

# SOBORNOST

## St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

(301) 638-5035 Church  
4419 Leonardtown Road  
Waldorf, MD 20601

Rev. Father Joseph Edgington, Pastor  
(703) 532-8017

[fredgington@gmail.com](mailto:fredgington@gmail.com)

[www.apostlethomas.org](http://www.apostlethomas.org)

*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

## SERVICES

**Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM**

**Great Vespers 5:30 PM**

**Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM**

**Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM**

**Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.**



## St. Thomas Sunday (Antipascha)

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

On this first Sunday after Pascha we remember our beloved St. Thomas – a great saint, apostle and martyr of the Church. Too often we remember St. Thomas as “doubting Thomas” – as if “doubt” was his defining characteristic. Often we’ve heard the term “doubting Thomas” in reference to somebody who is unbelieving, a skeptic, or somebody who cynically refuses to believe.

Well, I submit to you that this is an unfair characterization of the Apostle Thomas. When we read the whole Gospel, we see that Thomas is not the doubter he is often made out to be. We can see this in the Apostles’ reaction to Christ’s words before their entry into Jerusalem. Before entering the city, the Apostles learned that the external, worldly success and triumph that they had hoped for was not going to come to fruition. Instead, they learned that what awaited the Savior, and what similarly awaited them, was persecution and death. Faced with such a fate, the Apostles were stricken with fear. Yet in the face of this danger, it was the Apostle Thomas who said of the Savior: “Let us go, that we might die with Him.” (John 11:16) Thomas had a loyal, noble heart, and it was not Thomas who was the “doubter” throughout the Gospels, for Thomas believed in Christ. The true doubters were those who saw Christ – who saw His miracles, who heard His teachings, and who even cried, “Hosanna!” as they ran with palms to meet Christ

in his entry to Jerusalem – and yet who ultimately *rejected* Him and who did not believe. They did not believe because they did not have a heart like Thomas – a heart that truly yearned for God and for the things of the Spirit. No, their hearts were hardened by worldly desires and concerns, and thus they did not perceive God in their midst.

But why, then, did Thomas say: “I will not believe”? This same Thomas who was willing to die for Christ, and who would eventually travel to the ends of the earth to preach the Gospel and to be martyred for Christ? Met. Anthony Khrapovitsky explains that “Thomas asked for assurances not because he did not believe, but because he desired an untroubled faith, for he longed for the Resurrection and understood its significance.”

Indeed, the greatest event in the history of mankind had just occurred – the Resurrection from the dead of the God-Man Jesus Christ, and His trampling down death by death. Despite all that had happened, the Apostles were still somewhat dumbfounded, and they remained hidden and locked in their rooms, “for fear of the Jews.” News of the Risen Christ had reached them, yet the full reality of what was occurring had not yet completely set in, and the Holy Spirit had not yet descended as at Pentecost. So in looking at the other Apostles, Thomas saw no difference in them. Yes, they were full of joy instead of fear, but they still looked like the same people as before. The full implications of Christ’s Resurrection had not yet set in. And so Thomas said: “Unless I see... I cannot believe you.”

And what about us? As Orthodox Christians who proclaim the Risen Christ, who know the Gospels and the history of salvation, who have renounced the “Old Man,” have died with Christ and have “put on Christ” in baptism, who partake of the Sacraments – of Communion, Confession, Anointing, etc. Does all of this reflect in our own lives in this world? When people see us, do our faces shine like they do on Pascha night? As Christians, do we proclaim the truth of our faith in the Resurrected Christ with love? And do we do all things with love, with patience, and with the meekness and humility that Christ taught us and exemplified for us? Are we, by our actions and by our very being as Christians, set apart from the world? Or have we ourselves become tired, bored, cynical – wallowing in the ways of this world? For we live in a society which is increasingly unbelieving, and which says: “Unless I see, I will not believe.” For when people see *us*, as Christians, what do they see? Do they notice that we are part of the mystical body of the Risen Christ, and that we are temples of the Holy Spirit? If not, why not? We, who hold the Truth of the Faith, who are called to be the salt of the earth, who commune in the Body and Blood of Christ and who are mystically united with the Faith that sustains the universe... When people see us, like Thomas saw the other

Apostles before he beheld the Risen Christ himself, do these people see a change in us?

Does the full implication of our own death and arising with Christ show in our own lives and shine out like a beacon for others? For we sing in the Paschal Canon: “Yesterday, O Christ, I was buried with Thee, but today I arise in Thine arising.” Is this truth made evident in our lives not just on Pascha night, but at all times?

And so, we must examine ourselves and ask ourselves: Do our lives affirm the Gospel of the Risen Christ? Or do our lives deny it? When people look at us, do they say: “I will not believe”? Or rather, do they say, to quote the words of Met. Anthony Bloom: “Such people we have never seen! There is something about them that we have never seen in anyone!”

Let us ask God to help us in *our own* unbelief, and from this moment on, let us worship Christ in the example of the Apostle Thomas – with a self-sacrificing heart yearning for the Risen Christ. And may our whole life and all that we say and all that we do be a shining testament to the beautiful and life-giving truth of these three words: **Christ is Risen!** (*from holycross-hermitage.com*)

### **Today’s Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 5:12-20**

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people through the hands of the apostles. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.”

### **Today’s Gospel Lesson – Saint John 20:19-31**

On the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace *be* with you.” When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent

Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.”

Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace be unto you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.”

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

## *A Word From the Holy Fathers*

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 Jn. 3:1), and so we are. O blessedness! O God's love for man! O how much God's love has accomplished! O how profusely has God's grace abounded! Poor and rejected sinners are made the children of God! The Apostle of Christ wonders at this and says, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," and so we are. For what is more astonishing than that a sinner should become a child of God? God's love toward man has wrought this. What is more glorious than to be called and to really be a child of God? God's grace has bestowed this on man. It is glorious to be the child of an earthly king; it is incomparably more glorious to be the child of God the Heavenly King. This honor, glory, merit, nobility, and name is more excellent than all titles of this world. For this, glory to God Who loves mankind!

If Christians are children of God, they are also heirs, heirs, then, "of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). If they are children of God, what then, and whom should they fear? Why fear traitors, enemies, the devil, demons, death and hell? God shall stand up for them. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). We receive this most exalted gift of God in Baptism, for then we men are born of God and receive this most glorious title.

Beloved Christians! Let us remember our holy Baptism and this most exalted mercy which God then showed us: we then became children of God. Glory to God for this! But it is required of children that they should be like their parents, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6). Therefore Christians must be like God as they are born of God. Let us therefore show in deed that we are children of God. God is holy, let us also be holy. God is righteous, let us also be righteous. God is good, "for He makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt. 5:45); let us also be good and do good both to our friends and to our enemies, to those who love us and to those who hate us. God is compassionate, let us also be compassionate and show mercy to our unfortunate brethren. God hates sin, let us also hate every sin and turn away from it. God loves us, let us also love one another. God forgives us our transgressions when we repent, let us also forgive men their transgressions.

The Apostle of Christ admonishes us to do this: "Be therefore followers of God as dear children" (Eph. 5:1). When we show such character in ourselves, then we shall be true children of God and we shall receive both the inheritance and all good things promised to the children of God in Jesus Christ the Lord.

– St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

## **Also Commemorated Today: Apostles Aristarchus, Pudens, and Trophimus of the Seventy**

Saints Aristarchus, Pudens, and Trophimus were among the Seventy Apostles whom the Lord Jesus Christ sent to proclaim the good news of the Gospel (Luke. 10:1-24).

Saint Aristarchus, a co-worker of the holy Apostle Paul, became bishop of the Syrian city of Apamea. His name is repeatedly mentioned in the Acts of the Holy Apostles (Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2) and in the Epistles of Saint Paul (Col. 4:10, Philemon 1:24). He accompanied Saint Paul on his travels (Acts 16:29), and was Bishop of Apamea, Syria.

Saint Pudens is mentioned in Saint Paul's second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:21). He occupied high position as a member of the Roman Senate. The saint received the foremost Apostles Peter and Paul in his home, where believing Christians gathered. His house was converted into a church, receiving the name "Pastorum". According to Tradition, the holy Apostle Peter himself served in it as priest. Saint Pudens suffered martyrdom at Rome under the emperor Nero (54-68). He is also commemorated on January 4.

Saint Trophimus hailed from the city of Edessa. His name is mentioned in the Acts of the Holy Apostles (Acts 20:4) and in Saint Paul's second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:20). He was a disciple and companion of the Apostle Paul, sharing with him all the sorrows and persecution, and is also commemorated along with St. Pudens on January 4. *(from oca.org)*

## **Martyrs Basilissa and Anastasia of Rome, Disciples of Apostles Peter and Paul**

The Holy Women Martyrs Basilissa and Anastasia lived in Rome and were converted to Christianity by the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. They devoted themselves to the service of the Lord. When the emperor Nero (54-68) persecuted Christians and gave them over to torture and execution, Saints Basilissa and Anastasia took the bodies of the holy martyrs and gave them reverent burial. Rumors of this reached Nero, so Saints Basilissa and Anastasia were locked up in prison. They subjected them to cruel tortures: they scourged them with whips, scraped their skin with hooks, and burned them with fire. The holy martyrs remained unyielding, however, and bravely confessed their faith in Christ the Savior. By Nero's command, they were beheaded with the sword (+ ca. 68). *(from oca.org)*

### *Parish Life in Pictures: Pascha Edition*



**Above, left:** The cantors sing the Communion Hymn – “Receive the Body of Christ; taste the Fountain of Immortality. Alleluia!” **Above, right:** Fr. Joseph censens the people during Resurrection Matins. **Next page, top:** Standing room only! **Next page, bottom:** Fr. Joseph supervises the start of the Easter egg hunt after liturgy.



# CAMP NAZARETH SUMMER CAMP 2018

*The time for Summer Camp is Rapidly Approaching!!! The clock is ticking!!*

---

---

## Dates for the Summer Camping Program

**Week 3 -- July 29 - August 4, 2018**

Pittsburgh, Mid-Atlantic, Tri-State and Washington D.C. Deaneries

---

---

## **Register at – *campnazareth.org***

From the Home Page, From the 2018 Summer Camp Icon, or From the Diocesan Summer Camp Tab found under the Summer Camp Tab and look for Camper Registration.

If you are Clergy or a Volunteer go to the 2018 Summer Camp Icon on the Home Page or the Diocesan Summer Camp Tab found under the Summer Camp Tab and look for the paper forms under Clergy/Volunteers.

---

---

## **\$20 Early Bird Discount Per Child!!!!**

(one-time only, not per week)

## **Register & pay by May 15, 2018!!!!**

**Online Registration MUST be complete AND payment must be submitted by May 15 in order to qualify for the Early Bird Discount.**

**Registrations after June 15 will incur an additional \$20 late fee.**

- ❑ When you register online please note that **you will still need to submit a paper copy of the Medical Examination Form (i.e. Camper Physical)** which must be filled out and signed by a licensed medical professional (licensed physician or physician's assistant). This form will be emailed to you after you complete the online registration process.
- ❑ **Payment by check, money order, or credit card is accepted.** Checks and Money Orders are to be made payable to *Camp Nazareth* and sent to *Camp Nazareth at 339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137.*

## Follow Our Diocese On-Line

Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org>

Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

***In Your Prayers – Please Remember...*** His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Grace Bishop GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbytera Katie Baker and family, Santiago Alzugaray, Alicia Barosio and family, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiacki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectarios and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)