



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

Bulletin for Sunday, April 27, 2025

Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, it is

offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians we stand against racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

Members of our Parish Council are:

Carolyn Neiss- President Greg Jankura - Vice President
Boris Doph - Treasurer
Sharon Hanson - Member at Large
Luba Martins - Member at Large

Brett Malcolm - Member at Large

Pastoral Care - General Information

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 322-2906, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Anointing in Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

Announcements

Christ is Risen!

After Liturgy next weekend (May 4th), representatives from Birthright of Greater Westbrook will be offering silk roses for a suggested donation of \$2 each. (Sale begins May 11th) Birthright has been a presence on the shoreline for over 45 years.

We are able to maintain an office in a visible location on Route 1 thanks to the money raised from this fundraiser, the generosity of the Diocese, and many local donors.

Birthright provides support to pregnant mothers and their babies by offering free pregnancy tests, friendship counseling, alternatives to abortion, referrals to local

agencies, maternity, and baby clothing. Birthright is non-political and is interdenominational.

See Lynn or Maureen for more information about what Birthright offers. Thank you for your support!

Youth Rally Information is now available on the [DNE website!](#)

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Many Years! to Valery Danilack-Fekete, Sarah Senetcen and Cathy Martins on the occasions of their birthdays. The Reader John Skrobat on the the anniversary of his Tonsoring.

Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;

- All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless and dispossessed, those who are institutionalized, those who have no one to pray for them;
- All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all

- those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.
- All those who have perished due to hatred, intolerance, prejudice; pestilence and natural disaster; all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

Please let Fr. Steven know via email if you have more names for which to pray.

- Departed: Evangeline
- Clergy and their families: Fr Sergei B, Fr Vladimir, Matushka Anne, Matushka Sharon Anne, Fr Vladimir
- Catechumen: James
- Individuals and Families: Luba, Suzanne, Rosemary, Daniel & Dayna, Kristen, Victor, Susan, Gregory, Nancy
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Anne Hosking (B-5/4), Luba Martins (B-5/12), Katerina Hoehnebart (B-5/14), Kathryn Brubaker (B-5/24), Stella Boruch (B-5/24), Alexander Melesko (B-5/25), Fr Steven Hosking (B-5/28)
- Anniversaries this Month: Brubaker (5/23), Melesko (5/24), Kuziak (5/28), Jankura (5/29)
- Expecting and Newborn: Katie and Aaron and their unborn child, Valery and Jason and their new born, Augusta Mary
- Traveling: Michael
- Sick and those in distress: Thomas, Sheri, Joanna, Joshua, Julia, Stormy, Scott, Anne, Noah, Nancy, Sophia, Gregory, Tomas, Nicholas, Carol, Vincent, Matthew, Mark, Hermon, Sandra, Dorothy, Alan, Phyllis,

- Richard, Peter, Loretta

Today's commemorated feasts and saints

ANTIPASCHA. 2nd SUNDAY OF PASCHA — Tone 1. St. Thomas Sunday.

Hieromartyr Simeon, kinsman of the Lord, second Bishop of Jerusalem (107). Ven. Stephen, Abbot of the Kiev Caves and Bishop of Vladimir in Volyn' (1094). St. Eulogius the Hospitable, of Constantinople (4th c.). The Burning of St. Sava's relics (13th c.).

- Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.
- Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East.
- Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine and the Middle East, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

Parish Calendar

St Alexis Parish

April 27 to May 5, 2025

Sunday, April 27

Sarah Senetcen

Thomas Sunday
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, April 28

2nd Monday after Pascha

Tuesday, April 29

Cathy Martins
2nd Tuesday after Pascha
8:30AM Matins
6:00PM Parish Council Mtg

Wednesday, April 30

Tonsoring of John Skrobat
James the Apostle and brother of St. John
the Theologian
Krawchuk

Thursday, May 1

2nd Thursday after Pascha
8:30AM Matins

Friday, May 2

Removal of the Relics of St. Athanasius the
Great

Saturday, May 3

2nd Saturday after Pascha
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, May 4

Holy New Martyr Archpriest Vasily
Martysz
Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women
Anne Hosking
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, May 5

3rd Monday after Pascha

April 27

Thomas Sunday

Though the doors were shut at the dwelling where the disciples were gathered for fear of the Jews on the evening of the Sunday after the Passover, our Saviour wondrously entered and stood in their midst, and greeted them with His customary words, "Peace be unto you." Then He showed unto them His hands and feet and side; furthermore, in their presence, He took some fish and a honeycomb and ate before them, and thus assured them of His bodily Resurrection. But Thomas, who was not then present with the others, did not believe their testimony concerning Christ's Resurrection, but said in a decisive manner, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." Wherefore after eight days, that is, on this day, when the disciples were again gathered together and Thomas was with them, the Lord Jesus came while the doors were shut, as He did formerly. Standing in their midst, He said, "Peace be unto you"; then He said to Thomas, "Bring hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not unbelieving, but believing."

And Thomas, beholding and examining carefully the hands and side of the Master, cried out with faith, "My Lord and my God." Thus he clearly proclaimed the two natures - human and divine - of the God-man (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-29).

Saints and Feasts

This day is called Antipascha (meaning "in the stead of Pascha," not "in opposition to Pascha") because with this day, the first Sunday after Pascha, the Church consecrates every Sunday of the year to the commemoration of Pascha, that is, the Resurrection.

April 27

Symeon the Holy Martyr

Symeon was a first cousin of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the son of Clopas (or Cleopas, also called Alphaeus), the brother of Joseph the Betrothed. He became the second Bishop of Jerusalem, as a successor to James the Brother of God. He ended his life when he was crucified during the reign of Trajan, in 107, at the age of 120.

April 30

James the Apostle and brother of St. John the Theologian

James was one of the Twelve, like his brother John (celebrated on Sept. 26), whom the Lord called "Sons of Thunder," because they became great preachers and because of their profound theology. It was the Saint's boldness in preaching the Gospel that Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great, could not endure, and so he took him into custody during the days of the Passover, and slew him with the sword (Acts 12: 1-2); and thus he drank the cup of which the Saviour

had spoken to him prophetically (Matt. 20:23). As for Herod, the following year he went down to Caesarea, and, as the Acts of the Apostles records: "Upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration" to the elders of Tyre and Sidon; and the flatterers that surrounded him "gave a shout, saying, 'it is the voice of a god, and not of a man.' And immediately an Angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and like his grandfather (see Dec. 29) "he was eaten of worms and gave up the spirit" (Acts 12:21-23)

May 01

Tamara, Queen of Georgia

Saint Tamara was the only child of King George III. Upon his death in 1184, she became Queen at the age of twenty-four. Despite her youth, she ruled the country with such wisdom and godliness - leading it to unprecedented military triumphs over the neighbouring Moslem countries in defence of her kingdom, fostering arts and letters, and zealously strengthening Orthodoxy - that her reign is known as the Golden Age of Georgia. After her coronation, she convoked a local council to correct disorders in church life. When the bishops had assembled from all parts of her kingdom, she, like Saint Constantine at the First Ecumenical Council, honoured them as if she were a commoner, and they Angels of God; exhorting them to establish righteousness and redress abuses, she said in her humility, "Do away with every

wickedness, beginning with me, for the prerogative of the throne is in no wise that of making war against God." Saint Tamara called herself "the father of orphans and the judge of widows," and her contemporaries called her "King" instead of "Queen." She herself led her army against the Moslems and fearlessly defeated them; because of the reverence that even the enemies of Georgia had for her, entire mountain tribes renounced Islam and were baptized. She built countless churches and monasteries throughout her kingdom, and was benefactress also to the Holy Land, Mount Athos, and holy places in Greece and Cyprus. She has always been much beloved by her people, who have memorialized her meekness, wisdom, piety, and obedience, and peace loving nature in innumerable legends, ballads, and songs; the poem written in her honour by Shota Rustaveli, "The Knight in the Panther Skin," is the masterpiece of Georgian literature. The great Queen Tamara departed the earthly kingdom for the heavenly in the year 1212.

May 01

Jeremiah the Prophet

This great Prophet of God, Jeremiah, who loved his brethren and lamented for them greatly, who prayed much for the people and the Holy City, was the son of Helkias of the tribe of Levi, from the city of Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. He was sanctified from his mother's womb, as the Lord Himself said concerning him: "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee;

and before thou camest forth from the womb, I sanctified thee; I appointed thee a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5). He prophesied for thirty years, from 613 to 583 B.C. During the last captivity of the people in the reign of Sedekias, when only a few were left behind to cultivate the land, this Prophet remained with them by the permission of Nabuzardan, the captain of the guard under Nabuchodonosor. He wept and lamented inconsolably over the desolation of Jerusalem and the enslavement of his people. But even the few that remained behind transgressed again, and fearing the vengeance of the Chaldeans, they fled into Egypt, forcibly taking with them Jeremiah and Baruch his disciple and scribe. There he prophesied concerning Egypt and other nations, and he was stoned to death in Taphnas by his own people about the year 583 B.C., since they would not endure to hear the truth of his words and his just rebukes. His book of prophecy is divided into fifty-one chapters, and his book of lamentation into five; he is ranked second among the greater Prophets. His name means "Yah is exalted."

May 02

Removal of the Relics of St. Athanasios the Great

In the half-century after the First Ecumenical Council held in Nicaea in 325, if there was one man whom the Arians feared and hated more intensely than any other, as being able to lay bare the whole error of their teaching, and to marshal, even from

exile or hiding, the beleaguered forces of the Orthodox, it was Saint Athanasius the Great. This blazing lamp of Orthodoxy, which imperial power and heretics' plots could not quench when he shone upon the lampstand, nor find when he was hid by the people and monks of Egypt, was born in Alexandria about the year 296. He received an excellent training in Greek letters and especially in the sacred Scriptures, of which he shows an exceptional knowledge in his writings. Even as a young man he had a remarkable depth of theological understanding; he was only about twenty years old when he wrote his treatise On the Incarnation. Saint Alexander, the Archbishop of Alexandria, brought him up in piety, ordained him his deacon, and, after deposing Arius for his blasphemy against the Divinity of the Son of God, took Athanasius to the First Council in Nicaea in 325; Saint Athanasius was to spend the remainder of his life labouring in defence of this holy Council. In 326, before his death, Alexander appointed Athanasius his successor.

In 325, Arius had been condemned by the Council of Nicaea; yet through Arius' hypocritical confession of Orthodox belief, Saint Constantine the Great was persuaded by Arius' supporters that he should be received back into the communion of the Church. But Athanasius, knowing well the perverseness of his mind, and the disease of heresy lurking in his heart, refused communion with Arius. The heresiarch's followers then began framing false charges against Athanasius; finally Saint Constantine the Great, misled by grave

charges of the Saint's misconduct-which were completely false-had him exiled to Tiberius (Treves) in Gaul in 336. When Saint Constantine was succeeded by his three sons Constantine II, Constans, and Constantius, in 337, Saint Athanasius returned to Alexandria in triumph. But his enemies found an ally in Constantius, Emperor of the East; Saint Athanasius' second exile was spent in Rome. It was ended when Constans prevailed with threats upon his brother Constantius to restore Athanasius (see also Nov. 6). For ten years Saint Athanasius strengthened Orthodoxy throughout Egypt, visiting the whole country and encouraging all, clergy, monastics, and layfolk, being loved by all as a father. But after Constans' death in 350, Constantius became sole Emperor, and Athanasius was again in danger. In the evening of February 8, 356, General Syrianus with more than five thousand soldiers surrounded the church in which Athanasius was serving, and broke open the doors. Athanasius' clergy begged him to leave, but the good shepherd commanded that all the flock should withdraw first; and only when he was assured of their safety, he also, protected by divine grace, passed through the midst of the soldiers and disappeared into the deserts of Egypt, where for some six years he eluded the soldiers and spies sent after him.

When Julian the Apostate succeeded Constantius in 361, Athanasius returned again, but only for a few months. Because Athanasius had converted many pagans, and the priests of the idols in Egypt wrote to Julian that if Athanasius remained,

idolatry would perish in Egypt, the heathen Emperor ordered not Athanasius' exile, but his death. Athanasius took ship up the Nile. When he learned that his imperial pursuers were following him, he had his men turn back, and as his boat passed that of his pursuers, they asked him if he had seen Athanasius. "He is not far," he answered. After returning to Alexandria for a while, he fled again to the Thebaid until Julian's death in 363. Saint Athanasius suffered his fifth and last exile under Valens in 365, which only lasted four months because Valens, fearing a sedition among the Egyptians for their beloved Archbishop, revoked his edict in February, 366.

The great Athanasius passed the remaining seven years of his life in peace. Of his fifty-seven years as Patriarch, he had spent some seventeen in exiles. Shining from the height of his throne like a radiant evening star, and enlightening the Orthodox with the brilliance of his words for yet a little while, this much-suffering champion inclined toward the sunset of his life, and, in the year 373, took his rest from his lengthy sufferings, but not before another luminary of the truth, Basil the Great, had risen in the East, being consecrated Archbishop of Caesarea in 370. Besides all his other achievements, Saint Athanasius wrote the life of Saint Anthony the Great, with whom he spent time in his youth; ordained Saint Frumentius first Bishop of Ethiopia; and in his Paschal Encyclical for the year 367 set forth the books of the Old and New Testaments accepted by the Church as canonical. Saint Gregory the Theologian, in his Oration On the Great Athanasius, said

he was "Angelic in appearance, more angelic in mind; ... rebuking with the tenderness; of a father, praising with the dignity of a ruler ... Everything was harmonious, as an air upon a single lyre, and in the same key; his life, his teaching, his struggles, his dangers, his return, and his conduct after his return ... be treated so mildly and gently those who had injured him, that even they themselves, if I may say so, did not find his restoration distasteful."

Hymns of the Day



Priest: Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages

Choir: Amen

Priest: Christ is Risen (2 ½ times)

Choir: And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

Tone 7 Troparion (Pentecostarion)

From the sealed tomb, You shone forth, O Life!

Through closed doors You came to Your Disciples, O Christ God.

Renew in us, through them, an upright spirit, //

by the greatness of Your mercy, O Resurrection of all!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to

*the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

Tone 8 Kontakion (Pentecostarion)

Thomas touched Your life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God, when You came to Your Apostles through closed doors.// He cried out with all: "You are my Lord and my God!"

HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing:)
The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace: "Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: Rejoice, your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb! With Himself He has raised all the dead." Rejoice, O ye people! Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem! The glory of the Lord has shone on you. Exult now, and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of your Son

COMMUNION HYMN

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! Alleluia 3X

- **Priest:** "In the fear of God..."
- **Choir:** "Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord..."
- **Priest:** "O God, save Your people..."
- **Choir:** "Christ is risen from the dead... " (sung once, instead of "We have seen the True Light...")
- **Priest:** "Always, now and ever..."
- **Choir:** "Let our mouths be filled..."

At the Dismissal,

- **Priest:** "Glory to You, O Christ..."

- **Choir:** Christ is risen from the dead..." (thrice).
- And unto us He has given eternal life.
- Let us worship His Resurrection on the third day!

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 4th Tone. Psalm 146.5;134.3.

Great is our Lord, and great is his power.
Verse: Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

The reading is from Acts of the Apostles 5:12-20.

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested 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 and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the

words of this Life."

Gospel Reading

Thomas Sunday

The Reading is from John 20:19-31

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them 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. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I 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; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe." Eight days later, His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and My God!" Jesus said to him, "Have

you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the 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.

Wisdom of the Fathers

The Lord stoops to the level even of our feeble understanding. He works a miracle of His invisible power in order to satisfy the doubts of unbelieving minds.

St. Hilary of Poitiers

On the Trinity, 1.20. Taken from: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Vol: John. Intervarsity Press, 2007, p. 369.

For great is the dignity of the priests. ... And hold them very exceedingly in honor; for you indeed care about your own affairs, and if you order them well, you give no account for others; ...

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 86, 4th Century

Beyond the Sermon



The week after Pascha (Easter), the Church celebrates the Sunday of Thomas. This Sunday is also called the Sunday of (in Greek: Αντίπασχα) “Antipascha” because it commemorates several appearances of the risen Christ to His disciples. “Antipascha” means

“in the place of Pascha” and not “in opposition to Pascha.” It is a “second” Pascha in

the same way that every Sunday and every Divine Liturgy is a unique celebration of the Resurrection of Christ.

The underlying theme of the Sunday of Thomas is the mystical reality of signs. The Epistle (Acts 5:12-20) says, “Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles.” But in the Gospel (John 20:19-31), it is Christ Himself who presents

the signs. The Gospel readings from Pascha to Pentecost are taken from the Gospel of Saint John for a reason. This Gospel is called the “Spiritual Gospel” because it reveals the Person of the God-Man Jesus Christ through symbolic theology more than historical

events, as told in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, & Luke).

On the Sunday of the Resurrection — the “Eighth Day” — Jesus is seen by the

women who had come to the tomb. The women then go and tell the Apostles. This is why

Saint Mary Magdalene is called the “Apostle to the Apostles.” Later, the Lord appears to two disciples traveling on the seven-mile road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. When they arrive, the Lord sits at the table with them. He takes bread, blesses it, and gives it to them.

Their eyes are opened at once, and they know it is Him. He then vanishes from their sight.

After this encounter, the Lord appears before the other disciples in Jerusalem. Even with locked doors, Jesus comes, stands among them, and says, “Peace be with you.”

The

Lord does not rebuke the disciples for abandoning or betraying Him, nor does He recount

His passion, death, and descent into Hades. The first thing our Lord gives His disciples after His Resurrection is His peace. His peace is everlasting (Isaiah 9:6). Whenever we en-

counter Christ, we are in His peace and receive His grace. Even when the “doors” of our

hearts are locked, Christ enters in and offers to us His peace — the peace that “surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

We hear the words “Peace be with you” and “Peace be with all” several times in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy because Christ is truly in our midst. As Saint Seraphim of Sarov says, “When peace dwells

in a man's heart, it enables him to contemplate the grace of the Holy Spirit from within. ... When a man lives in peace, God reveals mysteries to him." This is the true peace that we gain through prayer and participating in the holy sacraments of the Church. When Christ gives the disciples His peace, He empowers them for their God-given mission as "ministers of peace" (Luke 10:1-6). "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." He then breathes on them and says: "Receive the Holy Spirit." In this way, the Lord empowers them for the ministry that lies ahead and gives them apostolic authority. One of the Apostles, Thomas, was not with them when Jesus appeared. The other disciples tell him, "We have seen the Lord." Thomas replies, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails in His hands and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." Yet, Thomas' absence the first time the Lord appears to the disciples was part of God's Providence. The following Sunday, the doors were again shut. Jesus appears, stands among them, and again says, "Peace be with you." Then, with divine love, He says to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Put your hand in my side. Do not be faithless but believing." Jesus demonstrates to him, and to all of us, that He was not a ghost but the risen Christ. It is then that Thomas

makes one of the greatest confessions about the divinity of Christ in Scripture, "My Lord and my God!"

As a result, the Church refers to Thomas's disbelief as "good" in our hymns, "Oh, how good is Thomas's unbelief!" (in Greek: Ὡ καλὴ ἀπιστία τοῦ Θωμᾶ!). It is "good" because it is based on a desire to find Christ and to meet Him directly and personally. If Thomas had not asked to touch the prints of the nails, we would not know without a doubt that Christ was Resurrected both in body and spirit. If Thomas had not doubted, we would not have this assurance. Thus, Thomas's unbelief helps form our belief. Jesus says to Thomas, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." These words refer to us, the "blessed who

have not seen." We have not touched His side, and we have not put our fingers on His scars. But we believe and love Him because we know, by the work of the Holy Spirit and by the apostolic witness of the Scriptures and the Church, that He is risen and He is with

us. We encounter Him in our hearts, in one another, and we receive His risen Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

May we continue to grow in our faith in Christ, as the Holy Apostle Thomas did. When we encounter doubt, may it be an opportunity to ask Christ to reveal Himself more

fully. Let us be inspired by Thomas and open our hearts to Christ and His peace. Christ is Risen! (in Greek: Χριστός Ἀνέστη!)