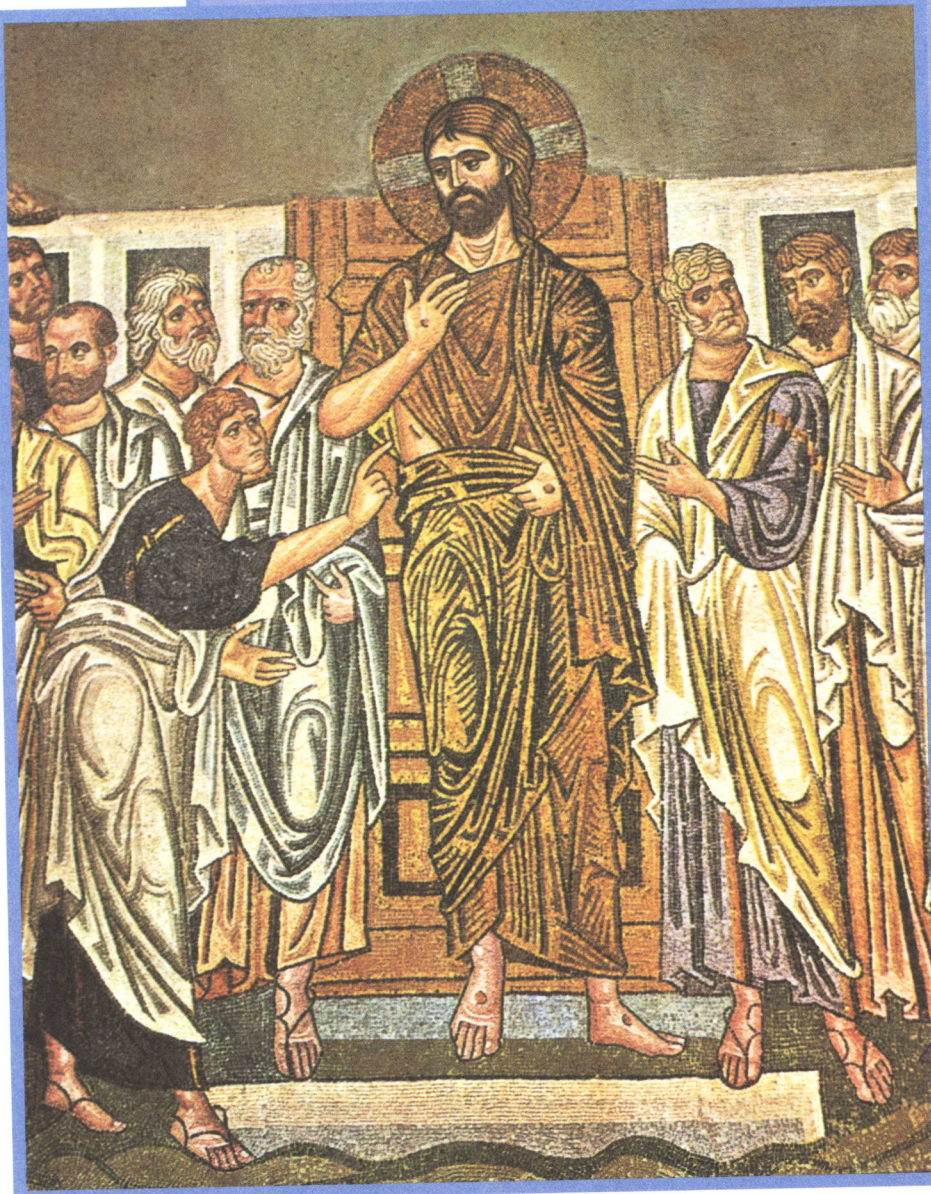


APOSTLE



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Confirming Christ's Resurrection through his doubt

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of St. Thomas

May 4, 2008

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor;
Father John Cmur; Deacon Kenneth E. Ellis and
Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris,
Cantors

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Today we have festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's Resurrection feasts. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Risen!" to which we reply, "Indeed He Is Risen!"

+++ **As we greet the Saviour in Resurrection triumph among us today, we are inspired to generosity. We are still graciously receive Resurrection gifts to the parish for which we thank our faithful in advance at this time of great need in the parish because of the impending building program.**

+++ We thank the good souls who invested time in keeping vigil at the tomb of the Lord during Passion Week. We invoke on these devoted souls the generous blessing of our Saviour.

+++ We acknowledge with deep gratitude the sponsorship of our parish Web-Site by Miguel and Maria Garcia for this month of May. We pray the Lord continues to bless them with good health for Many & Blessed Years, Christ is Risen!

+++ Today, following the Divine Liturgy, we have an Egg Hunt for the children of the parish. Prizes will be awarded as we tell the story of the use of eggs in Resurrection celebration.

+++ We give thanks o Paul & Eleni Pallas for sponsoring the parish bulletin for this month of May. We invoke upon them the blessing of the Lord for continued good health for Many & Blessed Years, Christ Is Risen!

+++ **We are grateful to all the workers in the parish who secured orders, prepared for the sale and actually came on the day to make the Pirohi yesterday. Our ardent prayer is for continued good health of each of the devoted souls for Many & Blessed Years, Christ Is Risen!**

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week-end: Tithe Offering, \$369.00; Candles, \$82.00; Food Coupons, \$120.00; Kitchen, \$12.00; Great Fast Self Denial Offering \$41.00; Steeple Cross Donation, \$100.00; Christian Fellowship, \$5.00; Candy Sales, \$55.00; Holy Day, \$154.00; Building Fund, \$1000.00; Resurrection of our Lord, \$1099.00; Flowers, \$5.00, for a total of \$3042.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 38 adults and 14 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Eleanor Korba, Pani Lucas, Bob Gorbich, Anna Zacharyczuk, Miguel & Maria Garcia, Paul Szmaida, Kyle Pasquino, Mary Jaakobs, Angeliki Tsokris, and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of **\$1312.00** from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals **\$92, 405. 00**. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ This Friday, May 9, we will have another Bake Sale with Nut and Poppy Rolls, Lekvar and Apricot Rolls available. Please secure orders from friends and neighbors and plan on coming with helping hands to assure its success.

+++ Please check the Sign-Up-Sheet for the weekly Christian Fellowship for the coming weeks. Simple foods without need for preparation are the best. Marilyn Korba coordinates this vital apostolate. Please assist her in making it a success by bringing your donation early so that all are present at the worship of our God.

+++ Please be certain to see Helen Karpiak or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using Shop Rite Food Coupons available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite ALL to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$4250.00 on this project to date!

+++ Please see Marilyn Korba to sign up for the Alaskan Cruise next August, 2009.

+++ We have some remaining rolls and pirohi available from the recent sales. Please see the woman in the kitchen to secure yours if you had no order.

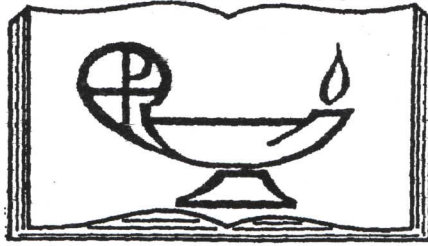
+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

+++ Next Sunday we will honor our living mothers in the Divine Liturgy and the departed ones in a Memorial Service following the services. We urge our faithful to offer seven day lights in honor of and in memory of our departed mothers.

+++ On Sunday, May 18, we will have the ground-breaking ceremony once again on the actual site of the new church. Please plan on being with us in celebration and praise. Father has been delegated by Metropolitan Nicholas to officiate at the ceremony.

**Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death
and to those in the graves, bestowing life.**

LORD



TEACH
US

Resurrection

Next he was seen by James, then by all the apostles 1 Corinthians 15: 7.

Finally, as they were all at table, Jesus was revealed to the eleven Mark 16: 14.

In the time after his suffering he showed them in many convincing ways that he was alive, appearing to them and speaking about the reign of God Acts of the Apostles 1: 3.

Men of Galilee, they said, why do you stand here looking up at the skies? This Jesus who has been taken from you will return, much as you saw him go up into the heavens Acts of the Apostles 1: 11.

Last of all he was seen by me as one born out of normal course 1 Corinthians 15: 8.

I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting Acts of the Apostles 9: 5.

What then are we to say, Let us continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Are you not aware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Through baptism into his death we were buried with him, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too, might live a new life. If we have been united with him through likeness to his death, so shall we be through a like resurrection. This we know, our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed and we might be slaves to sin no longer. A man who is dead has been freed from sin. If we have died with Christ, we believe that we are also to live with him. We know that Christ, once raised from the dead, will never die again; death has no more power over him. His death was death to sin, once for all; his life is the life of God. In the same way you must consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive for God in Christ Jesus Romans 6: 1 – 11.

Sunday of St. Thomas

Everyone has heard the expression, "doubting Thomas," because it is used to describe a person who is not inclined to believe things. The expression, of course, comes to us from St. Thomas, one of the Lord's twelve disciples who refused to believe that Jesus actually and really rose from the dead.

When Christ was crucified, the disciples fled in fear of their lives. They felt that the bottom had dropped from the hope and love of their hearts. Jesus had come to mean everything to them. Their lives were wound up in his life, just as the planets spin around the sun.

And now He was dead. For a day they brooded in silent solitude, feeling separated, alienated, even betrayed. Then, as Sunday dawned, they began to edge back to Jerusalem. They sought out one another, showing the sorrow and anguish of their hearts.

By Sunday evening they had all gathered together. All, except the apostle, Thomas were there. Perhaps he had fled anxiously so far that he couldn't get back in time. Perhaps his sorrow was so deep and profound that he could not stand to return and talk about the Lord. At any rate, the apostles were assembled in Jerusalem.

They locked the doors in fear. Suddenly, without any warning, Jesus stood among them! They looked at him, they looked at the closed locked doors and then they looked at one another, but could not believe the sight their eyes delivered them. The Lord speaks, shows them his wounds and assures them of his Resurrection from the dead.

The apostles are ecstatic, overcome with joy at this remarkable turn of events. Some time later, when they meet again, and St. Thomas is with them, they tell him the good news.

There is no longer reason for gloom and doom. "We have seen the Lord!" But Thomas reacted typically in human fashion. He felt badly he had been left out of the joy of the rest of Christ's followers. He now says, "Unless I see in his hands the print

of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

No wonder He was given the nick name “doubting Thomas.” No wonder this expression has come down to our day expressing as it does the disbelieving person.

A week later the apostles are once again gathered together for prayer. This time Thomas is among them. Again the risen Lord suddenly appears despite the once again locked doors in the upper room.

Jesus particularly addresses Thomas, saying, “Reach here your finger and look at my hands and touch them. Place your hand into my side and do not be faithless, but believing.” All doubt is reduced to nothing. Thomas falls to his knees and cries out to Christ, “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus uses this occasion to teach a deep and abiding truth that reaches down to us. He appeals to the sensitivity of soul in Thomas; because you have seen me, you believe. Far more blessed are those who have not seen, but yet believe.”

There are so many times in our lives when circumstances lead us to doubt, to disbelieve. But we are called upon today to look at the Resurrection of Christ and overcome the weakness of faith which we often see about us and strengthen it with our renewed commitment to the risen Saviour.

People will always disappoint us, because after all, they are only people, weak, sinful creatures like ourselves.

When we are disappointed by others, think for a moment, how many times we are a disappointment to them! But Christ alone does not disappoint; Christ alone affirms and confirms our faith. In Christ we do not misplace our devotion.

Yes, it is true, others like us cannot always be expected to live up to the expectations we have of them. They sin, they fail, they stumble, but in seeing their brokenness, their fragile response, their not so noble effort, we can realize that it is only to Christ we are to be fully and completely devoted and faithful, because He alone does not disappoint.

Yes, our wives, our husbands do not always have the strength to resist the temptations we think we can renounce easily. Yes, it is true even faithful friends

disappoint because they stumble, because they make mistakes, because they lapse in judgment, because they are momentarily weak and often sinful, needing our prayerful understanding and certain ready forgiveness.

What we should thank our God for, however, are moments of truth, moments of faithful response, moments of devoted service, moments of undying fidelity, moments of victory in their character and relationship with us. Yes, we will all fall, we will all sin, we will all fail from time to time in our own way.

Those are not the times to remember and emphasize. What we ought to think about and be thankful for are the good times, the perilous, but overwhelmingly successful times when God's grace helps us grow, when his strength is made manifest in our lives and those whom we love and respect. We ought to remember the "Thomas times," the times faith erupts and expresses itself, not the limited, small demeaning, even hurtful times. Remember the times when God's victory encircles us and our circumstances.

Our Lord assures us "Without me, you can do nothing." From time to time, we depend on ourselves, on our own insights what we think are superior insights, eagerly forgetting the challenges of our God, which unquestionably are higher than those of sin-weakened man.

From time to time we think our impressions are more valuable than those of others, but too late do we recognize frail humanity always fails when it does not depend on or call upon the grace and heavenly strength of the Lord.

The Lord was not condemnatory of Thomas. What Thomas did was not purposeful, was not neglectful, was not mean-spirited or sinister or derisive; it was only weakly human which means often times that it can be lacking in depth, in insight and in virtue. The Lord reveals himself to Thomas and chides him, "Because you saw you believe."

Perhaps those whom we love from time to time do not see as clearly as the Lord sees, do not see as we see, do not have the perception we enjoy, so they fail, they fall and they sin. With the risen Saviour on the scene, they are lifted, they too are raised to his dignity, they are corrected.

Today is a good time for each of us to recognize ourselves in the person of Thomas, eager, willing and hopeful of doing something good, but also, finding out our efforts can sometimes produce no virtue, only shortsightedness and even disaster.

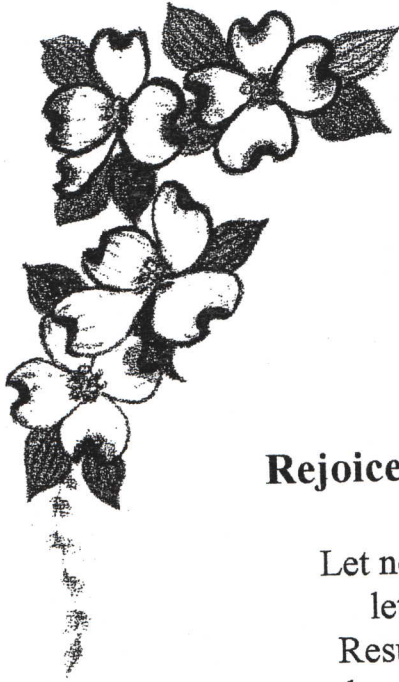
It is good to see ourselves in the person of our Lord, who by his gentleness, kindness, by his affirmation, by his forgiving soul corrects the doubter and confirms him in faith by his own positive behavior. If in doubt, it is to the Saviour we ought turn, not to our own deceptive perceptions or those of others. If victory over death is to have meaning, it must have meaning for us personally.

The distraught Thomas is restored because of the stability of Christ's loving victory, because of His presence. Just as Christ came purposely to confirm the lost faith and restore that of Thomas, so He is among us today in the Eucharistic celebration to uplift us, to restore us to our rightful dignity, to give us a place of victory in his kingdom in spite of ourselves, in spite of our well-meaning loved ones who often fail to please us and in spite of our own limited perceptions of goodness in their souls. Let us in gratitude respond with Thomas, "My Lord and my God" because in Christ we will never be disappointed and demeaned.

Let us never forget the words of the wise man who said, "There is so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us that it ill behooves all of us to condemn the rest of us." May we also rise above the limitations of our own humanity to celebrate and triumph with the Lord. Christ is risen!

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them is great reward

Psalm 19:7-11

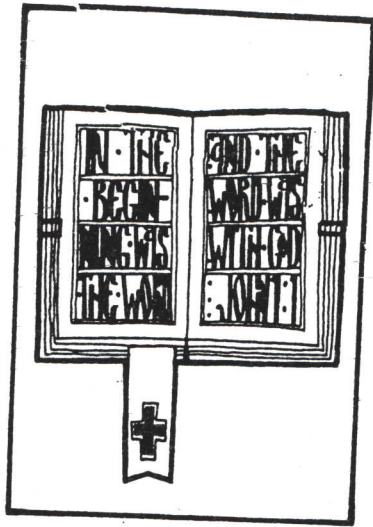


Rejoice! It's the Resurrection!

Let not your heart be troubled,
let not your soul be sad.

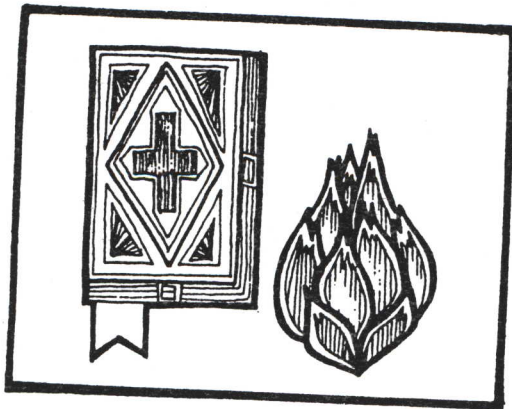
Resurrection is a time of joy
when all hearts should be glad.
Glad to know that Jesus Christ
made it possible for men
to have their sins forgiven,
and just like him, to live again.

So, at this joyous season
may the wondrous Resurrection story
renew your faith so we may be
partakers of his glory!



MY CHURCH

It is composed of people like me. We make it what it is. It will be friendly—if I am. Its pews will be filled—if I help fill them. It will do a great work—if I work. It will make generous gifts to many causes—if I am generous. It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship—if I bring them. It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a church with a noble spirit—if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these. Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things I want my church to be.



Did You Know That ...

...it is always too early to quit?

...things that matter in life always require effort; anything that matters will never be that easy, so enjoy it and you will achieve?

...one thing you cannot recycle is wasted time?

...if you would enjoy a good future, waste none of your present?

...he who controls the past, commands the future?

...the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams?

...you ought to live the life you imagined in Christ?

...someone who aims at nothing is sure to hit it?

...there are no shortcuts to any place worth going?

...a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step?

...even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there?

...the journey is the reward?

...there are many ways of going forward, but only one way of standing still?

...if you are determined to be happy, you will have the energy to get what you want in life?

...people take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness; just because they are not on your road does not mean they have gotten lost?

...you may not have gone where you intended to go, but you will end up where you intended to be?

...it is good to have an end to the journey, but it is the journey that matters in the end?

Dawn

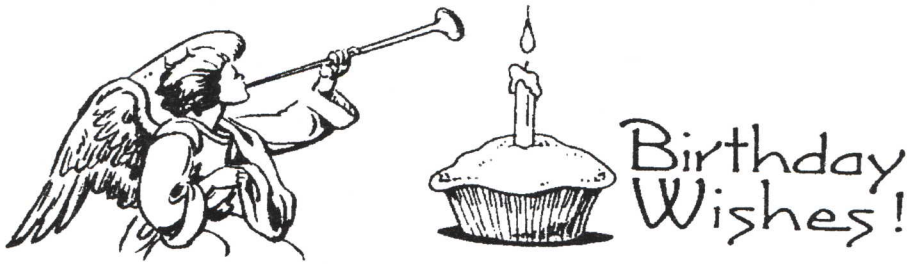
Often I have watched the dawn,
As the Master turned the daylight on,
And seen the sun peek o'er the hills,
To pleasure with the daffodils.

Birds sang in the scented air,
And flowers nodded everywhere,
Perfume on the gentle breeze,
Dancing leaves on all the trees.

It was a time of pure delight,
The world awakening from the night,
As we basked in nature's harmony,
With never a thought of harm to see.

It was a time to kneel and pray,
To thank God for His bright new day,
When we, in rapture, turned to see
God bathe the earth in rhapsody.

With such a dawn to start the day,
I cast my anxious fears away,
Rejoicing in the faith to see
That God will always care for me!

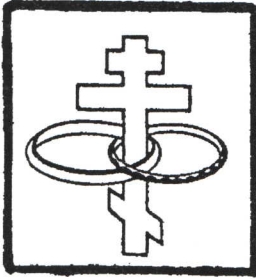


We are pleased to greet those of our faithful communicants who celebrate their birthday this month. Our Lord has offered these souls yet another year of blessed life. The most obvious way He blesses us and participates in our life is by sharing His divine life with us in the Eucharist at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Thus we can gather together and offer thanks to Him for yet another year of life blessed by His most gracious hands. Today, we prayerfully remember in the Divine Liturgy the following souls who celebrate their birthday during the month of May.

May 2 Betty Samaris
May 9 Rachel M. Korba

With a prayerful heart and grateful soul, our parish faith community asks the Lord to continue to bless these birthday celebrants with good spiritual and physical health for the coming year. We invite all to add their intercessory prayers so that with one voice and one heart we may also participate in the grace and joy of their celebration. As we wish them a happy and blessed celebration of their birthday, our ardent prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless them for

Many and Blessed Years!



WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

The Byzantine Fathers of the Church were wont to emphasize how ancient and how venerable marriage is in the sight of our God because it was established yet in paradise before the fall of Adam and Eve and brought to blessed perfection by Christ in Cana of Galilee. Its grace survived the sin of our first parents and it remains a sign of the presence of the Holy Trinity in our midst. It is a living symbol of the deep and abiding love between Christ and His Bride, our blessed Church. It is characterized in the liturgical life of the Church as a happy martyrdom. And it is precisely for this reason the sacramental Mystery of Marriage is such a joyous event. On the third Sunday of this month, we honor those of our good parishioners who observe their marriage anniversaries this month of May. They are specially remembered in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and subsequently receive an individual and personal blessing of the Lord at its conclusion. Celebrating this month are:

May 18 Robin & Louis Pasquino

May 22 Frank & Maria Pashos

May 24 Charles & Marion Peles

We gratefully give thanks to the Blessed Trinity for having guided and strengthened the marriages of these believers, and their cooperation with sacramental grace to remain faithful to one another over the years. Like all who are faithful to Christ, they recognize the presence and necessity of the Holy Spirit not only in the marriage, but in subsequent family life as well. As we praise our God for their witness in our midst, let us also join them with our prayers and thanksgiving before the throne of the Lord. May they continue to praise His Holy Name by their love and devotion to one another for

Many and Blessed Years

MORE THAN JUST A “DOUBTER”

Impressions of people are very difficult to change. The Apostle Thomas, for example will always be remembered for having a lack of faith. His statement - *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 IN HIS SIDE, I WILL NOT BELIEVE* - will forever label him as the “doubting Thomas.”

It should be noted, however, that Thomas also leaves behind a rich legacy of missionary service. After the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, tradition tells us that the Apostles cast lots to see where each of them would go to preach the Gospel. It fell upon Thomas to travel to India to spread the message of the Risen Christ. Although reluctant to embark upon such a lengthy journey, Thomas went to India, winning over a great number of converts to the Christian faith. Among his converts were two sisters, Tertiana and Mygdonia, who were married to Indian princes. The husband of Tertiana was so angered by this that he ordered Thomas to be executed. Five soldiers were sent to put him to death by running him through with their lances.

Before his death, Thomas, along with the other Apostles, was miraculously borne to Jerusalem for the funeral of the Mother of God. Arriving late, Thomas asked that the tomb of Mary be opened, so that he could pay his final respects properly. Miraculously, the body of the Theotokos was not there! The Lord had taken His Mother to His heavenly home!

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