

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
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OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic
Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky
Choir Director: Wash King

Sunday, May 9, 2021
2nd Sunday of Pascha
St. Thomas Sunday

<i>Christ is Risen!</i>	<i>Indeed, He is Risen!</i>
<i>Khristos Voskrese!</i>	<i>Voistinu Voskrese!</i>
<i>Christos Anesti!</i>	<i>Alithos Anesti!</i>
<i>El Messieh Kahm!</i>	<i>Hakken Kahm!</i>
<i>Cristos a Inviat!</i>	<i>Adevarat a Inviat!</i>
<i>Cristo ha resucitado!</i>	<i>Verda-deramente, ha resucitado!</i>
<i>Christ est Ressuscite!</i>	<i>En Verite, ll est Ressuscite!</i>
<i>Christus ist auferstanden!</i>	<i>Wahrlich Er ist auferstanden!</i>

Sunday, May 9	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy – Mother's Day
Sunday, May 16	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy
Sunday, May 23	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy
Sunday, May 30	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy – Parastas

Acts 5:12-20 (Epistle)

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. 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."

John 20:19-31 (Gospel)

Then, 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 to 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, "Thomas, 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.

Candles (May 9):

7-Day Vigils/Altar... For the Health of Terri Bogosh offered by Uncle Ted Bogosh

Altar Candles... In memory of Lillian Yelsh offered by William Yelsh

Eternal Lamp... In memory of Kay & Paul Maliniak offered by William Yelsh

Vigil Crosses ... In memory of Mary & Andrew Yelsh offered by William Yelsh

7-Day Vigils/Tetrapod... In memory of Marion Pickenheim offered by William Yelsh

Decorated Candles/Tetrapod... In memory of Anastasia Scarloss offered by Natalie & Michael
Bolinski



SEEING IS BELIEVING



Seeing is believing. We have all heard that age old adage, haven't we? It is quite possible that this saying originated with the story of St. Thomas, who expressed a similar philosophy in today's Gospel when he skeptically proclaimed in regards to Christ's asserted Resurrection: "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."

We know, of course, that Thomas got his wish, for Christ appeared to the Apostle eight days later when the doubting disciple was in their midst. He received sufficient proof to cry out with the others: My Lord and My God! Thomas SAW . . . Thomas BELIEVED.

In reality, however, "believing" has absolutely nothing to do with "seeing." When we experience something visually, we are dealing within the

realm of **FACT** and **KNOWLEDGE**. Faith does not enter the picture at all if something is proved to us beyond a shadow of a doubt. This is precisely why the words of our Lord in response to Thomas are so significant to us: "**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET STILL BELIEVED.**"

We all fall into this category. We have not been blessed with "first-hand" knowledge of our Saviour. His words never directly touched our ears. Our eyes never witnessed His miracles. We neither saw His Crucifixion, nor experienced His Resurrection. Still we continue to believe! We have shown **FAITH** in the writings of those who had **KNOWLEDGE** of our Lord. And for this, we will be rewarded, for the Gospels were written ". . . that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that **BELIEVING, YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME.**"

ANTIPASCHA. 2nd SUNDAY OF PASCHA . Tone 1. St. Thomas Sunday. Prophet Isaiah (8th c. B.C.). Martyr Christopher of Lycia, and with him Martyrs Callinika and Aquilina (ca. 250). Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker from Myra to Bari (1087). Ven. Shio of Georgia.

Troparion — Tone 7

From the sealed tomb, You did shine forth O Life! / Through closed doors You did come to Your disciples, O Christ God! / Renew in us, through them, an upright spirit, / by the greatness of Your mercy, O Resurrection of all!

Kontakion — Tone 8

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

Some icons depicting this event are inscribed “The Doubting Thomas.” This is incorrect. In Greek, the inscription reads, “The Touching of Thomas.” The Slavonic inscription is, “The Belief of Thomas.” When Saint Thomas touched the Life-giving side of the Lord, he no longer had any doubts.

This day is also known as “Antipascha.” This does not mean “opposed to Pascha,” but “in place of Pascha.” Beginning with this first Sunday after Pascha, the Church dedicates every Sunday of the year to the Lord’s Resurrection. Sunday is called “Resurrection” in Russian, and “the Lord’s Day” in Greek.

Prayer List:

Matushka Lovey Ropitsky, Matushka Lisa Weremedic

Andrew Balliet, Michael Birocik, Clark Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Cecil Buchanan, Emmalyn Naomi Buchanan, Evanna Jane Buchanan, Stephanie Chmel, Irene Davis, Ilene Devine, Julia Forte, Olga Hebda, Peter Holoviak, John King, Claire Kononchuk, Michael Kulick, John Kushnir, Nancy Lorchak, MaryAnn Macenka, Mary Maholick, Mildred O’Shura, Anna Pisko, Melissa Schmitt, Althea Shellock, Olga Sidoriak, Martha Stafiniak, Joseph Tosca, Martha Teno, Michael Teno, Nancy Vanno, Elizabeth Warcholak, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, & Richard York.

May Birthdays: 2- Lynn Sharpe, 17- Russell King, 17- Julia Forte, 21- Lindsey Ruch 31- Marie Skripnek

If anyone is in need of a priest, please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772. Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

Financials 5/1-2/21: *Operating Acct:* Candles 60 - Altar Candles 20 - Offerings 1,285 – Non-Envelope 205 - Holy Days 981 – Donations 625 = Total \$3,176.00; – Flowers 10 – Building Fund 5

Pascha attendance was 62 souls. This # was wonderful and the most since COVID restrictions started!!!

Please continue to keep filling your church envelopes. – Thank you!

Coming on Saturday – Yard Sale following CDC Guidelines

May 15 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Please drop off items from May 10 to May 14 between 1:00 and 4:00 PM

Please use Amazon Smile when ordering from Amazon.

If you have any Redner receipts, please call or get them to Helen King

Please use your Boyer’s card when shopping at Boyers; if you need one call Helen King

A Mother's Love

There are times when only a mother's love
Can understand our tears,
Can soothe our disappoints
And calm all of our fears.

There are times when only a mother's love
Can share the joy we feel
When something we've dreamed about
Quite suddenly is real.

There are times when only a mother's faith
Can help us on life's way
And inspire in us the confidence
We need from day to day.

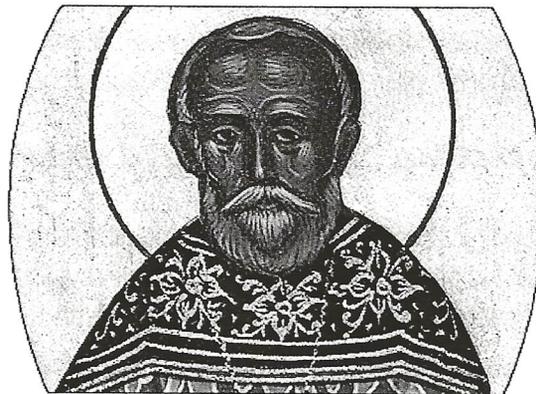
For a mother's heart and a mother's faith
And a mother's steadfast love
Were fashioned by the angels
And sent from God above.

--Author Unknown

St. Alexis Toth

Confessor & Defender of Orthodoxy in America

Included in this section are the historical accounts of those Saints who labored for the Church here in North America. Icons with scenes from their lives are also available.



Born: March 18, 1854 (Austro-Hungary)

Died: May 7, 1909 (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania)

Glorification Date: May 29-30, 1994

Commemoration Dates: May 7 (repose)

St. Alexis Toth - Orthodox Church in America (oca.org)



May 6, 2021

Dear Rev. Frs., esteemed members of the parish councils and faithful.

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen! By the Grace of God our parishes were able to offer all the prescribed Lenten, Holy Week and Paschal services this year! Seeing our faithful returning to church is truly a blessing. Hopefully, this trend will continue as everyone who wants to get vaccinated is able to do so. We were not created to live in isolation, but to live in communion with one another.

Over the past month or so, both clergy and laity asked for updated guidelines related to mitigation measures in our parishes. Much has changed since the initial letters of May 6th and May 16th of 2020. Three different vaccines are now fully available. The medical field is more knowledgeable on effective treatments and we now know the virus is rarely if ever passed on through contact with surfaces, as it is air borne.ⁱ Additionally, the Wolf administration announced on May 4th that all mitigation orders are being lifted on Memorial Day with the exception of the mask mandate, which will be lifted once 70% of Pennsylvania adults are fully vaccinated.ⁱⁱ Finally, we also know one cannot become sick through ingesting the virus.ⁱⁱⁱ

We all have been traumatized by the events of the last year in one way or another.^{iv} Additionally, we are repeatedly traumatized through the barrage of news reports, directives and reminders, public service announcements, social media, healthcare networks, insurance companies, text messages, emails, as well as the plethora of signage, etc. One cannot escape hearing or seeing something about precautions multiple times a day. As the Church we do not want to be part of the ongoing traumatization, but be a place where we can find peace, healing and hope, resting our eyes and ears from the constant reminders which cause fear and anxiety.

We grieve those we have lost and pray for those mourning a loss of a loved one, as well as those suffering from loneliness, fear, anxiety, depression, isolation, substance abuse and despondency. We are blessed, however, that our faithful were *more than capable of taking adequate precautions* in their daily activities to protect themselves whether at home, the grocery store, restaurants, church or traveling, etc. While our Diocese did have a couple of funerals of the elderly associated with COVID 19, the number of funerals for 2020 was actually less than 2019 and consistent with the numbers over the last 5 years.^v

Given the availability of the vaccine, availability of effective treatments and our faithful's understanding and practice of proper protocols, as well as the constant reminders in the public sphere, I am making the following Archpastoral changes to our Diocesan Protocols out of love and care for the faithful:

1. Parishioners are no longer to be asked about COVID symptoms or have temperature checks at the parish. (*No parish has sent one parishioner home because of an elevated temperature. Our people understand not to come to church if they are sick.*)
2. All tape or barriers delineating social distancing is to be removed from the floors and pews. (*Our people already know what to do after a year of conditioning and other places have already removed them.*)
3. All barriers blocking pews are to be removed. (*The faithful are already making decisions regarding their comfort level and proximity apart from Church services and are able to*



do so when attending services. The airlines have people sitting shoulder to shoulder on their flights. People have been dining at restaurants where they sit for an hour or more without masks on.)

4. No one is required to wear *two masks* in any parish of the Diocese, nor are they to be told to do so. *(Twenty-five states have no masks requirements at all and that number will be increasing. The mandate within Pennsylvania and Delaware will also come to an end at some point.^{vi})*
5. Parishes are to begin using the communion cloth. The mouths should only be wiped if needed. *(If someone's mouth needs to be wiped another cloth should be available with one of those holding the cloth.)*
6. Council members must not be overly zealous in policing the faithful as they have already proven themselves responsible over the last year.
7. Parishes may begin to pass the offering basket if so desired.
8. Parish Halls are to be opened after services for those who would like time for fellowship. *(We can let people decide for themselves when they are ready, but we should not deny them the opportunity.)*

Dear to God, let us, as the Church provide the one place where the faithful are not traumatized through our words or what they see when attending services. Many businesses began this process months ago. May our Lord stretch forth His healing hand and help us to become whole.

Your unworthy father in Christ,

+ Mark

+MARK, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

ⁱ The CDC has acknowledged the unnecessary overuse of sanitizers and concern with handling various surfaces.
<https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2021/coronavirus-surface-cleaning.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/Health-Details.aspx?newsid=1437>

ⁱⁱⁱ See <https://www.consumerreports.org/food-safety/coronavirus-common-questions-about-the-food-you-eat-food-safety/>

^{iv} Understanding the impact of trauma

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/#:~:text=Initial%20reactions%20to%20trauma%20can,effective%2C%20and%20self%2Dlimited.>

Symptoms of Trauma

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/table/part1_ch3.t1/?report=objectonly

^v See the document, "Funerals by Parish in the last 5 Years."

^{vi} Governor Wolf is lifting all Covid restrictions except masks on Memorial Day.

https://www.wfmz.com/news/area/pennsylvania/pa-to-lift-all-covid-restrictions-except-mask-mandate-on-memorial-day/article_2f35a328-acf9-11eb-ad9f-43199baaa4ee.html