



74<sup>th</sup> Year

April 19, 2026

Pamphlet #16 (3803)

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**THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (John 20:19-31)**  
**"My Lord and my God"**

*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.*

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## THE CHURCH AS AN IMAGE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Today's Gospel passage is an image of the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord, He who abolished the dominion of death, entered "while the doors were closed" into the place where the disciples were gathered "for fear of the Jews." He stood in their midst and imparted to them His peace and His Holy Spirit, so that they might forgive the sins of mankind. This is the Church's most important work: to reconcile the person with God, with oneself, and with one's fellow human beings; to free humanity from sins; to make each person worthy of beholding and communing with the Risen Christ; and to render them participants in the Kingdom of God.

The Lord appeared among His disciples, or rather, according to Saint Gregory Palamas, in the very center of each one's heart. As is well known, Thomas was absent from the gathering of the disciples at the first appearance of the Risen Lord. It seems that he had withdrawn into isolation, overwhelmed by doubt and fear. Thus, he showed disbelief toward the assurance of the disciples that they had seen the Lord. However, when after eight days, on the following Sunday after the first appearance, he was also present with the disciples, he was deemed worthy to see the Risen One and to converse with Him. At this point, Saint Gregory Palamas makes a keen observation: when we too, like Thomas, are absent from the gatherings of the Church, we are deprived of the vision of the Risen Christ. For in the Divine Liturgy, through the power, energy, and grace of the Holy Spirit, together with our own cooperation, we gain experiential knowledge of Christ's presence in our hearts. We sense that He grants us peace, frees us from unbelief and our sins, our errors and weaknesses, and makes us worthy of communion with Him.

## **The doubt of Thomas**

Although Christ blessed those who believed in Him without having seen Him, He satisfied the well-intentioned doubt of Thomas and deemed him worthy of His divine appearance. Thomas found peace, for he was illumined by the light of faith, which, when it touches the human heart, reveals with certainty invisible, transcendent truths. Thus, from the depths of his heart, he confessed that the Risen Jesus is not simply a teacher or a prophet, but his Lord and his God. And the Lord did not rebuke Thomas for his doubt. Christ's conduct is a manifestation of divine love, understanding, and forgiveness. The love of the Risen One shakes Thomas's self-reliance, shatters his egotism, and he lives the presence of Christ in his very being.

## **The faith of people**

Yet a person, each and every person, who is deemed worthy to be blessed by the Risen One because he believes in Him, and indeed believes without having seen Him in a physical way, experiences the love of Christ, joy, and grace. Such a person remains united and closely bound to the Risen Lord, and through the Risen One, to his fellow men. This living and radiant faith is made active and revealed through love (Galatians 5:6). It is manifested through the decision and the effort to be more humble and gentle in one's relationships; more steadfast and patient in bearing one's cross; more daring, courageous, and selfless in love; more Paschal in one's outlook and in one's heart; more grateful to God and people; more consistent with the ethos that is shaped with the ethos of Christ and of the Saints as its model.

## **Thomas Sunday as a model of eternity**

New Sunday, or Thomas Sunday, or Antipascha, becomes a model of the age to come: the unwaning day of the presence of Christ in the midst of the Church, and the confirmation of the

fact of the Resurrection. It removes every doubt and becomes an unbreakable bond, a personal communion with the Risen One.

Amazed, we too should glorify Christ as our Lord and God, and hymn Him with this hymn of the Church from today's Orthros service: "You, O Christ, who as God rose from the tomb, though we did not see You with bodily eyes, but believed with the longing of the heart, we magnify You in hymns" [of thanksgiving].

Archimandrite N. K.

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April 19, 2026: SUNDAY OF ANTIPASCHA (OF THOMAS)

The renewal of the (weekly recurring) feast of the Resurrection of Christ and the salvific confession of the Apostle Thomas.

Hieromartyr Paphnutius; George, Bishop of Pisidia.

Eothinon: 1 – Epistle: Acts 5:12-20 – Gospel: John 20:19-31

NEXT SUNDAY: April 26, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women  
Epistle: Acts 6:1-7 – Gospel: Mark 15:43-16:8

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