



Orthodox Heights

HolyTrinityOrthodoxChurch.org

139 Horseheads Blvd, Elmira Heights, NY 14903

Fr James Worthington, Acting Rector 315-706-6185

Sdn Shawn Michael Karney, Warden

APRIL 23, 2017

Christ Is Risen! Indeed, He Is Risen!

ANTIPASCHA. 2nd SUNDAY OF PASCHA — Tone 1. Holy Glorious Greatmartyr, Victorybearer and Wonderworker George (303). St. Thomas Sunday. Martyr Alexandra the Empress, wife of Diocletian (303). Martyrs Anatolius and Protoleon, soldiers converted by witnessing the martyrdom of St. George (303).

EPISTLE: ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 5.12-20: The Apostles preach the Gospel, but are imprisoned. An angel releases them, and they continue to preach.

GOSPEL: JOHN 20.19-31: Christ comes in peace, and St Thomas, now believing, recognizes Christ as "My Lord and my God!"

RECEIVING COMMUNION: The Orthodox Church believes that in order to partake of the Eucharist, the very body and blood of Christ, one has to share the beliefs of the Church regarding it. In the Church's teaching, this means being a full member of the Orthodox Church. Therefore, one may not receive Communion in an Orthodox Church unless he or she is an Orthodox Christian and has prepared through recent confession, prayer and fasting. All are welcome to join the Orthodox Church, should they so choose. **CHRISTOS VOSKRESE! Христóсь воскрéсе!**

GIFT TABLE: There are a few gift items for sale that may be of interest in this upcoming season: Orthodox Study Bibles (a good gift for family or godchild) and some decorated eggs. They are on a table in the basement, and payments can be given to Alex. **AL MASEEH QAM! المسيح قام! حقا قام!**

WELCOME VISITORS! We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It's good to have you with us! Please know that we are glad that you are here praying with us and invite you to join us after the service for a meal and to meet everyone in our community. **CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

GRAVE BLESSINGS: As we continue to proclaim the Gospel of the Resurrection, it is custom to bless the graves of those who have gone on in the hope of the resurrection before us. We will be headed to the cemetery after the Divine Liturgy today to bless all of the graves there. Also, if any of the departed faithful are in other locations, please see Fr James to schedule a grave blessing. **CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE:

APRIL 23: Worthington

April 30: Lyons

May 7: Haluszczak

May 14: S & S Cheplick

May 21: Dudek

READERS SCHEDULE:

For Week of: 4/22 Rdr Thomas

4/29 Sdn Michael

5/6 Rdr William

5/13 Rdr Thomas

5/20 Sdn Michael

PRAYER LIST

LIVING:	Kathleen	Kathleen	REPOSED:	Taissia
Apr John	Helen	Michael	Apr John U	Theophan
Apr Herman	Peter	Yuri	Priest Matthew	Lynda
Apr Theodore	Rdr Thomas	Kira & Rebecca	Priest John	Alfred
Apr Jason	Rdr David	Bill	Apr Alexander	NEWLY REPOSED:
Mat Joanna	Rdr Paul	Nadia	Dn Mark	Kathleen (3-26)
Mat Katherine	Maria	<u>Children:</u> All of the	Rdr Gregory	ANNIVERSARIES:
Mat Christine	Leon	Parish	Joseph C	None.
Mildred	Katherine	BIRTHDAYS: None.	Steven L	
Elizabeth	Kate	ANNIVS: None.	Anne O	
Antonina	Kristin	NAMESDAYS: None.	Debra	

BY THE NUMBERS: Last Collection: \$827. Weekly Budget: \$1100.
MTD: \$2727. Monthly Budget: \$4360. March: +\$941.

SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK

CONFESSIONS ARE HEARD BEFORE AND AFTER VESPERS AND AT ANY OTHER CONVENIENT TIME.

ST THOMAS SUNDAY, APRIL 23: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy, Social Hour

MONDAY, APRIL 24: Rector's Sabbath

TUESDAY, APRIL 25: 8:30 Morning Prayers

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26: 8:30 Morning Prayers

THURSDAY, APRIL 27: 8:30 Morning Prayers

FRIDAY, APRIL 28: 8:30 Morning Prayers

SATURDAY, APRIL 29: 5 PM Great Vespers

MYRRHBEARERS SUNDAY, APRIL 30: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy and Social Hour

Aleut: Kristuusaq Ungwektuq! Pichinuq Ungwektuq!

Arabic: Al Maseeh Qam! Haqqan Qam!

Chaucerean Middle English: Crist is arisen! Arisen he sothe!

Chinese: Helisituosi fuhuole! Qeshi fuhuole!

Church Slavonic: Christos Voskrese! Voistino Voskrese!

Coptic: PiKhirstos af tonf! Khen o methmi af tonf!

Eritrean: Christos Ten-si-OU! Ba-Ha-ke Ten-si-OU!

French: Le Christ est ressuscité! Il est vraiment ressuscité!

Gaelic (Irish): Tá Criosd ar éirigh! Go deimhin, tá e ar éirigh!

Phonetic - Taw Creest Ereen! Taw Shay Ereen Guhdyne!

Georgian: Kriste aghsdga! Cheshmaritad aghsdga!

German: Christus ist auferstanden! Er ist wahrhaftig auferstanden!

Greek: Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti!

Hebrew: Ha-Mashiah qom! Be-emet qom!

Italian: Cristo e' Risorto! Veramente e' Risorto!

Japanese: Harisutosu Fukkatsu! Jitsu Ni Fukkatsu!

Korean: Kristo Gesso! Buhar ha sho Nay!

Latin: Christus Resurrectus Est! Vere Resurrectus Est!

Nigerian: Jesu Kristi Ebiliwo! Ezia o'biliwo!

Quenyan: Ortanne Laivino! Anwa ortanne Laivino!

Romanian: Hristus A Inviat! Adeverat a Inviat!

Russian: Khristos Voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese!

Slavonic: Christos Voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese!

Spanish: Cristo ha resucitado! En verdad, esta resucitado!

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

Elmira Heights, New York



SUNDAY, APRIL 23RD, 2017

ST THOMAS SUNDAY

ANTIPASCHA

WEEKLY HYMNS FOR APRIL 23RD

Tone 7 Troparion / St. Thomas Sunday

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

Tone 4 Troparion / St. George

As a martyr of Christ, Thou wast bound for good **deeds**, O George / by faith thou didst conquer the torturer's **godlessness** / Thou wast offered as a sacrifice **pleasing** to God / thus receiving the crown of **victory** /// Through thine intercessions, forgiveness of sins is **granted** to all.

Tone 4 Kontakion / St. George

God raised thee as His own **gardener**, O George / for thou hast gathered for thyself the sheaves of **virtue** / Having sown in tears, thou dost now **reap** with joy / thou hast shed thy blood in combat and won **Christ** as thy crown /// Through thine intercessions, forgiveness of sins is **granted** to all.

Tone 8 Kontakion / St. Thomas

Thomas touched Thy life-giving side with an eager hand, O **Christ** God / when Thou didst come to Thy apostles through **closed** doors /// He cried out with all: Thou art my **Lord** and my God.

Prokeimenon Tone 3 [from Psalm 146]

Great is our Lord and abundant in power / His understanding is beyond measure.

v: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God!

Seventh Tone: The Righteous one shall rejoice in the Lord and shall set his hope on Him.

The Alleluia / Tone 8 (from Psalm 94):

Come let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us shout in jubilation to God our Savior!

v: For the Lord is a great God, and great King over all the earth.

First Tone: The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree and shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon

Hymn to the Theotokos

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, all 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**! The righteous shall be in everlasting **remembrance**; he shall not be afraid of evil **tidings**. Alleluia...

QUESTIONS ABOUT ST. THOMAS SUNDAY

QUESTION: How does the Holy Spirit, through the services characterize Thomas' unbelief?

ANSWER: The church characterizes St. Thomas' unbelief as "good", because it led to a greater manifestation of the reality of Christ's resurrection in the flesh: "As the disciples were in doubt, / the Savior came on the eighth day / to where they were gathered and granted them peace, / and cried unto Thomas: / Come, O Apostle, and feel the palms in which they fastened the nails. / O good unbelief of Thomas, / which hath led the hearts of the faithful to knowledge! / Hence, he cried out with fear: // O my Lord and my God, glory be to Thee." (Sticheron from Lord I have cried, vespers for St. Thomas Sunday)

QUESTION: How many times had the apostles as a group seen the risen Lord before St. Thomas saw Him and believed?

ANSWER: Jesus appeared to all the apostles save Thomas on the eve of the day of the Resurrection - Sunday evening. He did not appear again unto them until eight days later, when Thomas was with them. "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, came Jesus and stood in the midst ... But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst..." (John 20:19a, 24,26a)

QUESTION: What important priestly charism was given by Christ when He came to the upper room the first time He saw the apostles?

ANSWER: Jesus gave the apostles, and whom they would appoint, and their successors, down through the ages, the authority to bind and loose sins. A priest (or bishop, of course), usually exercises this authority and responsibility in the sacrament of confession.

"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, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ... Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20:19,21-23)

GAZING INTO THE EMPTY TOMB

By Fr Steven Kostoff

The “empty tomb” has been a point of endless discussion and debate among biblical scholars for quite some time now. The issue is not simply one of whether or not the tomb of Jesus was indeed empty when the myrrhbearing women discovered it on “the first day of the week.” And, if it was empty, then why was it empty? Those are theological or “faith” questions and claims that determine the difference between “believers” and “non-believers” based on how one may answer those questions. Rather, some biblical scholars who study the New Testament evidence concerning the resurrection of Christ challenge the very reliability of the empty tomb narratives in the canonical Gospels. These very scholars even going so far as to claim these narratives are basically imaginative reconstructions, for apologetic purposes, composed by the evangelists. In other words, the empty tomb narratives are not conveying to us an actual record of events; but they are actually later inventions that are used to strengthen the claim that Jesus rose from the dead. This is often called “historicized theology.” In responding to these skeptical charges, many excellent biblical scholars have carefully demonstrated the reliability of these narratives with detailed and sophisticated arguments that skillfully and convincingly defend the solid historical nature of these narratives. The haunting simplicity of these narratives; the fact that they are “unadorned” with claims of fulfilled biblical prophecy or theological embellishment; the discovery of the empty tomb by women disciples whose testimony was not binding in first century Judaism; the fact that living disciples of Christ could have refuted any invented stories; the integrity of the evangelists(!). All of these combine to strongly support the historicity of the empty tomb narratives. As Gerald O’Collins summarizing in his book, *Believing in the Resurrection* “*The more we detect such a simplicity that derives from the origins of Christianity, the less plausible we find the theory that the discovery of the empty tomb was not an historical event but merely a later creation, a fictional scenario coming from the evangelist Mark.* (p. 83)”

And very telling is the conclusion reached by one of the world’s great “Jesus scholars,” Geza Vermes, a scholar who does not believe that Jesus was raised from the dead: “*When every argument has been considered and weighed, the only conclusion acceptable to the historian must be that the opinions of the orthodox, liberal sympathizer and the critical agnostic alike – and even perhaps of the disciples themselves – are simply interpretations of the one disconcerting fact: namely that the women who set out to pay their last respects to Jesus found to their consternation not a body but an empty tomb.*”

Regardless of how interested or not one may be by endless discussions and debates among biblical scholars today, what is of interest to us is how integral a part the empty tomb has played within the Orthodox Christian liturgical, hymnographic, iconographic, and theological Tradition ever since the “beginnings” of the proclamation of the Gospel. At the Liturgy yesterday, on St. Thomas Sunday, we sang in the troparion: From the sealed tomb, Thou didst shine forth, O Life! The discovery of the empty tomb by the myrrhbearing women is a theme constantly brought to remembrance during the paschal season and beyond within the Church’s hymnography: “*Before the*

dawn, Mary and the women came and found the stone rolled away from the tomb. They heard the angelic voice: “Why do you seek among the dead as a man the One who is everlasting light? Behold the clothes in the grave! Go and proclaim to the world: The Lord is risen! He has slain death, as He is the Son of God, saving the race of men.” (Hypakoe of Pascha)”

“When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection; they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy. (Resurrectional troparion, tone 4)”

The empty tomb was the great “sign” that something mysterious occurred following the death and burial of Jesus of Nazareth. And this sign found its proper interpretation when the Risen Lord appeared to His female and male disciples – in that order. The tomb was empty because Jesus had been raised from the dead! Christians do not believe in the empty tomb, but in the Risen Lord. But Christians cannot believe in the Risen Lord if the tomb was not found to be empty. The empty tomb may be a “secondary” sign of the resurrection, but it is essential to the claim that Jesus had been raised from the dead. The empty tomb reveals that it is a fully embodied life – and not a disembodied life – that is the ultimate goal of a glorified life in the presence of God. This is one of many reasons why all four evangelists include accounts of the discovery of the empty tomb as climactic points of their respective Gospels.

In a section of his book, *Believing in the Resurrection*, entitled “The Sign of the Tomb,” Gerald O’Collins eloquently comments on the significance of this great sign: “*First, in the New Testament the empty tomb stood for a return from the dead and all that such a return implied. The burial of people signified that they were removed from the land of the living and had fallen into the power of death ...*

“Where tombs express the finality and irrevocable loss of death, Jesus’ open and empty tomb symbolized the fullness of the new and everlasting life into which he had risen. Here the emptiness of the tomb, paradoxically, indicated the fullness of life into which the risen Jesus had entered. Graves naturally suggest the quiet decay of an existence dissolved by death. The empty tomb of Jesus symbolized the opposite, the complete life that had overcome the silence of death.

“Second, the emptiness of Jesus’ grave reflects the holiness of what it once held: the corpse of the incarnate Son of God, who lived totally for others and died to bring a new covenant of love for all people. This ‘Holy One’ could not “experience corruption” (ACTS 2:27)

“Third ... God did not discard Jesus’ corpse but mysteriously raised and transfigured it, so as to reveal what lies ahead for human beings and their world. In short, the empty tomb in Jerusalem forms God’s radical sign that redemption is not an escape to a better world but a wonderful transformation of this world. Seen that way, the open and empty tomb of Jesus is highly significant for anyone who want to appreciate what redemption means. (p. 94-95)”

As others engage in the debate over the empty tomb, let us with a living faith gaze into that empty tomb as did the myrrhbearing women and some of the disciples and “hear” the voice of the angelic proclamation: “**Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him**” (MK. 16:6).