



Holy Apostle Thomas

TROPARION OF ST. THOMAS

Thou wast a disciple of Christ and a member of the divine choir of Apostles, by thine unbelief thou didst make known Christ's Resurrection, and by touch thou wast assured of His holy Passion, O all-glorious Thomas, and now pray that we be granted peace and great mercy.

MEGALYNARION OF ST. THOMAS

Doubting, thou did come forth to touch His side; yet the resurrection was confirmed by thine unbelief. Henceforth, all have been taught by thee to serve Christ, O Thomas, who did end thy course well by holy martyrdom.

ST. THOMAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

1201 N. Llano Street
Fredericksburg, Texas

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT (MEATFARE)

HIEROMARTYR POLYCARP,
BISHOP OF SMYRNA

Sunday, February 23, 2025

*Antiochian Diocese of
Wichita and Mid-America*

Primate

His Beatitude, the Patriarch of
Antioch, JOHN X

Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of All North America
His Eminence, Metropolitan Saba

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Sunday, February 23, 2025; Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare)

Hieromartyr Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna;
Venerable Gorgonia, sister of Gregory the Theologian

THE SECOND EOTHINON GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark (16:1—8).

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb at the rising of the sun. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back – it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a long white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, “Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified. He is risen; He is not here; see the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him, as He told you.” And they went out quickly and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

THE SYNAXARION

On February 23 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Hieromartyr Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna; and Venerable Gorgonia, sister of Gregory the Theologian. Today, we commemorate the Second and impartial Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Sunday of the Last Judgment—known also as Meat Fare Sunday—the lesson of which occurs in today’s Holy Gospel. Jesus illustrates to us God’s ineffable goodness and His great love for mankind. And so lest some who are lazy should loiter and spend the time appropriate to their salvation in the pursuit of sin, and be suddenly overtaken by death, the divine Fathers decree that on this day the remembrance of the Second Appearance of Christ may be celebrated. The intention is to remind them that, as God is good and loving to mankind, He is also a very righteous Judge Who recompenses each according to his deeds. Our Lord teaches us that when we minister to our brother or sister, we really minister to Him. This brings us righteousness and life eternal.

Verses

When the Judge of all sitteth to judge the earth,
Come now! Mayest Thou judge me worthy of Thy voice!

THE EXAPOSTEILARIA & THEOTOKION FOR SUNDAY OF LAST JUDGMENT

O Lord, as I now bring to mind the dreadful day of judgment and of Thy glory past all speech, I quake in all my members, and sorely trembling, I cry out: When Thou shalt come in glory on earth to judge all things, O Christ, O God, rescue me also, wretch that I am, out of every punishment, pain, and torment, and deem me worthy then to stand at Thy right hand, O Master.

Behold, the day foretold doth come, the day of God Omnipotent; and who shall bear the great terror of His dread coming and presence? For then shall be the day of wrath, the oven set ablaze with fire, that day the Judge Himself doth sit and then to each recompenseth as what he did here deserveth.

I tremble sore considering that hour of searching inquiry and of the terrible coming of the benevolent Master; and being downcast, I cry out: Do Thou, O my most righteous Judge and only greatly merciful, kindly receive me repenting through Thy pure Mother’s entreaties.

THE SECOND EOTHINON EXAPOSTEILARION IN TONE TWO

Seeing the stone was rolled away, the wise myrrh-bearing women rejoiced with great exceeding joy; for they beheld a young man within the sepulcher seated who gave to them the tidings: Lo, Christ is risen from the dead; go and tell His disciples and Peter too. To the Mount in Galilee go to meet Him; for there, as He foretold His friends, ye shall again behold Him.

THE EPISTLE

The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (8:8—9:2)

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care, lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you—a man of knowledge—at table in an idol’s temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother’s falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (25:31—46)

The Lord said, “When the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and He will place the sheep at His right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at His right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and feed Thee, or thirsty and give Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger and welcome Thee, or naked and clothe Thee? And when did we see Thee sick or in prison and visit Thee?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ Then He will say to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to Thee?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me.’ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE TWO

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hades with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

KONTAKION FOR SUNDAY OF LAST JUDGMENT IN TONE ONE

When Thou comest, O God, to earth with glory, and all creatures tremble before Thee, and the river of fire floweth before the Altar, and the books are opened and sins revealed, deliver me then from that unquenchable fire, and make me worthy to stand at Thy right hand, O righteous Judge.

OIKOS FOR SUNDAY OF LAST JUDGMENT

O Lord supreme in love, as I think upon Thy fearful judgment seat and the day of Judgment, I tremble and am full of fear, for I am accused by my own conscience. When Thou sittest on Thy throne and bringest all to trial, none will be able then to deny his sins, for the truth will accuse him and terror will constrain him. The flames of Gehenna will roar and the sinners will gnash their teeth. Therefore, have mercy upon me before the end, and spare me, O righteous Judge.

WELCOME TO VISITORS

If you are visiting with us today, we are glad you joined with us in prayer today. Please leave your email address with Fr. Methodios if you would like to receive this bulletin and the services. If you are interested in studying the Orthodox faith systematically, please come to the catechumen classes, and speak to Fr. Methodios at 512-632-8188, or contact him at methodios102@yahoo.com.

REGULAR SERVICES

WEDNESDAY (7:00 p.m.) — Paraklesis
SATURDAY (6:00 p.m.) — Great Vespers
SUNDAY (9:00 a.m.) — Orthros
(10:00 a.m.) — Divine Liturgy
Confessions by appointment — contact the Pastor.

FASTING THIS WEEK: CHEESEFARE WEEK

Meatfare is today and is the last day to eat meat until PASCHA. This coming week is Cheesefare week and cheese, dairy, eggs, wine, and oil are permitted everyday.

CATECHUMEN CLASS & BOOK STUDY

Catechism class will meet March 16, during social hour. Classes will also be streamed on Zoom, Meeting ID 303 479 4823; Passcode 878497, and be available on the parish website. The book study will be Wednesday, February 26. We will begin reading, *Saint Paul the Pharisee*, by Fr. Stephen DeYoung, in the hall and on Zoom. Zoom Meeting ID 303 479 4823; Passcode 878497.

CALLING ALL PARENTS

A meeting will be held today, Sunday, February 23, during social hour regarding “church school,” including ages to be taught, age divisions, meeting times, and teachers.

LENTEN CALENDAR

The calendar on our website, stthomasorthodoxchurch.org, has been updated through Pascha, April 20. Weekday services during Great Lent are unique to those days and are not in use during other parts of the year.

Sunday, March 2, Forgiveness Vespers will be at the end of the Liturgy
Monday, March 3, 7:00 pm, Great Compline with first part of the Great Canon
Tuesday, March 4, 7:00 pm, Great Compline with second part of the Great Canon
Wednesday, March 5, 7:00 pm, Presanctified Liturgy
Thursday, March 6, 7:00 pm, Great Compline with fourth part of the Great Canon
Friday, March 7, 7:00 pm, Little Compline with Akathist Canon

FASTING

Fasting, as traditionally practiced in the Church, has always been difficult and has always involved hardship. Many of our contemporaries are willing to fast for reasons of health or beauty, or in order to lose weight; cannot we Christians do as much for the sake of the heavenly Kingdom? Why should the self-denial gladly accepted by previous generations of Orthodox prove such an intolerable burden to their successors today? . . . The primary aim of fasting is to make us conscious of our dependence upon God. If practiced seriously, the Lenten abstinence from food involves a considerable measure of real hunger, and also a feeling of tiredness and physical exhaustion. The purpose of this is to lead us in turn to a sense of inward brokenness and contrition; to make us appreciate Christ’s words, ‘Without me you can do nothing.’ If we always take our fill of food, we easily grow overconfident in our own abilities, acquiring a false sense of self-sufficiency. —*The True Nature of Fasting*, in *The Lenten Triodion*, Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, faber and faber, 1977, p. 15—16.