



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

**ST. JOHN CLIMACUS
AUTHOR OF
"THE LADDER"**

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF
GREAT LENT**

Sunday, March 30, 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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THE SEVENTH EOTHINON GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint John (20:1—10).

On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid Him.” Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the Scripture, that Jesus must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

THE SYNAXARION

On this Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, we make remembrance of our godly father, John, the author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (or Climacus). The celebration of his feast on this day arose from the custom prevalent in the honorable monasteries of starting Great Lent with the reading of his lessons. John describes the method of elevating the soul to God as ascending a ladder. He teaches those who seek salvation how to lay a firm foundation for struggles, how to detect and fight every passion, how to avoid demonic snares, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. John of the Ladder came to Mount Sinai at age 16 and remained there, first as a novice under obedience, then as a recluse, and finally as abbot until his eightieth year. One time, his disciple, Moses, fell asleep under the shade of a large stone. John, in prayer in his cell, saw that his disciple was in danger and prayed to God for him. Later, when Moses returned, he fell on his knees and gave thanks to his spiritual father for saving him from certain death. He related how, in a dream, he heard John calling him and he jumped up and, at that moment, the stone tumbled. Had he not jumped, the stone would have crushed him. John Climacus died on March 30, 606.

Verses

John, dead in the flesh and also living,
liveth eternally, even though appearing dead and without breath.
Leaving letters, a ladder for the journey upwards,
he showeth forth his pursuit of the journey upwards.
On the thirtieth John departed rejoicing.

THE SEVENTH EOTHINON EXAPOSTEILARION IN TONE TWO

Alas, they took the Lord away; as soon as Mary said this, then Simon Peter ran in haste to the tomb with that other initiate loved by Jesus; and when they both came running, they found the linen clothes within set apart from the napkin once on His head, each abandoned, cast off, and lying sep’rate. And so again they held their peace, until they had beheld Christ.

EXAPOSTEILARION FOR ST. JOHN CLIMACUS IN TONE TWO

The joy and comfort of the world thou didst reject as wearisome and with strict fasting didst wither the flesh, while fully renewing thy strength of soul, O righteous John, and thou becamest very rich in glory great and heavenly; hence never cease interceding for us, O far-famed ascetic.

THE EPISTLE

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (6:13—20)

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.” And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For people indeed swear by what is greater, and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. So when God, being minded to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, He interposed it with an oath, that by two immutable things—in which it is impossible for God to lie—we might have a strong consolation, we, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before us; a hope, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entering into “that which is within the veil,” where Jesus entered as a Forerunner on our behalf, having become a High Priest “forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark (9:17—31)

At that time, a man came to Jesus, kneeling down and saying unto him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked Thy Disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” And Jesus answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to Me.” And they brought the boy to Him; and when the spirit saw Jesus, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, “How long has he had this?” And he said, “From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if Thou canst do anything, have pity on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again.” And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when Jesus had entered the house, His Disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” And Jesus said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.” They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And Jesus would not have anyone know it; for He was teaching His Disciples, saying to them, “The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and after He is killed, He will rise on the third day.”

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SEVEN

Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS IN TONE EIGHT

The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundredfold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father John Climacus, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

KONTAKION OF THE ANNUNCIATION IN TONE EIGHT

To thee our captain, Queen of War, the battle trophies won, thy people rescued by thine aid from peril, dedicate as our offering of thanksgiving, O Theotokos, as thou has might which none by war can overcome, from all forms of danger hast thou delivered me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O virgin unwedded bride.

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 FOR GREAT LENT

Abstain from meat, fish, dairy, cheese, wine and oil. Wine and oil are allowed on Saturday and Sunday. Any prior dispensations are still in effect.

CATECHUMEN CLASS & BOOK STUDY

Catechism class will meet April 6, 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 is on hold until after PASCHA. We are reading, *Saint Paul the Pharisee*, by Fr. Stephen DeYoung, in the hall and on Zoom. Zoom Meeting ID 303 479 4823; Passcode 878497.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School classes will be on the 2nd and 4th Sundays during social hour. There will be three age groups — 3 to 6, 7 to 11, and 12 and up.

LENTEN CALENDAR

Our website calendar, stthomasorthodoxchurch.org, has been updated through Pascha, April 20.

Monday, March 31, 7:00 pm, Great Compline

Wednesday, April 2, 7:00 pm, Great Canon with Life of Mary of Egypt

Friday, April 4, 7:00 pm, Little Compline with Akathist Canon (final one)

FLOWERS FOR HOLY FRIDAY

Contributions for flowers to decorate the Tomb of Christ on Great Friday are being collected. Note “flowers” on your contribution. Kh. Dannielle will be ordering the flowers soon.

CLIMBING THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

We must not be impatient or hasty, for the climb is perilous. There is always a danger in seeking what is beyond our immediate reach. The famous icon of the Ladder of Divine Ascent clearly illustrates this—depicting monks falling from the heights into the abyss. Complacency and self-certainty are the most dangerous delusions we encounter in the spiritual life, and they are particularly acute for the most devout Christians. We would also do well to remember that spiritual perfection cannot be attained even by the saints. For dispassion is an uncompleted perfection of the perfect, while the last step of the Ladder, which is love, is an eternal step that we will never reach the end of, neither in this life nor in the world to come: Love has no boundary, and both in the present and in the future age we will never cease to progress in it, as we add light to light. If the spiritual battle seems hopeless and the struggle too much for you, do not be disheartened and do not give up. Our progress in virtue can often seem less like a ladder of ascent and more like a game of chutes and ladders. It would be wrong and a misunderstanding that those who fail to reach the heights of spiritual perfection in this life are doomed. But all can be saved and can be reconciled to God. — *Thirty Steps to Heaven*, Vassilios Papavassiliou, Ancient Faith Publishing, 2013, p. 14-15.