



Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

Schedule This Week

Sunday, April 23

- 10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School
- 1:00 pm St Alexander Nevsky Cemetery
- 3:00 pm Mt Calvary Cemetery

Tuesday, April 25

- 9:00 am Daily Matins
- 9:30 am to Noon Office Hours

Thursday, April 27

No Matins or Office Hours today

Saturday, April 29

- 4:00 pm Community Food Pantry
- 4:30 pm Confessions
- 5:00 pm Great Vespers/Cathedral Vigil
- 6:00 pm Parish Social Night

Sunday, April 30

- 10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Rector
Deacon Luke Loboda, Attached
Deacon John Skowron, Attached

Rdr James Wargo and Danielle Bartko, Choir Dirs

Antipascha: St Thomas Sunday

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org April 23, 2023

Announcements

➤ We are in great need of **coffee hour hosts**. Can you help? You can sign up either downstairs on the chart or to go <https://shorturl.at/gmsw8> and sign up. We need you!

➤ Fr Thomas will be out of town **this Wednesday and Thursday** for a meeting with the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America. For any issues, please contact him at frthomas@orthodoxpittsburgh.org. There will be no Bible Study on Wednesday or Matins/Office Hours on Thursday.

➤ **Pro-Life Ministry Drive:** The mom and baby gift bags are due. Please see Matushka Joni or Mary Hoffman with your fulfilled bags. Thank you for your generosity!

Antipascha is a Greek word meaning "instead of Pascha." As St. John Chrysostom points out, "It is always Pascha" (Homily 5, "On First Timothy"); that is, every Sunday Divine Liturgy has the same power, grace, and gifts as the Feast of Pascha itself. Therefore the Sunday (and every Sunday) after the Feast of feasts has the same place within Orthodox faith and practice as Pascha – it is **Antipascha**.

Pascha is the feast of our Lord's Resurrection from the dead which occurred on the first day of the week, which we call Sunday. Though Divine Liturgy with Holy Communion can be served any day of the week, and often is, the Orthodox invariably serve Divine Liturgy on Sunday, the Day of Resurrection. "Even if all of the other days of the week belong to the Lord, being His creations, none of them, however, bear His Name, for only that one and eighth day was worthy to be named the Lord's Day (Gk., *Kyriake*) after the Lord (see 1 Cor. 16:2 & Rev. 1:10). First, because on Sunday, and no other day, the Lord's resurrection occurred. Second, because that day, apart from all of the other days is especially consecrated to the Lord" (St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite, "Concerning the Prerogatives of Sunday"). Russian is more explicit: the first day of the week (Sunday) is called *Voskresenie* (lit., Resurrection-day).

As important as the Feast of Pascha is and has become in Orthodox popular practice, **Antipascha** reiterates the essential fact that each and every Sunday Divine Liturgy is just as important in God's plan of salvation for His people. Christ's Resurrection communicated to the baptized faithful in His very Body and Blood is the defining reality of the Christian Church with its members, the truth for which we are always preparing to receive worthily and from which we are always striving to live worthily.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* John Mahalchak (son), *Home:* (none). *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka.

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **John Mahalchak family** for the health of family, friends, John, Cheryl, Gregory, Cindy, Daniel, and Mary. From **Alexandria Tirpak** for the newly departed servant, Daniel, and for Amelia, Michael, and Ann; for the health of my family and Violet; special intentions. From the **Pravlochaks** for the health of brother, David, granddaughter, Christina & child to be born, and Doris Wasilko.

Thank You

➤ to our **April** donor Lindy Hamilton for all categories for donating all categories (Bulletin \$60, Holy Bread \$50, Communion Wine \$40, Altar Candles \$50, Incense \$10).

This Week in Church School

Today's Lesson: Fall of Constantinople, Persecution, St. Sergius

Questions to ask/review:

- When did the city of Constantinople fall?
- Who conquered the city? How?
- How long had the Byzantine empire lasted since the fall of Rome? (about 1000 years)
- How did this event affect the Church? (many Orthodox Christians of the East lived under Islamic rule and were persecuted)
- How would life be different for a Christian under Islamic rule?
- What is Constantinople called today? What country is it in? (Istanbul, Turkey)

Suggested Activities at Home:

Use internet sources such as Google Earth to explore modern day Istanbul. Look for images of the Hagia Sophia.

Prayer: Lord, bring freedom to Your people still suffering in Your great City of Constantine.



St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, April 23

Troparion of the Sunday Tone 7

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.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion of the Sunday Tone 8

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 (Psalm 147) Tone 3

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

Epistle of the Sunday (Acts 5:12-20)

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."

Gospel of the Sunday (John 20:19-31)

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.

Hymn to the Theotokos of the Feast

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, O 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 of the Sunday

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion.

Millions of people today think and speak essentially like Thomas, and assume that this is the only correct approach worthy of any thinking person. "Unless I see, I will not believe..." In our contemporary speech isn't this the "scientific approach?" But Christ says: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." This means that there is, and was, another approach, another standard, another possibility. True, others may say, but that approach is naïve and not rational; it's unscientific; it's for people who are backward; and since I'm a person of the modern world, "Unless I see, I will not believe."

We live in a world of great oversimplification and therefore spiritual poverty. "Scientific" or "Unscientific." People use words like these all the

time as if they were self-evident and self-explanatory, and they use them because everyone else also uses them, without reflection, without debate. In fact, they themselves believe these reductions blindly and simplistically, and so any other approach appears to them as neither serious nor worthy of attention. The question is already decided. But is that really true? I just said that we live in a world of great spiritual poverty. And indeed, if the end result of humanity's interminable development boils down to this pronouncement, "I won't believe it till I see it"; if the human race looks upon this as the height of wisdom and reason's greatest victory, then our world truly is poor, superficial, and most all, incredibly boring. If I only know what I see, touch, measure and analyze, then how little I really know! The whole world of the human spirit falls by the wayside, all the intuition and profound knowledge that flow not from "I see" or "I touch," but from "I think" and, most importantly, "I contemplate."

What falls away is that realm of knowledge which for centuries was rooted not in external, observable experience, but in another human faculty, an amazing and perhaps inexplicable ability that sets human beings apart from everything else and makes them truly unique. Even robots, machines and computers can now touch, handle and manipulate objects; they can make accurate observations, and even make predictions. We know that they actually perform better than human beings in measuring, comparing, making exact observations flawlessly; they are more accurate, more "scientific." But here is what no robot, under any circumstances, will ever be able to do: to be filled with wonder, to be awed, to have feelings, to be moved by tenderness, to rejoice, to see what can't be seen by measurement or analysis of any kind. No robot will hear those unheard sounds that give birth to music and poetry; no robot will ever cry, or trust. But without all this doesn't our world become colorless, boring and, I would say, unnecessary? Oh yes, planes and spaceships will fly ever further and faster. But where to and what for? Oh yes, laboratories will conduct their analyses with ever increasing accuracy. But to what end? "For the good of humanity," I'm told. I understand, so this means that one day we will have a healthy, well fed, self-satisfied human being walking about, who will be totally blind, totally deaf and totally unaware of his deafness and blindness.

-Fr Alexander Schmemmann