

Thomas 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, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He shewed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the LORD. 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: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the LORD. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. 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, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My LORD and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.. (KJV)

Hristos Voskrese! Vaistinu Voskrese!

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Hristos a inviat! Adevarat a inviat!

The Lord Jesus Christ convinced the Holy Apostle Thomas of His Resurrection when He invited Thomas to put forth his finger and hand and touch Him. The Holy Apostle Thomas proclaimed his belief with the words “ My Lord and my God!”

The Church continues with the joy of the Resurrection at this time and until the Feast of the Ascension. The Lord Jesus Christ’s Resurrection is all consuming for the believing heart, mind and soul.

The serious believer’s life is founded in and guided by the Resurrection. Each celebration of Pascha renews, deepens and strengthens belief in the Resurrection.

Belief in the Resurrection is the guiding light through the darkest moments of life. Belief in the Resurrection takes the mind beyond the earthly grave to the unlimited joy of eternal life.

Jesus’ Resurrection established the dominance of hope in earthly life and makes visions of overcoming adversity possible. In the Matins of Pascha we find the verse that embeds hope in the human heart, mind and soul.

The verse of hope in Paschal Matins states: “How sweet is Thy voice O Christ! For Thou hast faithfully promised to be with us to the end of the world.

Having this as our anchor of hope, we the faithful rejoice.” (The Paschal Service, DRE OCA. 1977 p.38)

The finite mind is challenged and expands to experience the joy of the Resurrection. Believers immersed in Jesus Christ sense the presence and joy of the Risen Lord.

God's Holy Church abounds with the celebration of the Feast each day until the Leave-taking of Pascha. Believers reorient their lives after having experienced and celebrated the Resurrection.

The Resurrection is celebrated in the present. The Paschal greeting, "Christ is Risen!" is shared by believers until the Leave-taking of Pascha and confirms the Resurrection.

The Paschal greeting reaches into the depths of the heart, mind and soul. The Resurrection transforms and make believers "new" in Christ. The world is renewed with the celebration of Pascha.

The Holy Apostle Thomas' experience with Jesus serves as further verification of the Resurrection. The Holy Scriptures document Jesus' various appearances as the Risen Lord.

The current Gospel of St. John proclaims the value of the written word as a basis for believing Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and believing we might have life through his name. (Jn.20:31)

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ merits our deepest thoughts throughout the remaining days of earthly life. Jesus conquered death and proved there is more to life than earthly death.

Jesus' triumph over death gives believers reason to think deeply about the way to live earthly life. The hope of eternal life is very real in the Risen Christ. The Resurrection gives credence to the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures.

Jesus said: "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." (Mt.7:14) Believers are blessed with the opportunity to celebrate the Resurrection in God's Holy Church.

Wise believers cherish and are grateful to the Risen Lord for the opportunity to celebrate Pascha in peace and safety. Today is a day to invest in prayers for peace in parts of the world where hardship, conflict and wars exist.

Today is a day to pray for peace in this land and in all lands where peace is not existent. The Risen Lord has demonstrated He can accomplish what was considered impossible when He triumphed over death. Bringing peace is possible.

The Risen Jesus greeted His disciples with the words: "Peace be unto you!" We have the opportunity to be ambassadors and promoters of peace in the name of the Risen Lord. Let us make the effort! Hristos Voskrese! Christ is Risen!

Thomas Sunday. Venerable John, Disciple of St. Gregory Decapolis.

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