



# Weekly Bulletin

## St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County for over 45 Years

*Father Andrew Clements*, Pastor

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<b>Sunday</b>	<b>May 5</b>	<i>2nd Sunday of Pascha / Tone 1 / St Thomas Sunday</i>
		9:00 am Church School
		10:00 am Divine Liturgy      Coffee Hour
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>May 11</b>	<i>SS Cyril &amp; Methodius</i>
		5:30 pm Great Vespers
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>May 12</b>	<i>3rd Sunday of Pascha / Tone 2 / The Myrrhbearing Women</i>
		Readings: Acts 6:1-7      Mark 15:43-16:8
		9:00 am Church School
		10:00 am Divine Liturgy / Prayers for Mothers / Coffee Hour
		1:00 pm Blessing of Graves

### ATTENDANCE / STEWARDSHIP / Apr 28

Operating	\$4,358.00
OCA Assessments	28.00
Uganda Children	65.00
Charities	5.00
Icons	35.00
Maintenance	10.00
Flowers	10.00
Alms	200.00
Project Mexico	100.00

### YOUR HELP PLEASE

Please email Fr Andrew with the names of any who will be graduating from High School, College or any post High School Program.

### PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Perry (Capitan), Sbdcn Leonard, John (Adam's nephew), Ted Geletka, Nina Stehnach (Fr's frnds), Julian, John Clements, Sarah Crivella, Nancy, (Ruth B's frnd), Joella (Lu D's daughter), suffering Christians in Ukraine and the Middle East.

**Birthdays:** Alec Moore (5/5), Brian Furman, David Schroeder (5/8), Dan Rausch (5/9), George LeMaster, Rosemary Bagley (5/11).

**Newborns:** Luka (Bobby & Juliana), Mira (David & Maria).

**Expecting:** Tom & Stephanie.

**Our Seminarian:** Deacon Brian Crivella & Family.

**Our Catechumens:** Mike Brzozowski, Ken Hockenberry.

*Though the doors were locked, Jesus suddenly appeared to the disciples. He calmed their fears and gave them peace. Then He said to Thomas: "Why do you not believe that I am risen from the dead? Bring your hand here! Thrust it into my side and see! Your doubt will teach my Passion and Resurrection to all, and everyone will join your shout: "Glory to You, my Lord and my God!"*

— Vesper Hymn of St Thomas —

# Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

# Blessed Doubt

by Dcn George Shumaik

It is remarkable that at the Divine Liturgy of the Feast of Feasts, Pascha, the Gospel lesson does not speak about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is read comes from the first chapter of the Gospel of John known as the Prologue. It starts with “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”.

While there are numerous instances within the New Testament where Jesus is called the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Messiah, the Christ, only twice is He declared to be God – this is the first. The Gospel narrative at the Vespers of Great and Holy Monday comes only hours after the first joyous proclamation of Christ is Risen!

We are sobered by the introduction of the haunting issue of doubt. Drawn again from the Gospel of John, the tardy Apostle Thomas announces, “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!” (John 20:25)

Even in the secular world, “Doubting Thomas”, has become part of our lexicon to this day to describe uncertainty or skepticism.

In the chronology of the entire 20th chapter of John, this account follows Mary Magdalene’s discovery of the empty tomb and the confirmation by Peter and John who had run to see for themselves. It is the first day of the week (Sunday). In the evening, the disciples are huddled in a closed room with the doors shut “for fear of the Jews”. In short, they are hiding. Jesus physically comes into their midst bearing the wounds of His crucifixion. We are told Thomas was not present, but no explanation is given for his absence. When he arrives, he is given the good news by the brethren followed by his expression of doubt and desire to see for himself. He has to wait until the eighth day (the following Sunday in the liturgical life of the Church) to complete the story. Thomas is then present and does touch the physical wounds of Jesus proclaiming, “My Lord and my God!” This is the second time within the scriptures Jesus is declared as God.

Christ blesses the affirmation of Thomas and then offers this comforting promise to us, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Indeed, we have not seen Christ as Thomas did and therefore fall

subject to doubt. This then begs the question of whether doubt particularly among those that profess belief is a sin? If we turn back to scripture, the theme of doubt can be found “everywhere”.

Jesus asks the father of the epileptic child if he believes that He can heal the boy. The reply is honest and heartfelt “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24) When Peter loses sight of the Lord while walking on the water, his fear causes him to sink. “Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’ (Matt 14:31) Peter denies the Lord three times because he was afraid. All of the disciples are hiding in the upper room because they were afraid. The last verses of the Gospel of Matthew include, “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.” (Matt 28:16-17)

Even the English word, doubt, has its root in an Old French word, *doter*, that means to dread, fear or be afraid. To be fearful is part of the human condition, part of the plethora of emotions that we all deal with daily. In and of itself, there is nothing sinful in experiencing doubt. It is what we do with it in relationship to our faith that matters.

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware in his book, *The Orthodox Way*, writes - “Yet doubt does not in itself signify lack of faith. It may mean the opposite—that our faith is alive and growing. For faith implies not complacency but taking risks, not shutting ourselves off from the unknown but advancing boldly to meet it. Here an Orthodox Christian may readily make his own the words of Bishop J.A.T. Robinson: ‘The act of faith is a constant dialogue with doubt.’ As Thomas Merton rightly says, ‘Faith is a principle of questioning and struggle before it becomes a principle of certitude and peace.’”

Saint John reminds us also that, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear...” (1: John 4:18) The only perfect love that we can know is that of God for us. Having touched Christ in the Sacraments, let us then also be perfected by the Blessed Doubt of the Apostle Thomas in proclaiming “my Lord and my God!”

Amen.