



JAMES THE APOSTLE (FEAST DAY APRIL 30)

The Holy Apostle James, the son of Zebedee, was the brother of St. John the Theologian, and one of the Twelve Apostles. Both he and his brother were called to be apostles by Christ. In Mark 3:17, one can find Christ referring to the brothers as the “Sons of Thunder” because of their great abilities as preachers and theologians. It was this James, alongside John and Peter, who was invited by Christ to witness the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the Lord’s Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Following Pentecost (the Descent of the Holy Spirit), St. James travelled to and preached in Spain and other nations, but ultimately returned to Jerusalem. Much like thunder, St. James was incredibly bold and vibrant when he preached Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. In addition, he would often denounce the Pharisees and the scribes with the words of Holy Scripture, reproaching them for their malice of heart and unbelief. The Jews were incapable of withstanding St. James and so they decided to hire a magician known as Hermogenes. It was their intention that Hermogenes would contest and refute St. James’ arguments which proclaimed Christ was the promised Messiah. The hired sorcerer decided to bring along his very own disciple, Philip, to contest St. James’ claims. However, after the truth was revealed to them by the apostle, both Hermogenes and Philip renounced their lifestyles as magicians, burned their books of magic, and accepted the holy sacrament of baptism, thus becoming followers of Christ. At this time, the Jews persuaded Herod Agrippa, King of Judea (40-44) , to arrest the Apostle James and sentence him to death (Acts 12:1-2). Despite the circumstances, St. James continued to preach and a false witness, known as Josiah, was struck by the saint’s courage. When they led the apostle forth to execution, Josiah fell at his feet and repented of his sins and asked forgiveness. The apostle embraced him, gave him a kiss and said, “Peace and forgiveness to you.” Then Josiah confessed his faith in Christ before everyone, and he was beheaded with St. James in the year 44 at Jerusalem. St. James was the first of the Twelve Apostles to die as a martyr.

Excerpt taken from oca.org

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THOMAS SUNDAY- APRIL 26, 2020



FROM THE HOLY FATHERS:

“Who can say that God, in His providence, did not wish here to make use of Thomas’ unbelief for the belief of many? In any case, two things have here been clearly shown: the terrible sickness of human nature, revealed in the stubborn unbelief of one of the apostles (who had innumerable reasons to believe), and God’s most abundant wisdom and love. In His purity and holiness, God does not use evil that good may come, nor make use of evil means to achieve good ends, but, in His wisdom and His love for mankind, He corrects our evil ways and turns them to good.” – St. Nikolai Velimirovic

THOMAS SUNDAY

Dismissal Hymn of the Feast

O Life, You rose from the sepulcher, even though the tomb was secured with a seal, O Christ God. Then, although the doors were shut, You came to Your Disciples, O Resurrection of all. Through them You renew a right spirit in us, according to Your great mercy.

Kontakion of Pascha

Though You went down into the tomb, O Immortal One, yet You brought down the dominion of Hades; and You rose as the victor, O Christ our God; and You called out 'Rejoice' to the Myrrh-bearing women, and gave peace to Your apostles, O Lord who to the fallen grant resurrection.

DOUBTING THOMAS:

More often than not, St. Thomas is branded as being doubtful, skeptical and close-minded. However, even in his own ignorance, St. Thomas sought out the Truth that the other disciples proclaimed because he had the desire to grow as a follower of Christ. He loved Christ, but he lived in fear and uncertainty. Christ knew Thomas needed a personal experience in order to believe, and so He not only appeared to him yet again, but invited him to touch His side in order to stop doubting and to begin believing. Christ transformed Thomas' mindset, just as He would do with many saints of the Church in the following years. Rather than remaining doubtful or unwilling to change, the saint was filled with awe and gratitude. It's important to remember that St. Thomas was neither the first nor will he be the last Christian to ever experience doubts, but in God's generosity and abundant love for His children, we are repentant, we are transformed and we are able to give thanks to Him. The story of Doubting Thomas can be used in one of two ways: 1) a Christian may compare himself to Thomas and exclaim how he would never doubt the Lord as Thomas did, or 2) we will all stumble and fall, but with Christ we can always rise up again.

Κυριακή τοῦ Θωμά

Ἀπολυτίκιον τῆς ἑορτῆς:

Ἐσφραγισμένου τοῦ μνήματος, ἡ Ζωὴ ἐκ τάφου ἀνέτειλας Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, καὶ τῶν θυρῶν κεκλεισμένων, τοῖς Μαθηταῖς ἐπέστης, ἡ πάντων ἀνάστασις· Πνεῦμα εὐθὲς δι' αὐτῶν ἐγκαινίζων ἡμῖν, κατὰ τὸ μέγα σου ἔλεος.

Κοντάκιον τοῦ Πάσχα:

Εἰ καὶ ἐν τάφῳ κατῆλθες Ἀθάνατε, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ᾄδου καθεῖλες τὴν δύναμιν· καὶ ἀνέστης ὡς νικητής, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, γυναιξὶ Μυροφόροις φθελγζάμενος, Χαίρετε, καὶ τοῖς σοῖς Ἀποστόλοις εἰρήνην δωρούμενος, ὁ τοῖς πεσοῦσι παρέχων ἀνάστασιν.

Join us for a livestream of each service by liking our Facebook page at *Sts. Constantine & Helen, Reading.*

Thank you to everyone who filled out the membership update forms that were sent out! We encourage everyone who did not, to please mail the completed forms at your earliest convenience and to include your baptismal names.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Greek school** is cancelled until further notice.
- All **youth events** are cancelled until further notice.

GROCERY CARDS:

If anyone would like to order gift cards to Giant, Redner's or Weis supermarkets you may send a check with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the home of Tony Phyrillas and he will mail the gift cards back to you.

Tony Phyrillas
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WEEKLY CALENDAR

Thomas Sunday, April 26th

8:30 AM: Orthros
9:45 AM: Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Acts 5:12-20
Gospel: John 20: 19-31

Monday, April 27th

St. Symeon the Holy Martyr & Euvlogios the Innkeeper

Tuesday, April 28th

9 Monk Martyrs of Cyzikos & Memnon the Wonderworker
9 AM: Orthros
6 PM: Website Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 29th

Jason & Sosipater of the 70 Martyr Cercyra
5 PM: Paraklesis
7 PM: "Our Life in Christ"

Thursday, April 30th

St. James the Apostle & Argyra the New Martyr
8:30 AM: Orthros
9:45 AM: Divine Liturgy
7 PM: Our P.A.R.T.

Friday, May 1st

Jeremiah the Prophet, Maria of Fournas, & Mirabella of Crete
4 PM: Vespers

Saturday, May 2nd

Removal of Relic of Athanasios, Hesperos & Zoe the Righteous
6 PM: Great Vespers

Sunday of Myrrh Bearing Women, May 3rd

Peter the Wonderworker, Timothy & Mavra the Martyrs
8:30 AM: Orthros
9:45 AM: Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Acts 6:1-7
Gospel: Mark 15:43-47 & 16:1-8