

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley
a Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys, California; 91406 **stmichaelvannuys.org**

His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York

and Metropolitan of all North America

www.antiochian.org

Archpriest Timothy Baclig, Pastor

pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org

Rev. Fr. Minas Sarchizian, Assisting Priest

[f.atherminas@gmail.com](mailto:fatherminas@gmail.com)

Rev. Deacon Andrew Monsue

armcopper@att.net

Subdeacon Richard Tamoush

richard@aaaflag.com

Subdeacon Magued Wassef

wassefm@msn.com

Subdeacon Richard Ajalat, Pastoral Assistant

rajalat@stmichaelvannuys.com

Parish Council Chair - Michael Mitchell

mgmitchell3@gmail.com

Council Vice-Chair - Connie Abdun-Nur Barilla

cmatthews46@yahoo.com

Council Secretary - Eric Nelson

ericnelson2520@sbcglobal.net

Council Treasurer - Kris Thabit

kthabit66@hotmail.com

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of No. America (AOCWNA)

Chapter President - Charmaine Darmour

cdarmour@sbcglobal.net

Church Comptroller - Mary Ann Coury

maryanncoury@aol.com

Choir Director - Art Danks

artdanks1@yahoo.com

Church School Director - Lila Coudsy

lcoudsy@aol.com

Youth Director - Cooper Rowe

crowe31@gmail.com

Young Adult Director - Richard Ajalat

rajalat@stmichaelvannuys.org

Faithtree Resources Exec. Director - Michelle Moujaes

michelle@faithtree.org

Project Manager - Michael J. Malouf

michael@jacksonia.com

Stewardship Chair - Richard Tamoush

richard@AAAFLAG.COM

Capital Funds Campaign Chair - Ron Zraick

ronaldzraick@gmail.com

Property Management Chair - Eric Nelson

ericnelson2520@sbcglobal.net

Bookstore Manager - Bobbi Monsue

bobbi_monsue@att.net

50th Anniversary & Golf Classic Co-Chair - Don Meena donmeena@sbcglobal.net

Golf Classic Co- Chair - Fred Milkie

milkief@aol.com

Webmaster - Dan Raju

dan.raju16@hotmail.com

Coffee Hour Coordinator - Cindy Tamoush

famtam5@socal.rr.com

Head Usher - Ramez Hage

jeddo.ramez@gmail.com

New Sunday (Anti-Pascha)

Commemoration of the Act of Thomas the Apostle, Called "The Twin"

Great-Martyr Irene of Thessalonica; Venerable Euthymios, Bishop of Maditos in Thrace

Sunday, May 05, 2019

Apolytikion for Thomas Sunday (Tone 7)

While the tomb was sealed, Thou didst shine forth from it, O Light. While the doors were closed, Thou didst come in to Thy Disciples, O Christ God, Resurrection of all, renewing in us through them an upright spirit, according to the greatness of Thy mercy.

Kontakion of Pascha (Tone 8)

O Immortal One, when Thou didst descend into the tomb, Thou didst destroy the power of Hades; and Thou didst rise victorious, O Christ God. Thou hast said to the ointmentbearing women: Rejoice! And Thou gavest peace to Thy Disciples, O Bestower of Resurrection to those Who had fallen.

Daily Readings

THE EPISTLE

Great is the Lord, and great is His power. Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

The Reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles (5:12-20)

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the Apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested 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 and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

THE GOSPEL (for Thomas Sunday)

The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to St. John (20:19-31)

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the Disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them 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. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I 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; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other Disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe." Eight days later, His Disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the 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.

A Note Regarding Holy Communion

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical Faith, *only those* who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and recent Confession may participate in Holy Communion. (We invite all, however, to partake of the blessed bread which is distributed at the dismissal.) Please see the Pastor for inquiries on how to become a member.

OFFERINGS

The Coffee hour is being hosted this morning by Amy & Alejandro Castillo with prayers for their family.

A special offerings and requests for prayer are being made . . .

for the speedy recovery and continued health of Violet Kavan.

for the speedy recovery and continued health of Anton & Katie Turk.

remembering Louis Aboud, Sr. on the 100th anniversary of his birth
(May 19) and Jeannette Aboud on her birthday (May 5th).
Memory eternal.

Included in our prayers throughout the month of May are those celebrating their birthday: Riad Nasser (5/2), Maria Safady (5/2), Antonio Tortolano (5/2), Christian Chala (5/3), Natalia Zait (5/4), Michael Safady (5/4), Rafi Zait (5/5), George Yazbek (5/6), Ben Azzam (5/8), Buddy Andrews (5/9), Mervat Azzam (5/9), Robert Homsey (5/9), Don Saba (5/9), Christina Thabit (5/12), Jenna Scott (5/13), Ted Coudsy (5/15), Alexander Moujaes (5/16), Kris Thabit (5/16), Andrew Aparicio (5/18), David Soffa (5/18), Savannah Leilani Anne Gascou (5/20), Dillon Patrick O'Dea (5/20), Barbara Monsue (5/20), Evan Edward Waldman (5/22), Nicholas Horaney (5/25), Michelle Moujaes (5/24), Michael Meena (5/29), Lillian Meena (5/31), Kathryn Zraick (5/31); and those celebrating their wedding anniversary: Joseph & Paula Kence (5/2), Carl & Alice Andrews (5/6), Robert & DeAnne Abraham (5/8), Miriam & Elias Mankouche (5/8), Katherine & Hani Abughazaleh (5/14), Orit & Steven Srour (5/14), Robin & Robert Haddad (5/14), Rita & Stephen Ablahad (5/25), Abdalla & Beth Mallouk (5/25). May God grant them all many years!

Included in our prayers for the departed for the month of May are:

Kamel Zaki Wassef, +2 May, 1963

Albert Massad, +6 May, 1972

Frederick P. Piet, +31 May, 1973

Salim Sweis, +11 May, 1974

Vilma Anthoney, +20 May, 2004

George Nicholas, +30 May, 2004

Raisa Gallup, +6 May, 2005

Abla Hajj, +15 May, 2006

Salim K. Srouf, +17 May, 1975
Elizabeth Abraham, +5 May, 1978
Norman Lush, +3 May, 1978
George G. Abraham, +5 May, 1978
Mitchell Khouri, +1 May, 1980
Nicholas Azal, +25 May, 1983
Shamah Sweis, +26 May, 1985
Nadima May Toomey, +8 May, 1990
Elizabeth Hanna, +21 May 1990
Sandra H. Malouf, +7 May, 1993
Martha Jane Gorup, +18 May, 1993
V. Rev. James Meena, +15 May, 1995
Joseph Armelli, +19 May, 1995
Dr. George Nicola, +22 May, 1995
Nabeeha Andrews, +28 May, 1995
Farha Abughazaleh
Elias Abughazaleh
Zarina Chala, +10 May, 1998
Thamer Hatem, +10 May, 2001
Mary Kwiatkowski, +25 May, 2002
Jamil Haggat, +7 May, 2003
Lorraine Ghiz, +17 May, 2003
Naomi McCarron, +20 May, 2003
Olga Burton, +20 May, 2003
Avenel Wolfley, +26 May, 2003

Zaki Nessim Wassef, +8 May, 2007
Richard Bastron, +21 May, 2007
Donna Calendar, +9 May, 2008
Lena Bogdanoff, +15 May, 2008
Naseeb Michael Saliba, +22 May, 2008
Richard Leal, +8 May, 2009
Sue Schullander, +13 May, 2009
Leila Ann Khoury, +16 May, 2009
Bertha I. Petersen, +10 May, 2010
Christopher David, +31 May, 1990
Hiam Khouri, +16 May 2001
Mary Abdelahad, +19 May, 2011
Emily Raies Fadel, +24 May, 2011
William Fichtner, Sr., +28 May, 2011
Maurice Mina, +3 May, 2013
Raymond Azzam, +3 May, 2013
Marie Tohme, +1 May, 2015
Wade Abraham, +25 May, 2015
Rose Helen Sady, +26 May, 2015
Ayda Tarbouche, +5 May, 2016
Vera Bibi, +17 May, 2016
Peggy Payne, +13 May, 2017
Gina Schmidt, +12 May, 2017
Wajiha Ashley, +12 May, 2017
Vladimir Worotko, +16 May, 2017
Boulos Khalil Ababseh, +8 May, 2018

Memory Eternal!

Please phone the Church Office if there are any omissions or corrections to the above listing of names. Please bear in mind that some have chosen not to be included in our announcement. Please pardon any errors.

A Note Regarding Holy Communion

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical Faith, *only* those who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and recent Confession may participate in Holy Communion. (We invite all, however, to partake of the blessed bread which is distributed at the dismissal.) Please see the Pastor for inquiries on how to become a member.

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley

16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, California 91406-4622

His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

V. Rev. Timothy Baclig, Pastor
pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org

Church Telephone: 818/994-2313
www.stmichaelvannuys.org

April 28, 2019

Beloved in Christ,

With great joy we proclaim that Christ is risen! **المسيح قام! Χριστος ανέστη!**
Χριστος Воскресе! Cristo ha resucitado! Hristos a înviat! Ua ala hou 'o Kristo!
Truly, He is risen!

In the words of Saint John Chrysostom: "...the Savior's Death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it, has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive... It took a Body and it met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen..."

I want to express my sincere thanks for everyone's participation in helping to make our Paschal celebration this year triumphant. As we have heard in the Paschal proclamation: "...for lo, through the Cross, joy has come into all the world! Ever blessing the Lord let us sing His Resurrection! For in that He has endured the Cross, He has destroyed death by Death!

Celebrating comes with whole hearted preparation. The more the preparation, the greater the celebration. Our time together during Great Lent and Holy Week this Fiftieth year in the history of our parish has again been glorious. We pray that we will be able to celebrate the Feast in our new church sanctuary in the next year. Our ability to fulfill this task will be achieved as God wills through our dedication and commitment. I am truly thankful for those of you who have been faithful in fulfilling their pledge to our Capital Funds Campaign and all who have been regular contributors to our project. The many sacrifices of our founders and faithful parishioners through the years have thankfully helped us to begin a new era in the life of our parish. Our community

continues to grow and all of our ministries are involving many of our new members by offering their talents and skills in service. There are many opportunities for everyone to have a part in the many tasks ahead of us for the glory of God.

I trust that this has been a meaningful season of illumination for you and your family. May the joy of the Paschal Feast fill your life with all that God truly desires for us: those imperishable gifts that are truly not of this world.

Christ is risen!

Father Timothy Baelig
Pastor

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Food for the Hungry Collection - Last Call!

All Food for the Hungry collection boxes should now be turned in to the Church Office. Please write your name on your box or write a check for the total amount of your collection earmarked "FFHP" for credit on your Contribution Statement. One check from our parish will be sent to the Archdiocese for the collection. Thanking you in advance for your support.

Note to Coffee Hour hosts: coffee and paper goods will be provided each week.

Holy Bread Offering List

May 12 - open
May 19 - open
May 26 - The Azzam, Hallak,
Ababseh, Kaslem and Tannous families
Jun 02 - open
Jun 09 - open
Jun 16 - Pentecost

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

May 12 - open
May 19 - open
May 26 - The Azzam, Hallak
Ababseh, Kaslem and Tannous families
Jun 02 - open
Jun 09 - Church School
Jun 16 - open

**Please contact Fr. Timothy (818/219-3761; pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org) to sign-up to offer Holy Bread and
Cindy Tamoush at: (818-345-4363; famtam5@socal.rr.com) to sign-up for the Coffee Hour.**

Parish Council Dinner Meeting - postponed to June 17, 6:30 p.m.

Raies-Murr Educational Trust Scholarship

Only members, in good standing of St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church (Van Nuys) or St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral (Los Angeles) and who have been accepted to or are currently enrolled in a publicly supported (not private) institution of higher learning, including eligible publicly supported vocational, technical and trade schools, are eligible to apply for a Raies-Murr Scholarship. Applications can be obtained by e-mailing Mallory Murr at: <RaiesMurrScholarship@gmail.com>. The applications must be returned by July 8, 2019.

St. Michael 50th Anniversary Golf Classic - May 13

The St. Michael Golf Classic is our largest annual fundraiser and we need your help for its success. This year the Golf Classic is celebrating our parish's 50th Anniversary and will again take place at the Woodland Hills Country Club. The evening will be filled with fun and fellowship with friends. A barbecue dinner will be followed with raffles, auctions and awards for our golfers. How can you help?

1) consider a donation toward our Golf Ball Raffle. Each golf ball recipient will receive a prize equivalent to its purchase price of \$50. One of the golf balls will reward the winner a free trip Grand Prize! Donations of gift cards and cash are being received for the Golf Ball Raffle. Consider giving your unused or newly purchased Gift Cards or your donation to DeAnne Abraham at: <dmarieabe@aol.com> or 818-389-0065; 2) consider a donation toward our Chinese Auction Baskets. In years past, these baskets have consisted of a Money Tree, Disney gift items, including tickets to Disneyland, a wine basket, picnic basket, golf basket, sports basket, cooking basket, restaurant basket, religious basket, Starbucks basket, Trader Joe basket, and many others. Each basket must be at least \$75 in value with an itemized list of its contents. Please let Sean O'Dea know if you are able to make a donation by contacting him at: <guinnessodea@gmail.com> or 818-642-7278.

The following dialogue is said between the priest and the faithful at the end of the Liturgy:

Priest: Christ is risen!

People: Truly, He is risen! [repeated in various languages]

Al Maseeah qam! **Haq qan qam!** (*Arabic*)

Christos Anesti! **Alithos Anesti!** (*Greek*)

Kristos voskrese! **Voistinu voskrese!** (*Slavonic*)

Kristo esta ressusitado! **Verdaderamente ressusitado!** (*Spanish*)

Khristi ungal! **Vertet ungal!** (*Albanian*)

Le Christ est ressuscite! **En verite il est ressuscite** (*French*)

Kristos Inviat! **Adervaret inviat!** (*Romanian*)

Ua ala hou ‘o Kristo! **Ua ala ‘I ‘o no ‘oia!** (*Hawaiian*)

Christus is opgestaan! **Hij is waarlijk opgestaan!** (*Dutch*)

Kristus ist Auferstanden! **Sicherlich ist Auferstanden!** (*German*)

Khristus Zmartvikstau! **Zaiste Zmartvikstau!** (*Polish*)

Christos harjav i merelotz! **Orhniale harutjun Christosi!** (*Armenian*)

Kristos Tensiah! **Be-a-man Ten-si-a!** (*Tigrigna*)

Massih Miyayat! **Hatman Miyayat** (*Farsi*)

Kristo azukidde! **Kituufu azukidde** (*Luganda*)

Kristo samawa, yomi gaimashta! **Hontoni yomi gaimashta!** (*Japanese*)

Priest: Glory to His holy, third-day Resurrection!

People: We adore His holy, third-day Resurrection!

Priest: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by Death, and upon those in the tombs... **People: Bestowing life!**

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

NOTE: There is no fasting for the forty-day period:
from Easter to the Feast of the Ascension (June 6th)

Commemoration of The Myrrh-Bearing Women,
The Pious Joseph of Arimathea and the Righteous Nicodemus

Great Vespers – Saturday, May 11th, 5 p.m.

Orthros – Sunday, May 12th, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

The Epitaphios (*E-pee-TAH-fee-os*), which has been placed on the altar — representing the Tomb of Christ, will remain on the altar until the Feast of the Ascension (Thursday, June 6th). At that time, the image of Christ will be returned to the Cross. The image of the entombed Christ, however is a permanent part of the altar as the “tablecloth” (Antimension; *Anti-MEN-see-on*), resting under the Gospel Book. It is opened for the “anaphora” (time of the offering in the Liturgy), at the second part of the Divine Liturgy, when the bread and wine are placed on the altar for consecration. It is a cloth sign by the Metropolitan Archbishop and is the church’s credentials as a canonical Orthodox Church of Apostolic succession.



New Sunday or "Anti-Pascha"

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE ACT OF THOMAS THE APOSTLE,
CALLED "THE TWIN"

GREAT-MARTYR IRENE OF THESSALONICA;
VENERABLE EUTHYMIOS, BISHOP OF MADITOS IN THRACE

المسيحُ قام من بين الأموات, ووطئ الموتَ بالموت, ووهب الحياة للذين في القبور.

طروبارية توما على اللحن السابع

لما كان القبر مختوماً أشرقت منه أيها الحياة, ولما كانت الأبوابُ مقفلةً وقفتَ بالتلاميذ, أيها المسيحُ الإلهُ, قيامةُ الكلِّ, وجددتَ لنا بهم روحاً مستقيماً, بعظيمِ رحمتِكَ.

قنداق القيامة على اللحن الثامن

ولئن نزلتَ إلى القبر يا من لا يموت, إلا أنكَ حطّمتَ قدرةَ الجحيم, وقمتَ ظافراً, أيها المسيحُ الإله. وقلتَ للنسوةِ الحاملاتِ الطيبِ افرحن, ووهبتَ لرسلكِ السلام, يا مانحَ الواقعين القيام.

الرسالة

عظيم هو ربنا وعظيمة هي قوته، سبحوا الرب فإنه صالح
فصل من أعمال الرسل القديسين الأطهار

في تلك الأيام جرت على أيدي الرسل آياتٌ وعجائبٌ كثيرةٌ في الشعب, وكانوا يجتمعون بنفسٍ واحدةٍ في رواقِ سلميّا. ولم يتجاسرْ أحدٌ من سائرِ الناسِ أن يُخالِطَهُم, بل كان الشعبُ يُعظّمُهُم. وكانت جماعاتٌ من الرجالِ والنساءِ تنضمُ إلى الرب بالإيمان. حتى إنهم كانوا يخرجون بالمرضى إلى الشوارع ويضعونهم على فرشٍ وأسرةٍ, حتى إذا مرَّ بطرس يقع ولو ظلَّه على أحدٍ منهم. وكانت الجماعاتُ تجيء إلى أورشليم من المدنِ المجاورةِ تحملُ المرضى والمعذبين من الأرواحِ النجسةِ فيشفون جميعُهُم. فقام رئيسُ الكهنةِ وأتباعه من شيعةِ الصدوقيين, وقد اشتدتْ نقيمتهم, فأمسكوا الرسلَ وألقوهم في السجنِ العام. ففتح ملائكةُ الربِّ أبوابَ السجنِ ليلاً, وأخرجهم وقال لهم: "اذهبوا وقفوا في الهيكل, وبشروا الشعبَ بجميعِ كلماتِ هذه الحياة.

الإنجيل

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارَةِ القديسِ يوحنا

في مساء ذلك الأحد، كان التلاميذ مجتمعين والأبواب مقفلة خوفاً من اليهود، فجاء يسوع ووقف في الوسط وقال لهم: "سلام عليكم". ولما قال هذا أراهم يديه وجنبه، ففرح التلاميذ حين أبصروا الرب. وقال لهم ثانية: "سلام عليكم! كما أرسلني الأب أرسلكم أنا." قال هذا ونفخ فيهم وقال لهم: "خذوا الروح القدس، من غفرتُم له خطاياه تغفر له، ومن أمسكتُم عليه خطاياه تمسك عليه." وإن توما أحد الإثني عشر الملقب بالتوأم، لم يكن معهم حين جاء الرب. فقال له سائر التلاميذ: "إنّا رأينا الرب!" فأجابهم: "لن أوّمن إلا إذا رأيْتُ اثر المسامير في يديه، ووضعت إصبعي في أثر المسامير ويدي في جنبه." وبعد ثمانية أيام اجتمع التلاميذ في البيت مرة أخرى، وتوما معهم، فجاء يسوع والأبواب مقفلة، ووقف في الوسط وقال: "سلام عليكم." ثم قال لتوما: "هات إصبعك إلى ههنا وانظر يدي، وهات يدك وضعها في جنبي. لا تكن غير مؤمن، بل مؤمناً." فأجاب توما: "ربي والهي!" فقال يسوع: "أمنت لأنك رأيتني. طوبى لمن آمن ولم ير." وصنع يسوع أمام تلاميذه آيات أخرى لم تدون في هذا الكتاب، وأما الآيات المدونة هنا، فهي لتؤمنوا بأن يسوع هو المسيح ابن الله. فإذا آمنتم تكون لكم الحياة باسمه.

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

إن مفهومنا لتناول القربان يعنى عمومية المشاركة فيه لذوى العقيدة الواحدة، إلا إن المشاركة في سر القربان المقدس هنا تقتصر فقط على أعضاء الكنائس الارثوذكسية والذين يحضرون أنفسهم بالصلاة والصوم والاعتراف منذ فترة قريبة (وعلى كل حال، فإننا ندعو الجميع للمشاركة فى الخبز المقدس الذى يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس). رجاء مراجعة الكاهن إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضواً فى الكنيسة الارثوذكسية

Pastor's Sermon
Thomas Sunday
By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig
May 05, 2019

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen! المسيح قام! حقًا قام!

Today's Gospel, highlights the experience of Thomas. The many lessons that our Lord taught the disciples prior to His passion began to be brought back to their remembrance in His numerous appearances, which took place in the forty-day period following His Resurrection, prior to his Ascension.

The appearance of our Lord mentioned in today's Gospel is one of eleven Gospel readings heard in the early Orthros service each Sunday, called "The Eothinon" Gospels. Each Sunday, the Eothinon Gospel announces the Resurrection before the Divine Liturgy, similar to the Gospel read at the doors of the Church during the "Rush Procession" at the midnight service before the Liturgy.

The experience of the Apostle Thomas was unique. It is very possible that Thomas, more than any of the other Apostles was the one who actually *heard* what the Lord was saying before his death. It just sounded impossible that a Messiah, who was expected to restore the Kingdom of Israel, would face such a tragic death. Last night's Vespers service includes a section that helps us to understand what took place. In a section of the Apostika we hear: *"What a miraculous wonder, that a lack of faith became a conviction of faith..." "...the obstinate soul turned with fervor to true faith, 'My Lord, and my God.'"*

The transformation, which began taking place among the disciples, was significant; significant because once the disciples experienced a personal dawning and illumination they were ignited with faith and love to act with conviction. Until this happened nothing would have changed. The Lord who appeared in their midst imparted His Spirit to them (John 20:22). The content of the Gospel message that our Lord taught them had become their own message. It was the good news of the forgiveness of sins that is at the very heart of the Paschal message.