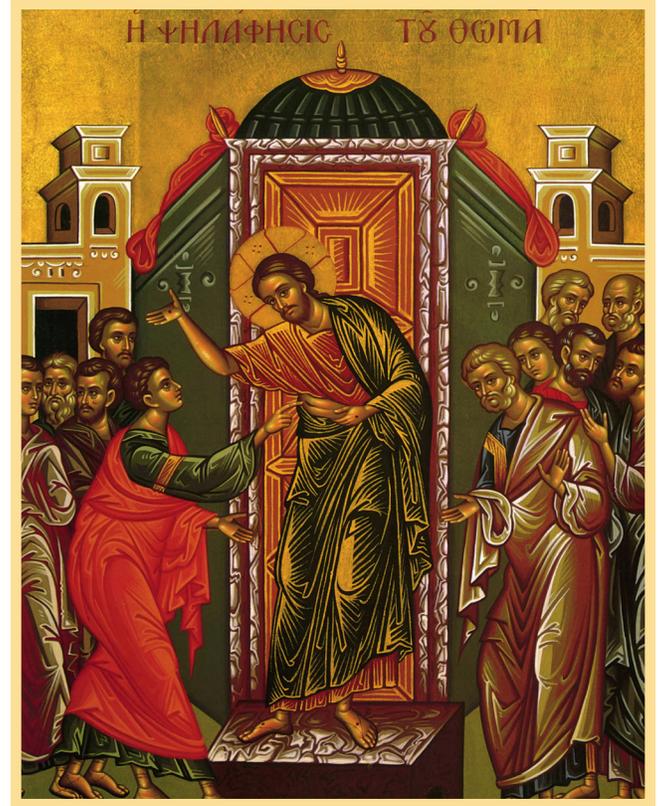


# FAMILY GOSPEL LESSON

John 20:19-31

We have all heard of “doubting Thomas,” and we all have a “doubting Thomas” in us. Doubt keeps us from faithfully committing ourselves to the Lord. We remember Thomas for his doubt, but the Church remembers him for his ministry as a faithful servant of God.



After Pentecost, Thomas went on to serve the Lord faithfully, unto death, by preaching the Gospel in India. Let us, trusting in the Lord’s presence in our lives, be among those about whom Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

## For Consideration

- What does Jesus do as He first greets the apostles? Why?
- What does Thomas tell the other apostles? What happens when he actually sees Jesus?
- What does this Gospel passage mean for our lives?

# TO DO TOGETHER

## Re-enactment

Have your children write a skit to act out the Gospel passage from Thomas Sunday. Let them be creative using music, costumes, and other decorations.

## Doubting Thomas

Discuss as a family the following quote from St. Gregory the Great. Focus on how Christ does not desert us in our doubts: *“Divine compassion brought it about in a wonderful way that when the doubting disciple touched the wounds of his Master’s body, he cured the wounds of our unbelief. Thomas’ unbelief was of more advantage to our faith than the faith of the believing disciples because when he was led back to faith by touching Jesus, our minds were relieved of all doubt and made firm in faith. And so after His resurrection Jesus allowed His disciple to doubt. But He did not desert him in his doubt.”*

## Visit the Cemetery

In some Orthodox churches, visitations are made to the cemetery on this Sunday to pray for those who have departed and proclaim the resurrection of Christ. If your church does this, take your children with their Pascha candles even if you don’t know anyone buried there. If this is not a practice of your church, consider visiting graves of relatives with the Pascha candles and flowers. Sing “Christ is Risen!” and read memorial prayers for the departed. You can find these prayers here: [www.onlinechapel.goarch.org](http://www.onlinechapel.goarch.org).

## CLOSING PRAYER

*O Lover of mankind, great and immeasurable is the multitude of Your mercies; for You endured being struck by the Jews, handled by Apostles, and investigated by those who reject You. How did You become incarnate? How were You crucified, You who are sinless? But make us understand, as You did Thomas, so that he cried to You, ‘My Lord and my God, glory to You.’*

*Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Both now and forever. Amen.*

*-From the Vespers of St. Thomas Sunday*

## FINAL THOUGHT

In 1957 Fr. Cleopa, an Orthodox monk, was riding on a train when he encountered some atheists who were making fun of him for his belief. One of the men said, “Look, Father, isn’t it absurd to expect us to believe in something that can’t be seen? You say that God exists, but has anyone ever seen Him? It is absolute foolishness for someone to believe in what he does not see!” Fr. Cleopa responded, “So according to your statement that you cannot believe in something that isn’t visible, wouldn’t it then be foolish for me to believe that you have a mind if I have not seen it? How can I believe that you have a mind if I have never seen it? What does it look like?” After the men admitted that they all had minds, Fr. Cleopa continued, “So we will go on and admit that everyone has a mind, right? We agree on this, even though we cannot see the mind. Let’s move on. Have you ever seen life? Who has ever seen life? Would anyone say that a person is dead when he is obviously alive? Yet, can you see actual life?” “Well, no you can’t,” they admitted. “So wouldn’t it be foolish for us to believe that people have life if we cannot see it?” “But, Father, life is something that is manifested,” they countered. “Very good!” answered Fr. Cleopa. “Through its manifestations, we can believe that life exists even though we cannot see things that we call life. That is how it is with God!”

-adapted from Elder Cleopa of Sihastria



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