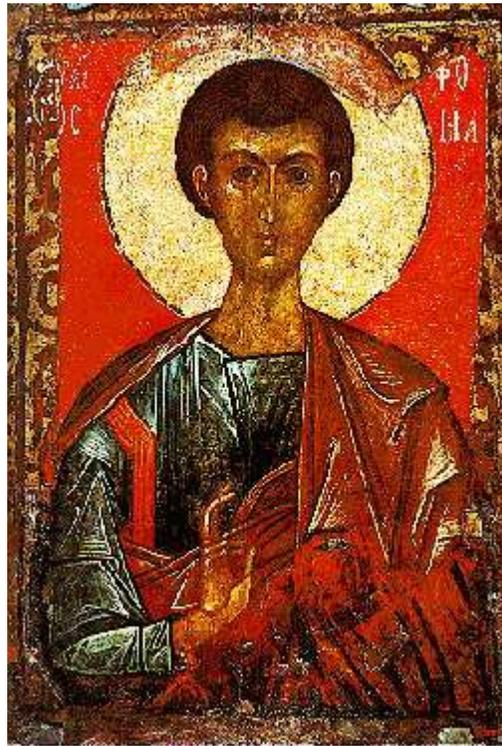




# “Joy of all Who Sorrow”

No 35 October 2011



## SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE

Thomas, called Didymus (the twin), is widely known as “Doubting Thomas” but this is only half the story. He was not stubborn in his doubt. The Risen Lord knew what Thomas had said and, when He appeared to Thomas, He did not wait for him to speak but immediately confronted him, *Reach hither thy hand.....* and Christ chided Thomas saying *be not faithless but believing*. A proud man would not want to admit that he had wrong to be doubtful but Thomas immediately demonstrates his worthiness to be an apostle by his confession of faith. As the kontakion says: *The grace-filled Apostle and true servant of Christ cried out in repentance: Thou art my Lord and my God.*

The details are given to us in St John’s Gospel but St Luke, in his Gospel (24:41), implies that they were all somewhat sceptical. Christ asks them all *Why are you troubled? Why do thoughts arise in you hearts?* Blessed Theophylact, in his commentary of St John’s Gospel tells us:

.....as soon as Thomas touched the Lord’s side, he was revealed as a superb theologian, proclaiming the two natures and single hypostasis of the one Christ. Thomas refers to the human nature of Christ, calling Him *Lord*; for the term “Lord” is applied not just to God, but to men as

well.....But when Thomas cries out .....*and my God*, he confesses Christ's divine essence and affirms that the names *Lord* and *God* refer to one and the same Person.

Tradition records that the Apostle Thomas, who was a native of the city of Paneada in Galilee, went to evangelise the people of India. This is a tradition of very long standing but many of the experiences of the apostle in India are drawn from ancient writings such as the *Acts of Thomas* and the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, which betray Gnostic influence, and are not necessarily reliable. When the Holy Virgin died, St Thomas was not there to mourn her. As St Nikolai records in the Prologue from Ochrid, *Arriving late, he grieved bitterly and, at his request, the tomb of the Most Pure was opened, but the body was not there; the Lord had taken His Mother to His heavenly home. Thus St Thomas, first by his unbelief, confirmed the faith in the Resurrection of the Lord and then, by his late arrival, revealed to us the wondrous glorification of the Mother of God.*

It is recorded that our own King Alfred sent alms not only to Rome but also "to India to St Thomas". The Apostle Thomas died a martyr's death in about AD70.

### **HOLY APOSTLE THOMAS, PRAY TO GOD FOR US.**

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## **HOMILY**



### **On the beauty of Christ above all other beauty**

*Thou art fairer than the sons of men* (Psalm 45:2).

Holy Scripture does not ascribe any particular value to physical beauty, and in general to anything transient. That is why everyone who reads Holy Scripture should take care to be sufficiently attentive and wise to transfer the praise of physical beauty to the soul and to spiritual values. Without a doubt, spiritual beauty gives a wondrous attractiveness to the most unattractive body, just as an ugly soul makes even the most attractive body repulsive. The Prophet David, *pouring forth good words* (Psalm 45:1), says to his King, the Lord Jesus Christ: *Thou art fairer than the sons of men.*

The Lord Himself created His bodily cloak as He wanted. Had He wanted to appear in the world as the physically fairest of men, He could have done so. But there is nothing in the Gospel to

indicate that He drew followers to Himself or influenced men by His appearance. He Himself said: *the flesh profiteth nothing* (John 6:63). Therefore, it is clear that David was not speaking of the physical beauty of Christ, but of His spiritual, divine beauty. This is clearly seen in the following words of the Psalmist: *Grace is poured forth upon thy lips* (Psalm 45:2).

So it is that the unsurpassed beauty of the Son of God is not in the form and shape of His lips, but rather in the stream of grace that flows from His mouth. Again, the Prophet Isaiah speaks of Christ: *He had no form or comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him* (Isaiah 53:2-3). Do Isaiah and David agree? Perfectly well. David speaks of Christ's inward beauty, and Isaiah speaks of Christ's external abasement. Isaiah said that He would not be seen as a king or a rich man, but as a servant and sufferer.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art fairer to us than all men and angels: glory to Thine immortal and unending beauty. O gracious Lord, correct the ugliness of our souls, which are disfigured by sin, we pray Thee. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

*From the Prologue from Ochrid by St Nikolai Velimirovic*

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## CHURCH NOTES AND JOTTINGS



### **BAPTISM**

On Saturday 10 September the baby daughter of Daniel and Sorina Palade was baptised. Her baptismal name is Elena and her name-saint is St Helena, the finder of the True Cross. We wish the newly illuminated Elena - Many Years.

### **SAINT BOTOLPH - planning ahead**

We are trying to arrange a pilgrimage to Iken, near Snape in Suffolk, which was the location of St Botolph's monastery. The idea is that on Saturday 30 June next year, we should organise a service at about midday in honour of the

saint, in the ancient church at Iken. We are talking with the Rector of Orford, who is in charge of the group of parishes that includes Iken, and will let you know the outcome.

### **CHRISTMAS CARDS**

Two Christmas card designs depicting our church are still available. One is the watercolour painting by John Constable Reeve and the other is the photograph of the church in the snow by Les Tozeland. Also the ikons of the Nativity of Christ and the Donskoy Mother of God are being re-printed as Christmas cards. All cards will retail at 20p each and will be sold complete with envelopes. The designs can all be viewed on our website - [www.joyofallwhosorrow.org.uk](http://www.joyofallwhosorrow.org.uk)

## **IKON OF SAINT CUTHBERT**

Efrem Carrasco's ikon of St Cuthbert has now been published by St George Orthodox Information Service. These are available at 20p each.

## **IN NOVEMBER**

Do not forget that Sunday 6 November is our church's Patronal Festival. The Liturgy will be at the usual Sunday time, 10.30am.

Tuesday 15 November is the first anniversary of the repose of Mary, our foundress, when there will be requiem services. Details will be in the Services list.

## **KURSK IKON**

Last June we were blessed to receive a visit of the Wonder-working Kursk Ikon of the Mother of God, which was brought out of Russia by General Wrangel after the Revolution to save it from the hands of the Bolsheviks. The ikon is frequently taken on pilgrimage to scattered church communities throughout the world. From 19-23 September, our archpastor, Archbishop Mark, has been in Kazakhstan with the Kursk Ikon. In a message of greeting to the Russian Orthodox communities in Kazakhstan, Metropolitan Hilarion said;



“...Until very recently, the existence of this ikon far from Russia reminded us of the sorrowful division among the Orthodox people, of the persecutions, the enslavement and imprisonment of those who bore the cross of their Christian service within the conditions of a godless regime.

Today the glorified image of the Kursk-Root Ikon of the Mother of God bears witness to, and serves the true spiritual unity of, the Orthodox flock of the Mother Church, attesting to our “communion in the Holy Spirit” (2 Corinthians 13:13), which has now been given visible, physical manifestation. I hope that the visit of the main holy ikon of the Russian diaspora to Kazakhstan will bring great spiritual consolation and benefit to the believers of this land, from whom we are separated by thousands of miles, but with whom we remain in spiritual kinship. This kinship arises from the fact that we all have as our Intercessor and Protectress the Most-Holy Mother of God, who from ancient times helped her devoted spiritual children overcome all life's trials and tribulations...”

## **NAMEDAYS**

We send congratulations to all who are celebrating a nameday at this time and wish the Many Years, remembering especially:

3 October - St Oleg, Prince of Briansk - Oleg Myslov  
5 October - St Peter the Tax-collector of Constantinople - Archpriest Peter Baulk  
8 October - St Sergei, Abbot of Radonezh - Sergey Kouzmin  
9 October - St John the Theologian - Fr John Palmer, John Harwood  
15 October - St Andrew the Fool for Christ - Archpriest Andrew Phillips  
17 October - St Gurias, Archbishop of Kazan - Gary Meyer

*New style dates given for convenience*

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