



# OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

**A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

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**REV. THOMAS P. STEINMETZ, Pastor**

**RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)**

**REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry**

**REV. DEACON ROBERT SPENCER**

**REV. DEACON PAUL LEONARCZYK**

*"Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge.  
Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)*

**April 12, 2015**

**The Second Sunday of Great and Holy Pascha**

**THE SUNDAY OF ST. THOMAS**



**Parish Advisory & Finance Council:**

**KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), RICHARD ASHOOH, LUKE ANDERSON, ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, MARY CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, MARYLOU LAZOS, TERRI LEONARCZYK, MATTHEW LOMANNO, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE**

**Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON**

**Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS**

**Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER** **N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON**

**HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;**

**HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;**

**HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;**

**HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;**

**HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.**

*Please remember to contact the church if a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from the priest. The hospitals do not always notify the church!*

# THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

## The Troparion of The Sunday of St. Thomas (7<sup>th</sup> Tone) Three Times

While the stone was sealed, You shone forth from it, O Christ our Life. And while the doors remained closed, You stood among Your disciples, O Resurrection of all, and through them You restored a new spirit in us, according to Your great mercy.

## Kondakion of Pascha (2<sup>nd</sup> Tone)

Though You went down in the tomb O Immortal One, You overthrew the powers of Hades and rose victorious, O Christ God. You greeted the ointment-bearing women saying, "Rejoice!" You gave peace to Your Apostles, and to those who had fallen, resurrection.

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## THE PROKIMENON:

**GREAT IS OUR LORD, AND GREAT IS HIS POWER,  
AND TO HIS WISDOM THERE IS NO LIMIT!**

*Praise the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endures forever!*

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***Today's Readings: Acts 5: 12-20 and John 20: 19-31***

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## Hirmos of St. Thomas Sunday (5<sup>th</sup> Tone)

O Shinning Light, O Mother of God, honorable without compare, you are higher in dignity than any other creature. We magnify you with hymns.

# LITURGY INTENTIONS

## Sunday, 11:00 AM:

**For the repose of Gerald Ouellette (One Year Anniversary),  
by his Family**

**For the repose of Fr. Michael Jolly,  
pastor of St. Joseph's Melkite Church in Scranton PA,  
who departed this life on Friday**

## Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

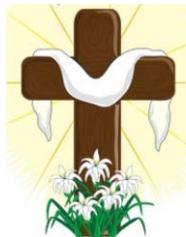
**For the repose of Naim & Emily Nseir,  
Michel Nseir, Dolly Abood, Salim Kahwaji,  
by Elias and Linda Dagher**

## Next Sunday, 11:00 AM:

**For the repose of the Rt. Rev. Lucien Malouf (33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary),  
the founder of our parish**

**For the repose of Gerald Harper, by his wife Lucille**

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**Congratulations** to Dr. Ryan Kramer and Dr. Mary Cullen who were united in marriage on Saturday afternoon. May God grant them many years of peace, joy, health and happiness!



## TROPARION OF PASCHA

**Christ is risen from the dead, and by His death He has trampled upon Death, and has given life to those were in the tombs!**

**Christos Anesti ek nekron thanato thanaton bateesas keh tis en dees mnimasi zo-een kharisamenos!**

**Al-Massehu-qama min bayn il-amwat wa wati al-mawta bil-mawt wa wahab al hayat lil lazeena fil qubor!**

## **THE SUNDAY OF ST. THOMAS**

After seeing Jesus and examining the wounds left by crucifixion, Thomas gave up his doubt and professed his faith in Jesus as Lord and God. Jesus responded to this profession of faith with the promise of a blessing that has reached down through the centuries to us today. Jesus said to Thomas, ***“You believe because you have seen me; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”*** We can be confident that Jesus has extended this blessing for all Christians down through the generations — Christians like us, who have not examined the physical wounds of the Risen Lord, yet have entrusted our lives and our salvation to His Divine power.



## **The Season of Pascha lasts for 40 days!**

Just as we had a 40-day preparation for this feast (Great Lent), so now we celebrate the Great Feast of the Lord’s Resurrection for 40 days (from Easter Sunday to the feast of the Lord’s Ascension on May 14). During this Easter season, we continue to celebrate with the hymns of the resurrection, and the doors of the iconostasis remain open to remind us that Jesus has removed the barrier that existed between God and man. Traditionally there is no fasting, even on Fridays, during this holy season when the Lord is with us.

***Bring the Easter Fire home with you!*** Candles are available in the back of the church for anyone who would like to bring home the blessed fire of Easter!

**Attendance Last Saturday 9:30 PM: 168    Sunday 11:00 AM: 69**

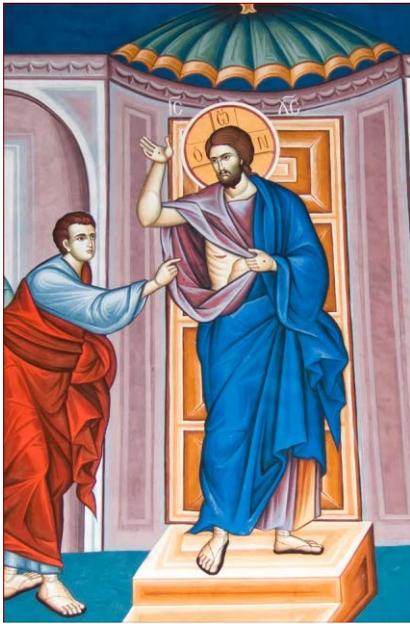
**Last Weekend’s Collection: \$ 2,723.<sup>00</sup>**

***The average Sunday envelope donation: \$43.<sup>60</sup>***

***The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 299,649.<sup>47</sup>***

### **SERVICES FOR THE WEEK**

Tues., April 14	8:30 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy:</b> <i>For the health of Erin Baroody</i>
Wed., April 15	7:00 PM	<b>Vespers</b>
Thurs., April 16	8:30 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy:</b> <i>For the health of Michael Baroody</i>
Sat., April 18	4:30 PM	<b>Divine Liturgy: Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women</b>
Sun., April 19	10:00 AM	<b>Sunday Orthros</b>
Sun., April 19	11:00 AM	<b>Divine Liturgy: Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women</b>



# The Sunday of St. Thomas

The Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas was born in the Galileian city of Pansada and was a fisherman. Hearing the good tidings of Jesus Christ, he left all and followed after Him. The Apostle Thomas is included in the number of the holy Twelve Apostles of the Savior.

According to Holy Scripture, the holy Apostle Thomas did not believe the reports of the other disciples about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).

On the eighth day after the Resurrection, the Lord appeared to the Apostle Thomas and showed him His wounds. "My Lord and my God," the Apostle cried out (John 20:28). Christ told Thomas that He was glad that Thomas no longer doubted, but also proclaimed: ***"Because you have seen Me, you***

***have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, yet believed!"***

Christ uses Thomas' doubt to teach both the Disciples and us that we don't need to physically touch Him to have faith. But upon hearing of Christ, we can be spiritually moved by His presence to follow Him, and trust in His promise that all men will be raised on the day He appoints for judgment.

St. Peter heard and understood, as he writes to his flock (I Peter 1:8): "You did not see Him, yet you loved Him; and still without seeing Him you are filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls."

Some icons depicting this event are inscribed "The Doubting Thomas." This is incorrect. In Greek, the inscription reads, "The Touching of Thomas." In Slavonic, it says, "The Belief of Thomas." When St Thomas touched the Life-giving side of the Lord, he no longer had any doubts.

"Thomas, being once weaker in faith than the other apostles," says St John Chrysostom, "toiled through the grace of God more bravely, more zealously and tirelessly than them all, so that he went preaching over nearly all the earth, not fearing to proclaim the Word of God to savage nations."

According to Church Tradition, the holy Apostle Thomas founded Christian churches in Palestine, Mesopotamia, Parthia, Ethiopia and India. Preaching the Gospel earned him a martyr's death. For having converted the wife and son of the prefect of the Indian city of Meliapur [Melipur], the holy apostle was locked up in prison, suffered torture, and finally, pierced with five spears, he departed to the Lord. Part of the relics of the holy Apostle Thomas are in India, in Hungary and on Mt. Athos.

It is the custom among some Orthodox Christians to travel to the cemetery on this day to pray, light candles, and to sing "Christ is Risen!" to deceased family members.

# The Gospel Is Proclaimed

ONE FEATURE OF THE PASCHAL SEASON in Byzantine Churches is the reading of the Acts of the Apostles. Every day, beginning with Pascha itself, this story of the early Church is read at the Divine Liturgy. While the text of Acts itself begins with Christ's ascension, our public reading of it begins as we commemorate His resurrection.



Acts paints a picture of the first Christian community in Jerusalem, then in Samaria, in Damascus and Antioch and the cities of Asia Minor. Finally Acts affirms that within the lifetime of the apostles a Church had been established in Rome, capital of the empire, the focus of life in the Mediterranean world of that era. The events recorded in this book would occur again and again through the centuries as the Church became established among different peoples and cultures. Some of these characteristics listed in today's passage, Acts 5:12-20, are:

***Signs and Wonders (vv.12, 14-16)*** – The Church is first of all characterized as a transforming presence, just as Christ's own earthly ministry was, according to the Gospels. The sick are healed just by Peter's passing shadow, and those "*tormented by unclean spirits*" (v.16) are delivered.

To this day physical healings are regularly reported at saints' graves or shrines, in connection with their relics or wonder-working icons. The 10th-century shrine of St George near Istanbul is one such place. Remarkable here is that most of those who come by the thousands to this shrine are Muslims. One of the priests at the shrine, Father Ephrem, confided, "During my three years here, we ourselves are witnesses of miracles, such as the healing of paralytics, mutes, and the giving birth to children."

Just as physical healing was not the chief object of Christ's ministry, the Church's focus is chiefly on spiritually healing the whole person. The Church's therapy may include Confession, spiritual guidance and the Mystery of Holy Unction, given "for healing, for relief from every passion, from defilement of flesh and spirit, and from every illness" (oil blessing prayer).

***Proclaiming Christ (v. 12)*** – Rabbis and scholars would regularly be found gathering at Solomon's Porch, a colonnade east of the temple. It became the place where the first followers of Jesus would go to share the Gospel, sure of a curious audience.

The town square and the coffee house have in their time been places where Christians have gone to gather and to make their faith known to others. Today cyberspace may be the ultimate Solomon's Porch. As Pope Benedict XVI recently wrote, "I would like then to invite Christians, confidently and with an informed and responsible creativity, to join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible... In this field too we are called to proclaim our faith that

Christ is God, the Savior of humanity and of history, the one in whom all things find their fulfillment.”

***Reluctance of the Religious Establishment (v. 13)*** – While people from the Jewish rank and file were drawn to the Gospel message, their religious leaders at first held back and then directly opposed this teaching which threatened their power among the people.

The apostles encountered the same reception from the leaders of Israel as had the Lord Jesus, John the Forerunner and other prophets. Politicians – be they political or religious – may be more concerned with keeping “good order” than with seeking the will of God.

***Growth (v.14)*** – A major theme in the book of Acts is that, before the death of the chief apostles, the Church had spread from the first group at Solomon’s Porch to the very heart of the empire, Rome itself. The Church began with “locals,” Jews from Galilee and Judea. Hellenized (Greek-speaking) Jews soon joined them as did “proselytes,” those pagans who had adopted the Jewish belief in one God, but had not formally joined the Jewish people as this would demand complete separation from their non-believing family and associates. Finally other pagans, never drawn to Judaism began accepting Christ ultimately outnumbering the first Jewish believers.

Is the number of Christians still growing today? In 2011 BBC reported that more people go to church on Sunday in China than in the whole of Europe. In 1900 there were approximately 10 million Christians in Africa, mostly in the historic Coptic and Ethiopian Churches and among Italians, Greeks and other settlers. A little over a century later the number has reached 500 million. In 1900, Africans accounted for only 2% of the world’s Christians, today they number 20%.

***Persecution (v. 17-18)*** – As the number of Christians in the Roman Empire grew, they came to be seen as a threat to the state. Christians in the empire were persecuted from time to time and from region to region until AD 311, when the Great Persecution of Diocletian came to an end.

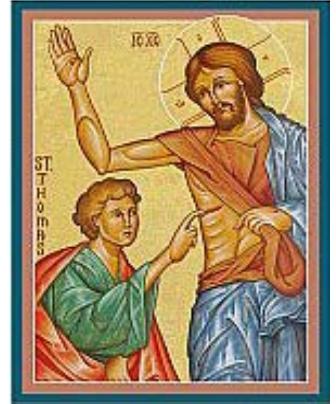
Religious persecution has often been carried out with political overtones. When Rome was persecuting Christians, they were welcomed in its neighboring rival, the Persian Empire. When Rome embraced Christianity the Persians began persecuting Christians as Roman sympathizers. Today Christians may be persecuted outright for political reasons, as in North Korea, or in strongholds of other religions in Asia and Africa. In the historically Christian nations of the West, the contemporary “powers that be” have increasingly marginalized religion, striving to keep it behind church doors for people who fancy that sort of thing. Public figures regularly pit Christian values against “human rights,” “women’s health” and the like. Thus even Mother Teresa of Calcutta was vilified for calling abortion “a great destroyer of peace” when accepting the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. One lives Gospel values in the public sector at one’s own risk.

***Divine Protection (vv.19-20)*** – The apostles, miraculously delivered from prison, went right back to the temple. As was reported to the Sanhedrin: “*Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!*” (v. 25). When questioned about why they had disobeyed the council’s demand that they stop, Peter and the others replied with a phrase that has repeatedly been used since against opponents of the Gospel: “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” (v. 29). From the apostles’ preaching at Solomon’s Porch to our own day the Holy Spirit, given by Christ, has protected and made fruitful the proclamation of the Gospel.

# On The Belief of Thomas by St. Gregory the Great

Dearly beloved, what do you see in these events? Do you really believe that it was by chance that this chosen disciple was absent, then came and heard, heard and doubted, doubted and touched, touched and believed? It was not by chance but in God's providence. In a marvelous way God's mercy arranged that the disbelieving disciple, in touching the wounds of his Master's body, should heal our wounds of disbelief.

The disbelief of Thomas has done more for our faith than the faith of the other disciples. As he touches Christ and is won over to belief, every doubt is cast aside and our faith is strengthened. So the disciple who doubted, then felt Christ's wounds, becomes a witness to the reality of the resurrection. Touching Christ, he cried out: "My Lord and my God." Jesus said to him: "Because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed."



When Thomas saw and touched, why was he told: "You have believed because you have seen me?" Because what he saw and what he believed were different things. God cannot be seen by mortal man. Thomas saw a human being, whom he acknowledged to be God, and said: "My Lord and my God."

Seeing, he believed; looking at one who was true man, he cried out that this was God, the God he could not see. What follows is reason for great joy: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

There is here a particular reference to ourselves; we hold in our hearts One we have not seen in the flesh. We are included in these words, but only if we follow up our faith with good works. The true believer practices what he believes. But of those who pay only lip service to faith, Paul has this to say: "They profess to know God, but they deny him in their works." Therefore James says: "Faith without works is dead."

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**East Coast Byzantine Catechetical Conference Presents:**

## **Living Christ:**

### **Reclaiming the Church in our Homes and Lives**

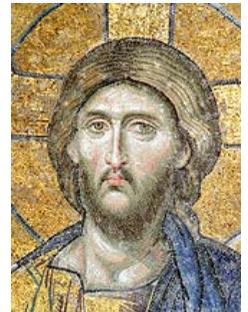
Saturday, May 2, 9:00 A.m. – 3:00 p.m.

St. Basil Melkite Catholic Church

15 Skyview Drive, Lincoln, Rhode Island 02865

& via live broadcast at: [www.Melkite.org/Live-Broadcast](http://www.Melkite.org/Live-Broadcast)

*No registration required*



For too long we have experienced the Church as a place we go on Sunday. Our Eastern tradition offers us something more. By restoring our lives in Christ, we learn to live our Christian calling in our daily lives, and renew it when we return to our parish family each week. Join us as we explore possibilities of restoring our lives in Christ and the fullness of our Christian calling. Fr. Mark Melone, Deacon Sabatino Carnazzo, and Deacon Paul Leonarczyk will be the featured speakers.

**Please remember** to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Ernie Ashooh, Louise Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Ted Baroody, Sarah Beadle, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Theresa Cullen, Jamileh Dagher, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Janet Drake, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, Loretto Gauvin, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Howard Jabaley, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Shirley Lanoue, Roger Lawrence, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, Susan Merrill, Margaret Mitchell, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Helen Baroody Payne, Josephine Paquette, Russell Pond, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Nassim Sleiman, Salwa Sleiman, Tarrant Smith, Mary Stephen, Catherine Waldron, Laura Weingast, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

**If you are visiting our church,** our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled **“Welcome to this Holy House,”** located on the table in the back of the church.



 <p><b>Joe Ashooh, Agent</b> 297 S Willow Street Manchester, NH 03103 Bus: 603-624-1000 joe@joesthere.com</p>  <p>State Farm, Bloomington, IL 1211999</p>	<p><b>NORTH HILLS REALTY GROUP, LLC</b> <i>Residential Real Estate Brokers</i> <b>Abraham Dagher, Realtor</b> <i>814 Elm St., Suite # 302 Manchester, NH 03101</i> <b>(603) 629-9988</b></p>	 <p>Personal Injury Medical Malpractice Call today for a <b>FREE</b> consultation. <b>“We Fight For You”</b></p> <p><b>STEPHEN LAW GROUP</b> <a href="http://www.StephenLaw.com">www.StephenLaw.com</a> • Call 663.1007 <b>848 Elm Street, Suite 303, Manchester, NH 03101</b></p>
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