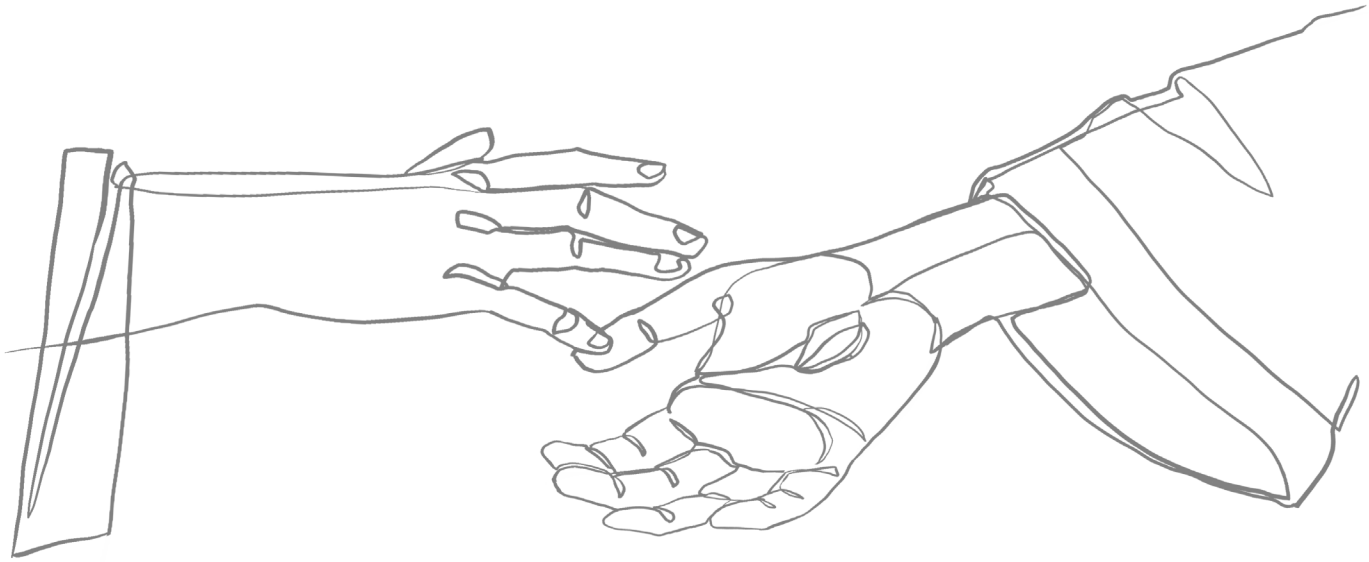
DIAKONIA

A National Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

REFLECTIONS FROM TODAY'S READING – *John 20:19-31*

"Thomas, Doubt and Faith"

Fr. George Parsenios



The doubt of St. Thomas provides a powerful lesson in discipleship, but not for the reasons that one might think. Thomas was not with the other disciples when they saw the risen Lord, and he insisted on seeing the wounds of Christ before he would believe that Jesus had been resurrected. Because he hesitated, Thomas is famously called "Doubting Thomas," and his faith is considered weak. But is this the correct way to view him? St. Romanos the Melodist urges us to see something different in Thomas. According to Romanos, if Thomas doubted what the disciples said, it was not because he failed, but because they did. His doubt was produced by their fragile and feeble witness. Although they told him that Jesus was risen, they did not act like Jesus was risen. Instead of having a bold and confident faith, they were still cowering in the upper room. Instead of bravely proclaiming the message of new life, they were hiding under the fear of death. Why would Thomas believe anything they said? The same is true for us. Think for a moment of the people who inspired you to take your faith seriously. They didn't just talk about their faith. They lived it. In the same way that Thomas watched how the disciples behaved, our children are also watching us. If they see that we sacrifice for our faith, they will learn to do the same. If they see that we share our abundance with those who lack, they will imitate our kindness. If they see that we treasure the Sunday Divine Liturgy, they will treasure it as well and orient their week around it. Fortified with this knowledge, let us proclaim not only with our words, but with everything we do: ***Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!***

Fr. George Parsenios *is Professor of New Testament at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.* ***www.hchc.edu***

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FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK: homoooousios (ὁμοοῦσιος)

What is "consubstantial?"

Fr. George Parsenios

When applied to Christ in the Nicene Creed, the term ***ὁμοούσιος/homoooousios*** means that Jesus shares the same essence or substance (ousia) as God. The term is translated into English either as "consubstantial," or "of one essence," and the concept was an important tool in fighting the Arian heresy. The Arians taught that Jesus was not truly God. He was a special person, even a superior person, but Jesus was inferior to God. Jesus was not immortal, they said, nor sinless, nor uncreated. Being immortal and sinless and uncreated are the qualities of the divine nature (***ousia***), but the Arians insisted that Jesus shared only in the human nature, which is mortal and created. The term ***homoooousios*** was directed precisely at opposing this heresy, as a way to insist that Jesus is fully God. But ***homoooousios*** was a controversial word. It is the one word in the Creed that is not Scriptural, and so it was opposed even by some Orthodox theologians who hoped to build a Creed that was entirely based on biblical language. But ***homoooousios*** was selected because it emphatically claims that Jesus shares fully in the divine nature. Jesus possesses whatever makes God to be God. He is ***homoooousios*** with the Father.

THIS WEEK'S LOOK AT CHURCH HISTORY

The Ladies Philoptochos Society



As Greek Orthodox immigrants arrived in the US in the late 1800s, women's clubs formed in our churches to welcome and assist them. In 1931, during the Great Depression, Archbishop Athenagoras founded a charitable organization, naming it the Ladies Philoptochos Society, to provide the community with music, educational lectures, and performances.

The Philoptochos Society was crucial to raising funds for the purchase of the Ruppert Estate just 60 miles up the Hudson River from New York City, which became St. Basil Academy. The Academy assists children and families in need, supported by the fundraising efforts of Philoptochos.

At the local and national level, the organization serves as the Church's philanthropic ministry to the poor and needy. Philoptochos focuses on providing food, medicine and clothing to people affected by natural disasters. Philoptochos fundraising campaigns assist the elderly and marginalized. In 1974, financial and moral support was provided to victims of the invasion of Cyprus. With over 400 parish chapters throughout the Archdiocese, Philoptochos provides millions of dollars each year to local and national philanthropic organizations and causes.

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APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

FAITH IN ACTION

Create Autism Awareness in Your Parish

The *What I Wish You Knew Series* is written from the voice of an autistic person to help parishioners better understand common autistic experiences to create more welcoming communities where everyone is valued.

ANSWERING CHRIST'S CALL

From Awareness to Action

Building Peer Relationships

Every person is created in the image of the Holy Trinity, and we imitate the Trinity when we experience loving relationships. Peer relationships can be challenging when neurological differences exist. Here are a few suggestions to create understanding, remove fear, and foster peer connections amongst autistic and non-autistic youth.

What I Wish You Knew: To My Peers

- **Unique perception:** I probably notice different things than you, but I love to learn.
- **I have talents:** I have a disability, but I also have many abilities and gifts.
- **Invite me:** I want to be included in activities, but I don't assume I'm invited. Please invite me to youth activities, parties, events.
- **I like structure:** It's easier for me to relate to you when there's a structured activity like a game or a shared project we can enjoy together.
- **Favorite Topics:** Some of my interests are so fun to me that I want to know everything about them. Ask me about things I love. I like to listen to your areas of interest, too.
- **Eye contact:** I may not be able to look directly into your eyes when you are talking. That doesn't mean I'm not listening or that I don't care about what you are saying.
- **Understand my movements:** My behaviors are a form of communication. If I move away, please give me space. If I sound happy but don't have words, it's my way of showing I care. Sometimes I must soothe myself to pay attention. I may rock, sway, or make sounds you don't understand. I'm just calming myself.
- **Be kind:** Even if I struggle to use words, that doesn't mean that I cannot understand or feel your words and attitudes.
- **Understand my communication:** If I have a difficult time, cry out, or get upset, don't be afraid. Sometimes I don't have words to express my pain or frustration. I'm honest and forthright, but I don't intend to hurt anyone's feelings.
- **Understand my sensitivities:** I may be sensitive to sounds, lights, changes of routine, or having to sit in a space that is new to me. Ask me if I'm comfortable holding hands or hugging. I may be sensitive to different types of physical touch.

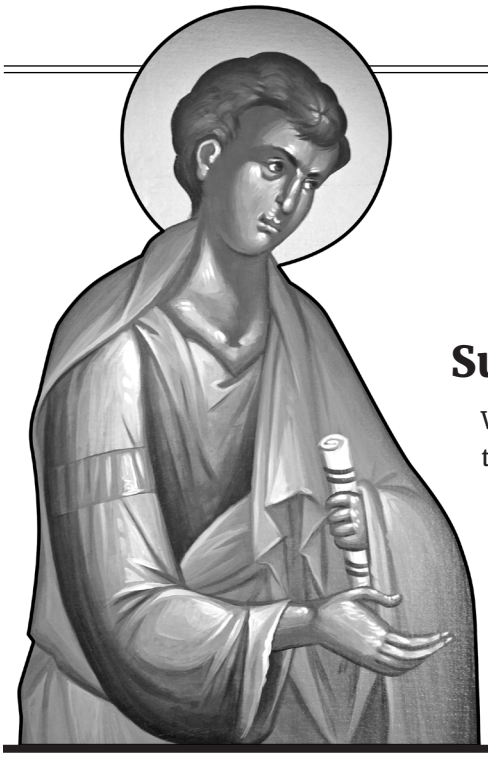
See the entire list. Scan the code or use the URL below:
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Just For Kids!

(...and the young at heart)



Sunday of Thomas

When Jesus rose from the dead, Thomas was not there. He did not believe the others. He said he needed to see and touch Jesus' wounds. A week later, Jesus came again. This time, Thomas was there. Jesus showed him His hands and side. Thomas believed and said, "My Lord and my God!" Thomas is called "Doubting Thomas," but he became very strong in faith. He loved Jesus deeply. He later traveled far to teach others about Jesus. Thomas lived a life of faith and courage.

WORD SEARCH

Find these words:

DOUBT
BELIEVE
TOUCH
DISCIPLES
APOSTLES
PASSOVER
NAILS
RESURRECTION
PEACE
THOMAS

B	X	A	P	O	S	T	L	E	S
V	A	P	L	W	K	B	D	V	Z
T	X	A	N	X	J	E	I	W	P
G	N	S	A	J	B	L	S	K	T
D	C	S	I	Q	P	I	C	V	O
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B	K	E	O	D	C	E	L	W	H
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T	H	O	M	A	S	U	S	S	B

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