



Parish Information Bulletin

SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER

Second Sunday of Luke, Luke 6: 31-36

• 8.00am

Orthros and Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER

Epistle Reading: Titus 3: 8-15

Gospel Reading: Luke 8: 5-15

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Fr Athanasios and
Fr Ephraim are available
at the Church every
Monday to Friday
between 4.00 and 6.00pm
for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

Becoming a Christian
is not so much
inviting Christ
into one's life
as getting oneself
into Christ's life.

What is true of
Christ must become
true of one
who is in Him.



(Orth. Study Bible note on
Ephesians 1: 4-6)

6 October: St. Thomas Apostle

He was one of the twelve Great Apostles. Through his doubt of the Resurrection of the Lord Christ, a new confirmation was given of that wonderful and saving event, for the risen Lord appeared again to His disciples, to convince Thomas. The Lord said to Thomas: *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing,"* and Thomas answered and said to Him, *"My Lord and my God!"*

After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the apostles cast lots to see who would go where to preach the Gospel, it fell to Thomas to go to India. He was somewhat saddened at having to go so far away, but the Lord appeared to him and comforted him. In India, St. Thomas converted many, both rich and poor, to the Christian faith, and founded a Church there, making priests and bishops. Among others, St. Thomas converted two sisters, Tertiana and Mygdonia, wives of Indian princes. Both sisters were ill-treated for their faith by their husbands, who would not live with them after their baptism, and divorced them. Being freed from their marriages, they lived godly lives till their death. Prince Misdaeus, the husband of Tertiana, whose wife and son Iuzanes Thomas baptised, condemned the Apostle to death, and sent five soldiers who ran him through with their lances, and thus the holy Apostle Thomas gave his soul into the hands of his Christ. Before his death, he, with the other apostles, was miraculously borne to Jerusalem for the funeral of the most holy Mother of God. 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.

We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' (2Cor- 5:1) says the discerning Apostle Paul. All our labour on earth for God has this one aim: to strive with all our strength to attain to that eternal home not made with hands in the heavens.

An Indian king, Gundapor, decided to build himself a magnificent palace, the like of which had never been seen on earth. When his envoy, Havan, sought skilled workers capable of building such a palace for the king, they came, by God's providence, to meet the Apostle Thomas, who told them that he was skilled in such work and that no-one could build the king what he wanted without his, Thomas', help. Thomas therefore received a great sum of gold from the king to build this palace. As soon as he left the king's presence, he gave all the gold away to the poor. After two years, the king sent servants to ask Thomas if the palace was ready, as it was being built at some distance from the capital. Thomas replied: 'All is ready except for the roof, and he asked for more money from the king and was given it. Thomas again gave it all away to the poor and went around the kingdom doing his own work, which was the preaching of the Gospel. The king discovered that Thomas had not even begun to build the palace, so he seized him and threw him into prison. That night, the king's brother died, and the king was grief-stricken. An angel took the dead man's soul and carried it to Paradise, and showed him a wonderful palace such as the mind of man could not imagine. The soul of the dead man wanted to go into that palace, but the angel told him that he could not, as it was the palace that the Apostle Thomas had built for his brother with the alms he had given. Then the angel returned the man's soul to his body. When the man came to himself, he said to the king, his brother: 'Swear that you will give me anything I ask of you.' And the king swore that he would. His brother then said: 'Give me the palace you have in heaven.' The king was amazed, and doubted greatly that there could be any such palace in heaven, but, when his brother explained it all to him, he was convinced and immediately released Thomas from prison. When they heard from the Apostle's lips the words of salvation and eternal life, the king and his brother were both baptised. The king gave himself to further almsgiving, that he might build himself a yet more wonderful palace in heaven.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed many wonderful truths, which until then were unknown. Many of these concern our relations with other people, either inside our homes or outside in society. Perhaps there is difficulty in remembering everything one has to observe in dealing with other people. For this reason, Jesus, as a wise Teacher, has today given us a Life Rule, named for its great value, "The Golden Rule." What does this Rule say?

"And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (Luke 6:31). Words that are simple, easy, understandable, short and something everyone can remember.

In the Old Testament, we read: "What you yourself hate, do not do to anyone" (Tobit 4:15). There have been ancient philosophers who have taught the same thing: Do not do to another what you do not want done to you. It is the negative view of the subject. Jesus speaks of something higher and more precious; You do to others what you want them to do to you. For example, if you see a poor person who has no food and his children are hungry, think: If you were in their place, you would want someone to help you. So, do something to help them, so they do not die of hunger! Can you not give them some food? Move, act among those you know, and make a team effort to find a way to help the situation.

What often happens, though, is this: If this person in need is a relative or a friend, someone we love, then we are interested in helping in every way. For others, however, we are indifferent, because we do not feel any love towards them. We consider them strangers. This is what the Lord is correcting when He tells us: "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them" (verse 32). What is more, we also hear "love your enemies" (verse 35). The Lord wants us to love not only those unrelated to us and outside of our personal circle of family and friends, but also our enemies. This is the basic difference between the Christian and non-Christian. The non-Christian will not love his enemy; he will apply "an eye for an eye" if he does not do something worse, and "hate your enemy" (Matthew 5:38 and 43). But the Christian is called upon to apply Christ's new command of love, which no one has ever imagined: To love the whole world without distinction as to whether he is a friend or an enemy; whether he loves or hates you. And not just a sentimental show of words, but actual works: "do good," even to enemies!

Of course, being this way towards those who are troubled is not at all easy. This God-like model is given to us by Jesus: "He is kind to the unthankful and evil people." If we imitate God in love, Jesus said, "your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High" (verse 35).

If we could, my brothers and sisters, imagine how the practical love for all people will raise us to such a high position. If we do that, we will certainly do our best to deserve this greatest honour, to become children of the Most High God! Is there anything higher? It is worth making every effort, and the method we use will be simple: Applying the Golden Rule. If there is an issue with another person and their actions, let us ask our conscience: If I was in their position, what would I want another person to do for me? The answer will soon come, and we have to do exactly what our conscience tells us. This depends of course, on our conscience being healthy, good, and enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

My beloved brothers and sisters, let us base our lives everyday on the Golden Rule of our Lord, to deserve to be recognized by God the Father as His children.

Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios



Avoid by every means occasions, causes, and words that produce enmity,
and avail yourself of every opportunity and occasion to show holy and sincere love.
By doing the first, the inimical disposition of the soul will little by little be eradicated,
and by the second, love will be nourished and strengthened.
Do not allow yourself for a moment to have any ill-feeling against anyone;
always be kind to everyone, conquering your evil disposition by the love that endureth all things
and conquereth all things.
Avoid obstinacy, self-will, and opposing your neighbour;
do not persist in having your own way, in order to satisfy your caprice,
or in order to intentionally injure anyone.

+ St. John of Kronstadt