

## 1<sup>st</sup> Pentecostal Sunday

### Thomas Sunday

*“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”* ([John 20:29](#)).

On this Sunday, referred to as Thomas Sunday and it is the first Sunday of the Pentecostal 50 days, the Church reads ([John 20:19-31](#)), recounting the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples after the Resurrection. The first time that Jesus met with the disciples, Thomas was not there. Thus, Thomas declared that he will only believe that Christ is risen if “I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side...” ([John 20:25](#)). From this reading, we can see how the Lord always tries to bring us back to Him, even if our faith is lacking.

Why did Jesus reappear with the wounds in His hands and on His side still open? Surely, if He could resurrect from the dead, He could also heal these wounds. However, Jesus purposefully returned with His wounds so that He could inspire Thomas to have faith once again. As St. John Chrysostom explains, “Note the Lord’s compassion! For the sake of one soul, He revealed Himself carrying His wounds. He came to save each one personally.” Whenever we are struggling with our faith, let us remember that the Lord is always making an active effort to have us return to Him—on a personal level. Likewise, Cyril of Alexandria reflects that Christ retained His wounds to confirm the reality of the Resurrection, affirming that the very body that suffered is the same that rose in glory. The wounds thus become a testimony, not only to Thomas, but to all generations, that the Resurrection is real, physical, and life-giving.

Thomas’s struggle mirrors our own. We often wrestle with believing in mysteries we cannot see: the descent of the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Chrismation, the transformation of the bread and wine into the true Body and Blood of Christ, and the invisible workings of divine grace. Yet the Lord gently calls us beyond sight into faith: *“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”* ([John 20:29](#)). As Gregory the Great insightfully writes: “The disbelief of Thomas has done more for our faith than the faith of the other disciples. For by touching the wounds of Christ, he healed our wounds of doubt.”

Furthermore, in the Coptic Synaxarium (26 Bashans), Thomas is later revealed not as a man of weak faith, but as a great apostle who carried the Gospel to the ends of the earth, even to India, sealing his faith with martyrdom. His journey, from doubt to confession, from questioning to proclamation, becomes a model for every believer.

Indeed, Thomas’s final confession is one of the clearest declarations of Christ’s divinity in all Scripture: *“My Lord and my God!”* ([John 20:28](#)). This confession stands at the heart of the Church’s faith, echoed in every liturgy, every prayer, and every Eucharistic gathering.

#### **Additional References**

- Holy Bible (ESV)
- Commentary on the Gospel of John
- Homilies on the Gospel of John – John Chrysostom
- Commentary on John – Cyril of Alexandria
- Homilies on the Gospels – Gregory the Great
- The Coptic Synaxarium (Commemoration of St. Thomas the Apostle)