



# “ORTHODOX 9” PARISHES BULLETIN

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CANADA

Monthly Newsletter for the family of Orthodox Churches including:



St. Mary’s (the Nativity of the Holy Virgin) - NISKU

Sts. Peter & Paul - BONNYVILLE

St. John the Baptist - HOREN

Holy Ascension - CALMAR

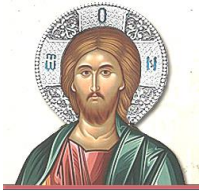
St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)

Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY

Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)

St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE

Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)



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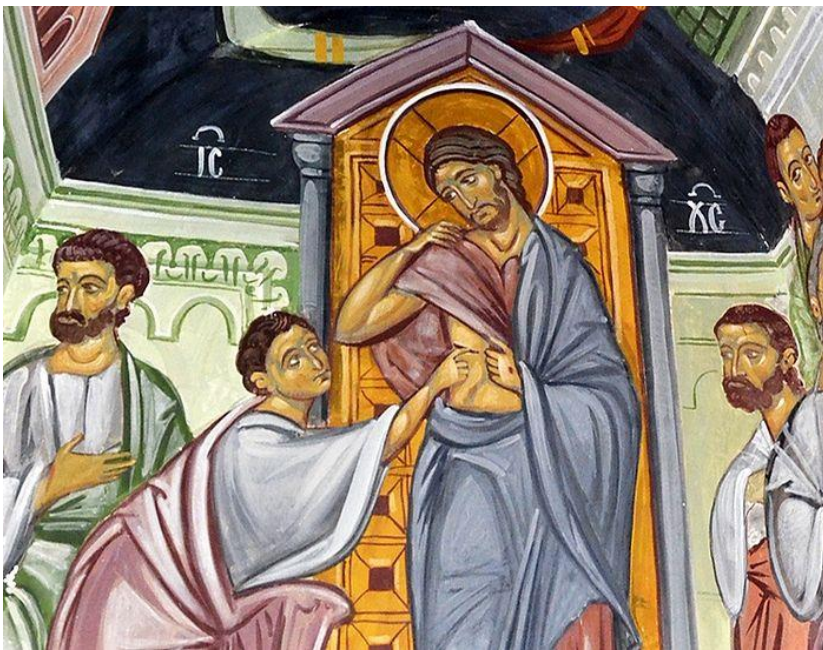
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## October 19 – Commemoration of St. Apostle of Twelve Thomas



October 19 is the memory of the apostle Thomas. This is an additional commemoration day, the primary being the Sunday right after the Easter.

Let us listen to the interpretations of the several, rather few, but great moments that Gospel uncovers us about the St. Apostle, his three dialogues:

*Let us pay attention to the dialogue between Jesus and His disciples at the very beginning of [His ascension to Jerusalem to the voluntary death]. "After that he said to the disciples, Let's go back to Judea. The disciples said to Him: Rabbi! A short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are*

*going back? ...Then Thomas, otherwise called the Twin, said to the disciples, "Let us go and die with Him" (John 11:7-8, 16). The Apostle Thomas is a pessimist, but he loves his Teacher dearly and is ready to accept death with Him. These three verses are a kind of prologue to the story of Thomas' unbelief, where Thomas did not believe the disciples of Jesus that they had seen the Risen One (John 20:26-28).*

*In this regard, another remark of Thomas in the Gospel of John is very interesting. In response to the words of Jesus: "And where I am going, you know, and you know the way," Thomas exclaims: "My God! We do not know where you are going; and how can we know the way?" (John 14:5-6). These words of Thomas emphasize that he does not know what will happen to the Teacher next,*

*and yet he is ready to follow Him — not for any purpose, but because he cannot help being with Christ, cannot leave Someone he has loved and trusts completely. And when Thomas says (in chapter 11), "Let's go and we will die with Him," we understand that with his pessimistic heart he has already realized that this road will end with Golgotha, the death of the Teacher and, possibly, the disciples, but he is still ready to follow Jesus along this road. (pr. George Chistyakov)*

*"Doubting Thomas"—the unbelieving—the Church calls the doubting Apostle. If we think back to Apostolic times and put ourselves in Thomas' place, we will understand that it wasn't so easy to believe in the good news of the resurrection of a man from the dead, because before Christ no one had been resurrected. Thomas went the way of an academic scientist: He wanted to conduct a natural science experiment that would give him a sufficient amount of convincing evidence. The Savior gave Him the chance, showing His arms and ribs.*

*If the preeminent Apostle Peter confessed Christ only as the Son of the living God (Mt. 16:16), then "Doubting Thomas" directly called Him LORD and God (John 20:28). Moreover, Thomas addressed the Savior with the words, My LORD and my God, emphasizing his relationship with Christ as "my" personal Teacher, Savior, and God.*

*Thomas' disbelief was not a stubborn unwillingness to accept the evidence of eyewitnesses. It was a thirst for faith that sought support in visible evidence. Thomas didn't want to blindly accept something on faith; he wanted to know the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Jn. 14:6). He didn't remain silent about his doubt because he was not indifferent to faith. He was interested in a real encounter with God, and not blindly following someone's beliefs. And therefore his "unbelief," however paradoxically, had a beneficial effect on all the people around him. (Hieromonk Ignaty)*

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). "Thomas, being once weaker in faith than the other apostles," says Saint 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."

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 Saint Thomas touched the Life-giving side of the Lord, he no longer had any doubts.

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.

Troparion — Tone 2

You were a disciple of Christ, / and a member of the divine college of Apostles. / Having been weak in faith you doubted the Resurrection of Christ, / but by feeling the wounds you believed in His all-pure Passion: / pray now to Him, O all-praised Thomas, to grant us peace and great mercy.

Kontakion — Tone 4

Thomas, the faithful servant and disciple of Christ, / filled with divine grace, cried out from the depth of his love: / "You are my Lord and my God!"

# Focus on Being a Friend

“A friend loves at all times” Proverbs 17:17

In today’s society, social media can make it more challenging than ever for us to be a good friend to each other. How can we focus on caring for our friends?



Gossip drives a lot of social media for our teens, sometimes with devastating results. Someone can impulsively share an embarrassing photo or unkind comment with the whole school with one click of a button on *Snapchat*. Online bullying has become all too common, fueled by our kids constantly being connected to their phones and the feeling kids have that they can say horrible things to each other online because it’s not real. Adults don’t usually experience bullying like that, but many of us have experienced not so nice comments online or gossip that hurts us. Getting likes or not on your *Instagram* posts

can feel like winning or losing a popularity contest. Then there’s the time you see online photos of most of your friends out having dinner, a dinner you weren’t invited to. It’s common for people to experience FOMO anxiety about the fear of missing out. People are even afraid of missing out on things others post on social media. Studies have shown that social media, which would seem to bring us together, is really creating more isolation. Friendships can be harder to navigate with all the complications we face in modern society.

**What are three things we can do to be a genuine, Christian friend?**

- **Focus on how we treat our friends instead of how they treat us.** It’s so easy to get caught up in the things our friend did or did not do while completely overlooking the things we did or did not do. Instead of wondering why you haven’t heard from someone and getting into a slump about it, think of a friend who you can reach out to today and do it. Focus on being a friend to others.
- **Avoid drama.** We all experience friends being upset with friends. Listen, hear your friend, but don’t add to the fire when they’re upset with another friend. Don’t escalate drama by stirring the pot! Throwing other friends under the bus to score a few points never works out well for anyone. Instead, seek to diffuse the situation by staying calm and being kind. Remember that upset people may not hear you accurately so be careful when choosing your words. Be compassionate without increasing the toxicity of drama. Remember that once posted, photos and comments are out of your control and can have unintended consequences. Be thoughtful about your posts, texts, and conversations.
- **Don’t manipulate people.** Being manipulative might get you what you want in a very short-term situation, but long term, it is a destructive quality and will hurt you and the people around you. Withholding friendship, like saying we can’t be friends if you are friends with so and so seems very junior high, but here we are as adults seeing the very same things on *FaceBook* as people with differing political beliefs say this about each other. Excluding people from otherwise open group events is another holdover from the tween years that follows us into adulthood all too often— although it’s usually more subtle. Not being manipulative, being a friend to all, those are qualities other people adore.

If you want to be popular, be a friend to everyone. Focus on what you’re doing to be a friend and you will be the kind of friend we all want to have. “A friend loves at all times” is timeless advice that reminds us to love our friends and focus on them.

# A Word on Thanksgiving

BISHOP MITROPHAN (ZNOSKO-BOROVSKY) OF BOSTON (+2002)

What is “thanksgiving”? Taking into consideration that everyone in America who is a believer, and everyone who recognizes God as Creator, today turns to God with hymns of praise, it follows that Thanksgiving Day has a religious character.

For us Orthodox Christians, thanksgiving is our testimony to God’s presence in the life of the world and of human beings.

Thanksgiving is the profoundly religious response of our hearts, testifying with reverent joy and trembling that the Lord participates in our personal lives through His majesty, glory, and love.

Thanksgiving is our response to God’s gift. It is our joyful recognition of the mercy and goodness that God has shown to us in our lives.

Finally, thanksgiving – a feeling of gratitude – is the foundation of our continuously renewed life in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The great Apostle Paul teaches us: *Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks* [1 Thessalonians 5:17-18].

This feeling of thanksgiving to God is the primary, basic feeling in which a child should be brought up from the earliest age, in order to become an emotionally healthy person who is inclined towards, and capable of, spiritual development.

It is with these feelings and these wishes that we turn today to the Almighty with hymns of praise. Amen.



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## Profound gratitude to our parishioners for the improvements to our Churches!

### St. Mary Church at Nisku



For preparation for the gate and fence system, Darcy Doblanko, Darrell Lecapoy, Danny Borys and Kevin Wasiluk trimmed the trees at the church.

Darcy Doblanko and Darrell Lecapoy installed new LED lighting at the bell tower and main entrance by St. Mary’s sign.

Daniel Borys replaced the wheelchair ramp surface at church, donated by Anita and Daniel Borys.

Tony Jacula and Kevin Wasiluk installed the motion activated security lights on the church.

### Holy Dormition Church at MucNutt



The parishioners continued the effort in recovering the church roof with metal shingles.

The white tiling that has been applied previously to the church hall has been also provided by George Shepherd for the bell tower to preserve it.

**Many good years and good health to all our parishioners and friends whose efforts on caring for the churches we either know or do not know! God bless and save you all!**

# Sermon on the Greatest Commandment

We have heard in the Gospel the question of one lawyer, who, tempting Christ, testing Him, asked: Teacher! What is the greatest commandment in the law?

It was already in the last days of Christ's earthly ministry, and everyone in the Jerusalem temple there who asked Him something, did this mainly in order to catch Him in a word, trying to find in His answers some reason for accusations against Him.

What is behind this question: *what is the greatest commandment in the law?*

The Old Testament had many commandments. And if Christ answered that the main commandment is the first: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt; may you have no other gods before My face (Deut. 5: 6-7), - then all this public that crucified Him would be justified - they all believed in One God, and were not pagans...

Or maybe this lawyer expected to hear that the main commandment is not to kill. In this case, most of the people would have justified themselves easily, who barely live a spiritual life, or even worse, but did not kill anyone.

And so on and so forth, this is what a sinful mind wants – to find indulgencies, to do one thing (usually, the easiest, or irrelevant to the current moment and temptation) and disregard the rest of the commandments!

So, in response, the lawyer hears the commandment, which combines all the other commandments. All the commandments are affirmed, founded on it: *love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

This is the wisdom of the Gospel, the one that Christ brought from Heaven.

Isn't it quite clear? Isn't it quite unacceptable by this world?

We should also pay attention that the commandment about love for one's neighbor is in second place after the commandment about love for God; and also the fact that it is standing there, in second place. Because one without the other does not work and does not exist. We cannot truly love our neighbor if we do not love God. We shall find a lot of justifications for our sinful aggression, including the "spiritual" ones, as the Jews did to the Lord. Or, to the holy righteous Ancestors of God Joakim and Anna, when they mocked them on their childlessness, as if for the sake of venerating the future birth of Christ.

So were tempted and tested the parents of the Holy Birth-Giver of God for the sake of the Nativity of the Mother of God, their daughter. But that only made them praying more intensive and constantly! And their humble prayers were heard!

**So, love for God and one's neighbor is that field where our cross stands, which we have to bear, and in which is our salvation.**

And we remember the words of the Apostle John the Theologian: *Who says: "I love God," but hates brother, he is a liar: for he who does not love his brother whom he sees, how he can love God whom he does not see?* (1 John 4, 20) But the same apostle John also had other words said: *that we love the children of God, we learn from when we love God and keep His commandments* (1 John 5, 2).

Among us, I think, there is no one who does not have love for God and for the neighbour at all.

Through the prayers of the Birth-Giver of God and by the power of the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord, may it be added more to those who has. Amen.

September 2022; Foam Lake, MacNutt



**GIVE THANKS  
TO THE LORD**



**FOR HE IS  
GOOD.**



**HIS LOVE**



**ENDURES  
FOREVER.**



PSALM 136:1



# Thanksgiving Word Search

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

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

## Word Bank

AUTUMN	FEAST	LOVE	LAUGHTER	TABLE	LITURGY
BAKE	FELLOWSHIP	GRAVY	PIE	THURSDAY	THANKFUL
BLESSINGS	FRIENDS	NAP	PRAISE	TRADITION	PSALM
CHRIST	GIVING	HARVEST	PRAYERS	TURKEY	
CHRISTIAN	GOD	JESUS	PUMPKIN	WORSHIP	
CHURCH	GRATITUDE	PARADE	SHARING	YUM	

# October 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p><u>2</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – <u>St Barbara Cathedral</u></p>	<p><u>3</u></p>	<p><u>4</u> St. Demetrius, metropolitan of Rostov</p> 	<p><u>5</u></p>	<p><u>6</u> St. Innocent, enlightener of Alaska</p> 	<p><u>7</u></p>	<p><u>8</u> St. Sergius, abbot, of Radonezh</p> 
<p><u>9</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – CALMAR (Thanksgiving Service)</p>	<p><u>10</u></p>	<p><u>11</u></p>	<p><u>12</u> St. Cyriacus the Hermit, of Palestine</p> 	<p><u>13</u></p>	<p><u>14</u> <b>Protecting Veil of the Mother of God</b></p> 	<p><u>15</u></p>
<p><u>16</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy VEGREVILLE (Thanksgiving Service)</p>	<p><u>17</u> Hieromartyr Hierotheus, of Athens</p> 	<p><u>18</u></p>	<p><u>19</u> Holy Apostle Thomas</p> 	<p><u>20</u></p>	<p><u>21</u> St. Pelagia the Penitent</p> 	<p><u>22</u></p>
<p><u>23</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – NISKU (Thanksgiving Service)</p>	<p><u>24</u></p>	<p><u>25</u> St. Cosmas the Hymnographer</p> 	<p><u>26</u></p>	<p><u>27</u> St. Nikola Sviatosha</p> 	<p><u>28</u></p>	<p><u>29</u> Martyr Longinus the Centurion</p> 
<p><u>30</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – NISKU</p>	<p><u>31</u> Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke</p> 					