

THOMAS SUNDAY



Icon of Christ and Saint Thomas

Mark your calendars!

On Sunday, May 9, we will celebrate Mothers' Day with a special Luncheon following the Divine Liturgy. The women will not be allowed in the kitchen since the Luncheon will be prepared and served by the Gentlemen of the parish! Let us all come together and celebrate that essential role in the Christian Family – the Mother. (Don't worry Fathers... your day is coming on June 20!)

Parish Rummage Sale

There will be a rummage sale on May 1 to benefit the parish. It will feature a special Ukrainian craft section! We will start accepting donations two weeks prior to the event. Volunteers are needed. Please contact Olena Bankston at (619) 567-6967.

ARTOS



In our Church, there is the custom for a single loaf of blessed bread (*Artos* in Greek), to lie before the Iconostasis throughout Bright Week in memory of the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ,

before it is shared among the whole congregation. Depicted on the top of the *Artos* are either the symbol of Christ's victory over death – the Cross, surmounted by a crown of thorns, or the icon of the Resurrection of Christ. On the first day of Pascha, during the Holy and Divine Liturgy, after the Prayer Before the Ambo, the *Artos* is blessed by a special prayer and sprinkling with the Holy Water. On the Saturday of Bright Week it is distributed as a blessing of the Arch-Pastor (that is to say Christ) to the congregation (sometimes after Sunday Holy and Divine Liturgy, on Saint Thomas Sunday).

The significance of the *Artos* is that it serves to remind all Christians of the events connected with the Resurrection of Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. While still living on earth, the Lord called Himself the Bread of Life, saying: I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst (John 6:35). After His Resurrection, more than once Jesus appeared to His disciples, ate

before them, and blessed their own food. For example, as evening fell on the first day of His resurrection, He was recognized in Emmaus by two of His disciples as He blessed and broke bread (Luke 24:13-35).

On the 40th day after His Resurrection, the Lord ascended into heaven, and His disciples and followers found comfort in their memories of the Lord: they recalled His every word, His every step and His every action. When they met for common prayer, they would partake of the Most Holy Body and Most Precious Blood of Christ, remembering the Last Supper. When they sat down to an ordinary meal, they would leave a place at the head of the table empty, for the invisibly present Lord and would lay bread on that place.

Remembering this custom of the Apostles', the Fathers of the Church made it their custom to put out the *Artos* at the Paschal Feast in memory of the appearances of the Risen Lord to His disciples, and also in memory of the fact that the Lord Who suffered and was resurrected for our justification has made Himself the true Bread of Life and is invisible present in His Church always, to the close of the ages (Matthew 28:20).

Whereas special Paschal breads, called *babka* or *paska* are broken and eaten on the first day of Pascha, the *Artos* is kept whole throughout the whole of Bright Week as a reminder of the presence of the Risen Saviour in the midst of those who believe in Him and is only divided and distributed on the end of the Bright Week. In this way, the Bright Week begins and ends with the eating of especially baked and blessed bread.

The *Artos* may also be compared to the unleavened bread of the Old Testament, of which ancient Israel, delivered from their captivity in the land of Egypt, ate during the week of the Passover (Exodus 12:15-20). As Cyril, the Bishop of Turov, who lived during the 12th century, said in a sermon for the Sunday after Pascha: "Even as the Jews bore the unleavened bread upon their heads out of Egypt through the desert (Exodus 12:34), until they had crossed the Red Sea, after which they dedicated the bread to God, divided it amongst all their host, and having all eaten thereof, became ... terrible to their enemies, even so do we, saved by our Resurrected Lord from the captivity of that Pharaoh of the mind, the Devil, bear the blessed bread – the *Artos* – from the day of the Resurrection of Christ and, finally, having dedicated this bread to God, we eat of it and preserve it to the health of body and soul."

Святкуємо 50-років!

Celebrating 50 Years!

**Українська Католицька Церква Святого Йоана Хрестителя
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The Wound of Thomas

So you, too, come up, Thomas. Come forth from your cave of sorrows. Put your finger here and see My hands. Extend your hand and place it in My side. And do not think that your blind suffering is more perceptive than My grace. But since you are so wounded and the open torment of your heart has opened up to the abyss of your very self, put your hand to Me and, with it, feel the pulse of another Heart: through this new experience your soul will surrender and heave up the dark gall which it has long collected. I must overpower you. I cannot spare exacting from you your melancholy – your most-loved possession. Give it to Me, even if it costs you your soul and your inner self thinks it must die. Give Me this idol, this cold stony clot in your breast, and in its place I will give you a new heart of flesh that will beat to the pulse of My own Heart. Give Me this self of yours, which lives on its not being able to live, which is sick because it cannot die. Let it perish, and you will finally begin to live. You are enamored of the sad puzzle of your incomprehensible ego. But you have already been seen through and understood, for look: if your heart accuses you, I am nevertheless greater than this your heart, and I know everything. Dare to make the leap into the Light! Do not take the world to be more profound than God! Do not think that I cannot make short work of you! Your city is besieged, your provisions are exhausted: you must capitulate. What could be simpler and sweeter than opening the door to love? What could be easier than falling to one's knee and saying: 'My Lord and My God!?'

Father Hans Urs von Balthasar