

Advent

Saint Stephen's welcomes everyone who wishes to follow Christ, worship together, grow in faith and share God's love through service to others.

FEAST OF SAINT THOMAS



Thomas the Apostle also called **Didymus** ("twin") was one of the **Twelve Apostles** of **Jesus** according to the **New Testament**. Thomas is commonly known as "**Doubting Thomas**" because he initially doubted the **resurrection of Jesus Christ** when he was told of it (as is related in the **Gospel of John** alone); he later confessed his faith ("My Lord and my God") on seeing the **wounds** left over from the **crucifixion**.

According to traditional accounts of the **Saint Thomas Christians** of modern-day **Kerala** in **India**, Thomas is believed to have travelled outside the **Roman Empire** to preach the Gospel, travelling as far as the **Tamilakam** which is in South **India**,^{[1][5][6][7]} and reached **Muziris** of **Tamilakam** (modern-day North Paravur and Kodungalloor in Kerala State, **India**) in AD 52.^{[8][9][11]} In 1258, some of the relics were brought to **Ortona**, in **Abruzzo**, Italy, where they have been held in the Church of Saint Thomas the Apostle.^[10] He is often regarded as the **patron saint** of India among its **Christian** adherents,^{[11][12]} and the Feast of Saint Thomas on July 3 is

Welcome and Announcements:

Wed. 22 December 9:30am, 2021



Opening Acclamation:

Presider Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen

Gloria: (Third Song of Isaiah)

Arise, shine, for your light has come, *
and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.

For behold, darkness covers the land; *
deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.

But over you the Lord will rise, *
and his glory will appear upon you.

Nations will stream to your light, *
and kings to the brightness of your dawning.

Your gates will always be open; *
by day or night they will never be shut.

They will call you, The City of the Lord, *
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Violence will no more be heard in your land, *
ruin or destruction within your borders.

You will call your walls, Salvation, *
and all your portals, Praise.

The sun will no more be your light by day; *
by night you will not need the brightness of the moon.

The Lord will be your everlasting light, *
and your God will be your glory.

The Collect of the Day:

Presider The Lord be with you

People And also with you.

Presider Let us pray

All: Everliving God, who strengthened your apostle Thomas with firm and certain faith in your Son's resurrection: Grant us so perfectly and without doubt to believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, that our faith may never be found wanting in your sight; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Word of God *(Please be seated)*

The Old Testament: A reading from **Habakkuk 2:1-4**

I will stand at my watchpost,
 and station myself on the rampart;
I will keep watch to see what he will say to me,
 and what he will answer concerning my complaint.
Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision;
 make it plain on tablets,
 so that a runner may read it.
For there is still a vision for the appointed time;
 it speaks of the end, and does not lie.
If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
 it will surely come, it will not delay.
Look at the proud!
 Their spirit is not right in them,
 but the righteous live by their faith.

Lector: The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 126

In convertendo (*Read aloud in unison*)

- 1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, *
then were we like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
and our tongue with shouts of joy.
- 3 Then they said among the nations, *
"The Lord has done great things for them."
- 4 The Lord has done great things for us, *
and we are glad indeed.
- 5 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, *
like the watercourses of the Negev.
- 6 Those who sowed with tears *
will reap with songs of joy.
- 7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

The New Testament Lesson: A reading from **Hebrews 10:35-11:1**

Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

For yet "in a very little while,
the one who is coming will come and will not delay;
but my righteous one will live by faith.
My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back."

But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Lector: The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Lesson:

Reader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
John 20:24-29

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with the other disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Reader The Gospel of the Lord
People Praise to you, Lord Christ

Homily

Nicene Creed: *Traditional Version (Said aloud by all, in unison)*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,

of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the

living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People:

Leader: *Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith. Strengthen Michael and Jennifer our bishops, Allison our priest, and all your Church members in the service of Christ,*

All: That those who confess your name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Leader: *Bless and guide the President, our elected officials, and those in positions of leadership in our governing bodies; give wisdom to all in authority; and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace;*

All: that we may honor one another, and seek the common good.

Leader: *Give grace to us, our families and friends, and to all our neighbors,*

All: that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

Leader: *Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit: especially remembering: _____ (Please add the names of any you wish to be remembered).*

Give them courage and hope in their troubles;

All: and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Leader: *Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ, especially _____ (please add names of those who have died). According to your promises,*

All: grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Leader: *In the Anglican cycle of prayer we pray for **The Diocese of Ile - Oluji – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)***

All: O Lord, Bless and keep them.

Leader: *In the Diocesan cycle of prayer we pray for **Resurrection, Gilbert***

All: O Lord, Bless and keep them.

Leader: *We acknowledge and pay respect to the first peoples of this land especially the Apache and Pascua Yaqui who call this area of Arizona their home.*

All: O Lord, Bless and keep them.

Leader: *Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints,*

All: We commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love. Amen.

Confession of Sin

Leader: *Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. (The people stand, sit, or kneel.)*

All: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Absolution

Presider: *Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.*

Exchange of the Peace

Presider *May the peace of Christ be always with you*

All And also with you.

The Ministers and People exchange socially distant signs of peace (peace sign, namaste, virtual hug)

Offertory

The Presider: Let us with gladness present the offerings and oblations of our life and labor to the Lord.

Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

Rite II Prayer B BCP p. 372

Presider *The Lord be with you.*

People **And also with you.**

Presider *Lift up your hearts.*

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Presider: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Because of your goodness and the fullness of your love revealed in your abundant creation, in the sending of your Son and in the imparting of your Holy Spirit, our hearts are moved to thankful praise.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

All:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The people stand, sit, or kneel.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son.

For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and

said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts (+) that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant.

Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified (+) by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through

Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

*By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **AMEN.***

And now as Jesus taught us, we pray:

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Fraction: *(In silence the Presider breaks the bread)*

Presider: *Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.*

People: **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**

Invitation to Communion:

Presider: *The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on him in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.*

(Everyone is invited to come forward and receive communion or a blessing).

Recognition of a Birthday, Anniversary, Healing, Gratitude

Post Communion Prayer *The people stand as they are able.*

Presider: Let us pray:

Presider and People

Almighty and ever-living God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Blessing

Presider: *Holy God, make us holy as you are holy. Revealing God, allow us to see as you see. Sending God, motivate us to move as you move. Loving God, inspire us to love as you love. And the blessing of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.*

Dismissal

Presider: People of St. Stephen's, what does God call us to do?

People: **We are called to love and serve.**

Presider: Let us go forth, rejoicing in God's Spirit, alleluia, alleluia!

People: **Thanks be to God,! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

celebrated as Indian Christian Day by believers belonging to many [Christian denominations](#).^{[13][14]} The name *Thomas* remains quite popular among the Saint Thomas Christians of the Indian subcontinent

Gospel of John

Thomas first speaks in the [Gospel of John](#). In [John 11:16](#), when [Lazarus](#) has recently died, and the apostles do not wish to go back to [Judea](#), Thomas says: "Let us also go, that we may die with him."^[a]

Thomas speaks again in [John 14:5](#). There, [Jesus](#) had just explained that he was going away to prepare a heavenly home for his followers, and that one day they would join him there. Thomas reacted by saying, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

[John 20:24–29](#) tells how [doubting Thomas](#) was skeptical at first when he heard that Jesus had risen from the dead and appeared to the other apostles, saying, "Except I shall see on his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."^[20:25] But when Jesus appeared later and invited Thomas to touch his wounds and behold him, Thomas showed his belief by saying, "My Lord and my God".^[20:28] Jesus then said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed [are] they that have not seen, and [yet] have believed."^[20:29]

Names and etymologies

The name *Thomas* ([Koine Greek](#): Θωμάς) given for the apostle in the New Testament is derived from the [Aramaic](#) ܬܘܡܐ or [Classical Syriac](#): ܬܘܡܐ *Tā 'wma/T'ōmā*, equivalently from [Hebrew](#) תאומים *tōm*, meaning "twin". The equivalent term for twin in Greek, which is also used in the New Testament, is Δίδυμος *Didymos*.

Other names

The [Nag Hammadi](#) copy of the [Gospel of Thomas](#) begins: "These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Didymos, Judas Thomas, recorded." Early Syrian traditions also relate the apostle's full name as Judas Thomas.^[b] Some have seen in the [Acts of Thomas](#) (written in east Syria in the early 3rd century, or perhaps as early as the first half of the 2nd century) an identification of Thomas with the apostle Judas, Son of James, better known in English as [Jude](#). However, the first sentence of the Acts follows the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in distinguishing the apostle Thomas and the apostle Judas son of James. Others, such as James Tabor, identify him as [Jude, brother of Jesus](#) mentioned by Mark. In the [Book of Thomas the Contender](#), part of the [Nag Hammadi library](#), he is alleged to be a twin to Jesus: "Now, since it has been said that you are my twin and true companion, examine yourself..."^[15]

A "[Doubting Thomas](#)" is a skeptic who refuses to believe without direct [Continued online](#)

