

# Morning Prayer

Saint Thomas, Apostle (December 12)

December 18, 2024

## Opening Sentence

*Officiant* The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. *Isaiah 40:5*

## The Invitatory and Psalter

*Officiant* Lord, open our lips.

*People* ***And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.***

*Officiant and People* ***Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.***

*Officiant* The Lord is glorious in his Saints:  
***Come let us adore him.***

## Venite

*Psalms 95:1-7*

Come, let us sing to the Lord;  
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.  
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving  
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God,  
and a great King above all gods.  
In his hand are the caverns of the earth,  
and the heights of the hills are his also.  
The sea is his, for he made it,  
and his hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee,  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.  
For he is our God,  
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.  
Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

## The Psalm Appointed *(appointed for the day)*

*Psalms 126*

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,  
then were we like those who dream.  
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy.

Then they said among the nations,  
"The LORD has done great things for them."

The LORD has done great things for us,  
and we are glad indeed.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,  
like the watercourses of the Negev.

Those who sowed with tears  
will reap with songs of joy.

Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

### The Lessons

#### A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Hebrews

*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.

The Word of the Lord.

***Thanks be to God.***

#### Canticle 11      The Third Song of Isaiah      *Surge, illuminare*      *Isaiah 60:1-3, 11a, 14c, 18-19*

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.***

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
***as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.***

## The Gospel

*Gospeller*      The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John  
*People*          ***Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

John 20: 24-29

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
***Praise to you, Lord Christ.***

## Reflection

The Gospel according to John records several incidents in which Thomas appears, and from them we are able to gain some impression of the sort of man he was. When Jesus insisted on going to Judea, to visit his friends at Bethany, Thomas boldly declared, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16). At the Last Supper, he interrupted our Lord's discourse with the question, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" (John 14:5). And after Christ's resurrection, Thomas would not accept the account of the other

apostles and the women, until Jesus appeared before him, showing him his wounds. This drew from him the first explicit acknowledgment of Christ's Godhead, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

Thomas appears to have been a thoughtful if rather literal-minded man, inclined to scepticism; but he was a staunch friend when his loyalty was once given. The expression "Doubting Thomas," which has become established in English usage, is not entirely fair to Thomas. He did not refuse belief: he wanted to believe, but did not dare, without further evidence. Because of his goodwill, Jesus gave him a sign, though Jesus had refused a sign to the Pharisees. His Lord's rebuke was well deserved: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20:29). The sign did not create faith; it merely released the faith which was in Thomas already.

According to an early tradition mentioned by Eusebius and others, Thomas evangelized the Parthians. Syrian Christians of Malabar, India, who call themselves the Mar Thomas Church, cherish a tradition that Thomas brought the Gospel to India. Several apocryphal writings have been attributed to him, the most prominent and interesting being the "Gospel of Thomas." Thomas' honest questioning and doubt, and Jesus' assuring response to him, have given many modern Christians courage to persist in faith, even when they are still doubting and questioning.

## The Apostles' Creed

*Officiant and People*

***I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.***

***I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.***

***He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.***

***He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.***

***He descended to the dead.***

***On the third day he rose again.***

***He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.***

***He will come again to judge the living and the dead.***

***I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.***

## The Prayers

*Officiant*      The Lord be with you.

*People*        ***And also with you.***

*Officiant*      Let us pray.

***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.***

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

R. ***And grant us your salvation.***

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

R. ***Let your people sing with joy.***

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

R. ***For only in you can we live in safety.***

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

R. ***And guide us in the way of justice and truth.***

V. Let your way be known upon earth;

R. ***Your saving health among all nations.***

V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

R. ***Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.***

V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;

R. ***And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.***

### **The Collect of the Day**

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.***

### **Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving**

*Officiant* Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

## Spiritual Communion

Let us pray together a prayer for Spiritual Communion:

**Lord Jesus, we believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. We are grateful to know there are many ways to experience your presence, but in whatever way we do, we know you come into our hearts, minds and souls. Unite my heart with those of my family of faith and make us all one with you. May this spiritual communion strengthen my faith and grant me confidence in your loving care now and forever. *Amen.***

## A Prayer of St. John Chrysostom

*Officiant* Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. ***Amen.***

*Officiant* Let us bless the Lord.

*People* ***Thanks be to God.***

*Officiant* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. ***Amen.***

## Bible Study

**Gospel: Luke 1: 39-45 [46-55]**

**In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.**

**When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."**

**[And Mary said,**

**"My soul magnifies the Lord,**

**and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.**

**Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.**

**His mercy is for those who fear him**

**from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."]**

### **Reflection on Luke 1: 39-45 [46-55]**

In the gospel, Mary sets out on a journey. She travels to the hill country to the town of Judah. She was anxious to see her cousin Elizabeth. Mary had strange and yet wondrous news for Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting to her, immediately the infant within her womb leaped for joy. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she cried out to Mary and said: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Elizabeth then asked Mary: "How is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Then Elizabeth told Mary how the child within her womb had leapt for joy as Mary approached her. Elizabeth added: "Blessed are you who believed what God had spoken to you." God's Word had been fulfilled!

Imagine what emotions these two women who were "with child" had when they came together. The path for Mary and Elizabeth had been strange and yet wondrous. Imagine the conversations they had as they compared their experiences.

If you are a parent, you can imagine the many conversations that Mary and Elizabeth had. They must have talked about their fears and concerns; their dreams and hopes for their children. Little did they know that their sons would change the course of history forever!

The Gospel continues as Mary proclaims the goodness and greatness of God. Despite the highly unusual circumstances of her call to be the mother of Jesus, Mary rejoices and proclaims that God has looked upon her with great favor. She is not overwhelmed by fear or panic.

Mary's immediate and heartfelt response to God's call makes it clear that Mary had a deep, personal relationship with God. She must have been somewhat confused by this call, yet Mary trusted the God who called her. Mary believed that God would guide her and grace her. While Mary was very young when God called her, she had a depth of faith and trust in God that many people never develop. What a wonderful gift!

We also can experience the gift of a personal and intimate relationship with God. Our relationship with God develops in the same way that any personal relationship develops: with

time and experience. I assume that most of us do not place a great deal of trust in someone we just have met. True trust grows over time. It is our personal experience of the person that enables us to begin to trust that individual. This also is true in our relationship with God.

May we take the time:

What is going well in my life?

Do I take these blessings for granted?

Do I thank God for the many blessings I receive each day?

When/if life is painful, confusing, or difficult, do I still praise and thank God?