

Sunday Bulletin  
April 27<sup>th</sup> 2025 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Pascha  
of St. Thomas



Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church  
1025 N Belle Vista Ave, Youngstown, Ohio 44509



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**Ministries:**

- Altar Servers
- Church Choir
- Church School
- Adult Education
- St. Mary's Sisterhood
- Sts. Peter & Paul Brotherhood
- Senior UOL Chapter
- Junior UOL Chapter
- Youth Ministry
- Orphanage Mission Ministry
- Bingo Team
- Fr Mykola Zomchak - Editor

**Website:**

<http://www.stspeterpauluoc.org>



## STS Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church

*We invite you to a celebration  
of the Resurrection of Christ*



**Sunday Bulletin**  
**April 27<sup>th</sup> 2025 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Pascha  
of St. Thomas**

**Christ is Risen from the dead,  
trampling down death by death,  
and upon those in the tombs  
bestowing Life!**

**The Story of My Life**  
**Maria Koval-Melnykovych**

- bull 8

**In Memory of**  
**Marie Pupa**

- bull 16

- **Liturgical Schedule & Announcem.** - bull 5
- **On St. Thomas** - bull 6
- **Crossword** - bull 7
- **Orthodox Christianity 101** - bull 11
- **The Church is ...** - bull 13
- **Message on the Repose of the Pope** - bull 15

**Tone 7 Troparion (Pentecostarion)**

From the sealed tomb, You shone forth, O Life! Through closed doors You came to Your Disciples, O Christ God. Renew in us, through them, an upright spirit,// by the greatness of Your mercy,  
O Resurrection of all!

**Tone 8 Kontakion (Pentecostarion)**

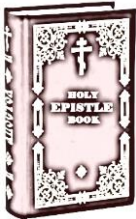
Thomas touched Your life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God, when You came to Your Apostles through closed doors.// He cried out with all: "You are my Lord and my God!"

*(The Trisagion is sung)*

**Tone 3 Prokeimenon (from the Pentecostarion)**

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power, / His understanding is beyond measure.  
*V. Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God! (Ps. 146:1)*

**The Reading is from the Acts of the Holy Apostles Acts 5:12-20**

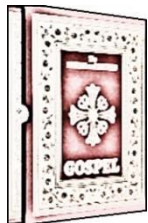


And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

**Alleluia and Verses Tone 8**

*V. Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!  
V. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King over all the earth.*

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia**



**The reading is from the Gospel according to St. John 20:19-31**

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came,

the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.



DO NOT  
*doubt*  
BUT  
**BELIEVE.**  
~  
JESUS

**Instead of "it is right in truth"**

The angel cried to the Lade Full of Grace. Rejoice, Pure Virgin, Again I say: Rejoice. Your Son is Risen from His three days in the tomb. With Himself He has raised up all the dead: Rejoice, all peoples.

**Irmos:** Shine, Shine, O New Jerusalem, for the Glory of the Lord has shone on you. Exult now and be glad. O Zion and rejoice, Pure Birth-Giver of God in the Resurrection of Your Son.

**Communion Hymn**

Receive the Body of Christ, taste the Fountain of Immortality.  
**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

**MEMORY ETERNAL**

**PLEASE PRAY FOR RESTING OF THE SOULS**

Metro Senedak, Eleanor K. Laise, Julian Naumenko, Patricia Huly, David Scharba, John Senediak, Ann & George Klein, Sophia Karpa, Iryna Farion, Charles Demetrios, Nun Antonina, Elaine Cartier, Betty Ewanish, Mary Gula, Mykola Prychodczenko, Oleksander Dmytro. Victims of the war in Ukraine.



**PRAYER LIST**

**PLEASE PRAY FOR HEALING, COMFORT,  
AND SPIRITUAL PEACE**



Metropolitan Anthony, Archbishop Daniel, Lorenzo, Rick Wilson, Walter Malys, Tom Drabick, Walter Duzzny, Lori, Christine Kline, Arlene Hawryluk, Jerry Zets, Larry, Darlene Moon, Jeff Smith, Soldier Ivan, Bernard Gnat, Dolly Mehalco, Jeff Ulbrich, Richard Scharba, Brittany, Matt, Stephen Shonn, Thelma Zemko, Artur Bohuslav, Bohdan, Lori Hayda, Shirley Duffy, Michele (Senediak) Caulder, Dobrodiyka Lilya, Sandy, Marilyn O'Leary, Alice Dobransky, Harold Owens, Dave Zylka, Marianne Carmack, Nicholas Yurchyk, Pauline Witkowsky, Eileen Maluk, Peter Anderson, Albert Auden, Michael Gino Maluk, Boris & Kathleen Vuksanovich, Kathy Zebel. People Suffering from any Illnesses. Ukrainian people suffering from war.

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

1 Jeff Ulrich	19 Anna Blair
2 Mary Lou Senediak	22 Mark Ames
3 Linda Pupa	23 Michael Crown
5 Mary M. Lane	24 Michael Zemko
8 Karen Semchee	26 Michael C Demetrios
9 Ben Mischey	27 Peter Anderson
9 Steven Novicky	27 Eileen Maluk
10 Emily Whalen	28 Michael Ace Maluk
11 Jason Zets	28 Richard Yuschak
14 Sam Rusnov	28 Samantha Moon
18 Joe Buzzelli	30 Wayne Tiedeman

**MAY BIRTHDAYS**

1 Nancy Tipple	15 Steven Telischak
1 L P Villers	16 Richard Rappach
2 Anna Anderson	16 Michael Sernulka
2 Irene Maizel	16 Katherine Anderson
7 Howard Ulbricht	19 Fr. Andy Gall
7 Julia Senediak	22 Fr. Mykola Zomchak
9 Zenon Walkowiec	24 Eryna Sanetrick
9 Andrew Betts	28 Stephanie Rimedio
10 Michael Walkowiec	28 Gregory Senediak
13 Douglas Dobransky	30 Ken Senediak

# Liturgical Schedule & Feast Days



## SERVICE AND FEAST DAY SCHEDULE

\* (HEARING CONFESSIONS ON SUNDAYS BEFORE LITURGY 8:30AM - 9:15AM)

- Sunday, April 27, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, of St. Thomas
- Sunday, May 4, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, of the Myrrh-bearing Women
- Sunday, May 11, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy**, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, of the Paralyzed Man.
- Sunday, May 18, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy**, 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, of the Samaritan Woman.
- Saturday May 24 - from noon to 4PM – **Blessing of the Graves at the Cemetery.**
- Sunday, May 25, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy at the Cemetery**, 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha, of the Blind Man. **Memorial Day. Blessing of the Graves after Liturgy.**
- Sunday, June 1, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy**, 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday, Ascension of the Lord  
**Church School Promotion & Awards Day**
- Sunday, June 8, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy**, 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday, Pentecost - Trinity Sunday.  
**First Confession.**
- Sunday, June 15, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy**, 1<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
**Recognition of our Parish Graduates. Fellowship for the Graduates/Father`s Day**

## Upcoming dates & events

- April 27 - **Brotherhood meeting** – Sunday, April 27.
- May 18 - **Last Day of Church School**
- June 1 - **Church School Promotion & Awards Day**
- June 8 - **First Confession.**
- June 15 - **Recognition of our Parish Graduates. Fellowship for the Graduates/Father`s Day**
- July 23-27, 2025 - UOL Convention in Florida – SAVE the DATE – July 23-27, 2025.

## Church School Calendar

- \* Church School – Apr 27
- \* Church School – May 4
- \* Church School – May 11
- \* Last Day of Church School – May 18
- \* Church School Awards Day – June 1

## All Saints Camp Programs 2025:



- June 18 - 21, 2025 - **St. Nicholas Program** for Special Needs Family Camp
- June 22 - 28, 2025 - **Diocesan Church School Camp** for Children 9 - 13
- June 29 - July 12, 2025 - **Teenage Conference** for Teenagers 13 - 18
- July 20 - 24, 2025 - **Mommy & Me / Daddy & Me** for Children 4 - 8 and their parents

To register for a Camp Program – please visit <https://www.uocyouth.org/campingministry>

## Pyrohy Schedule

ORDER BY DATE:	WORK DAY	WORK DAY	PICK-UP DAY
May 12	May 13	May 15	May 16



# ANNOUNCEMENTS:



• Let it be known to you of the Impending Marriage of **Peter Majetich**, son of *Steven & Elaine Majetich* with **Katherine Anderson**, daughter of *David & Anna Anderson*  
*The wedding is June 28, 2025.*

- **Need volunteers to help at the Memorial Day Picnic – May 25.**
- **Brotherhood meeting – Sunday, April 27.**

## Bulletin Dedication *(in memory or in honor)*

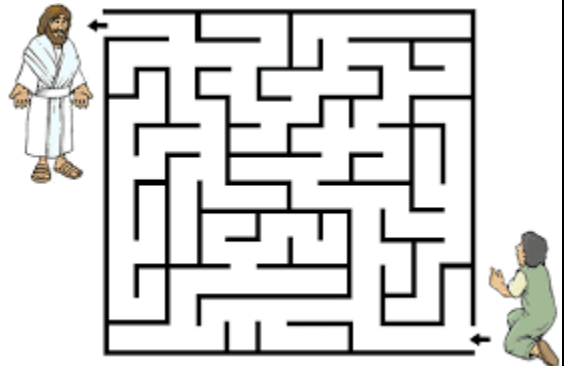
<u>Sun Apr 6</u> 1. Dedicated 2. Dedicated	<u>Sun Apr 13</u> 1. Available 2. Available	<u>Sun Apr 20</u> 1. Available 2. Available	<u>Sun Apr 27</u> 1. Dedicated 2. Available	
<u>Sun May 4</u> 1. Available 2. Available	<u>Sun May 11</u> 1. Available 2. Available	<u>Sun May 28</u> 1. Available 2. Available	<u>Sun May 25</u> 1. Dedicated 2. Available	

For bulletin dedication please call – 330-799-3830 Fr Mykola

OUR OFFERINGS TO THE LORD	On Apr 13	On Apr 18-20
General:	<b>\$ 1841.00</b>	<b>\$ 7354.00</b>
Renovation:	<b>\$ 20.00</b>	<b>\$ 165.00</b>
Online Donations on Tithe.ly	<b>\$ 20.00</b>	<b>\$ 65.00</b>

## On St. Thomas

St. Thomas the Apostle, also known as Doubting Thomas, holds a special place in Orthodox tradition. His story is one of doubt transformed into profound faith and conviction. When Thomas heard that Jesus had risen from the dead, he famously declared, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).



However, when Jesus appeared to him and invited him to touch His wounds, Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28), recognizing the divinity of Christ. This moment is a powerful testament to the Orthodox belief in the resurrection

and the divinity of Christ. St. Thomas's journey from doubt to faith teaches us that it is natural to have doubts, but true faith comes from encountering the living Christ.

His story reminds us that doubt can be a stepping stone to deeper faith, and that Jesus meets us where we are, offering us the evidence we need to believe. St. Thomas's example also teaches us humility, as he was willing to admit his doubts and seek the truth.

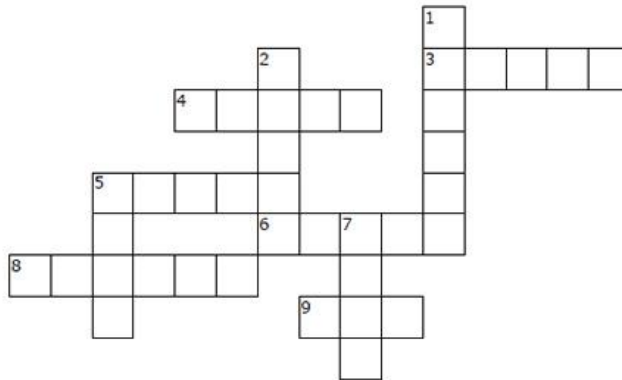
In Orthodox tradition, St. Thomas is seen as a great missionary, carrying the message of Christ's resurrection to India, where he is believed to have established the Christian community. Overall, St. Thomas's story is a powerful reminder of the transformative

power of encountering the risen Christ and the importance of seeking the truth with humility and an open heart.

## Jesus Appears to His Disciples

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." John 20:25

Based on John 20:19-31 (NIV)



### ACROSS

3. To be in a state of pleasure, satisfaction, joy or delight
4. Free from conflict; getting along with others; opposite of war
5. To be undecided or unbelieving that something is true
6. The body parts at the end of the arms
8. Not open
9. To break God's law

### DOWN

1. The disciple who would not believe without seeing
2. To believe in something for which there is no proof
5. An entrance into a building or room
7. A thin piece of metal with one pointed end and one flat end which you hit with a hammer

# THE STORY



# OF MY LIFE

## Maria Koval-Melnykovich

### “THE STORY OF MY LIFE”



Maria Koval-Melnykovich was born on November 11, 1934, in the picturesque village of the Staryi Sambir district, nestled in the Lviv region of Ukraine. Her early years were marked by hardship — raised without a father, who had gone missing during her childhood, and later displaced by Soviet policies that uprooted her family to the village of Asenivka. Despite these trials, Maria’s spirit remained unbroken.



In 1959, she married Mykola Demyanovych Koval, and together they built a family filled with love and resilience. They were blessed with two children — a daughter, Maria, and a son, Volodymyr. Maria worked tirelessly as a cook in a sanatorium for sick children, always nurturing others with her warm heart and gifted hands.



In 1991, she moved once more — this time to be closer to her grandchildren. Though she found herself alone and in need of care, she never lost her determination to work and serve. She took on jobs in restaurants and housekeeping before eventually working at a nursing home. There, her compassion and dedication earned her the deep respect of residents and colleagues alike. She worked faithfully until the age of 80, receiving multiple awards for her outstanding service.



Later in life, Maria found love again and married Vasyl Melnykovich. Together they expanded their family, lovingly raising three adopted children. In 2010, Maria suffered the loss of her beloved Vasyl, yet she continued to live with dignity, faith, and strength. She now resides alone at 5930 Astor Place in Arlington — but she is far from alone in the hearts of those who know her.



Since 1991, Maria has been a devoted and deeply beloved member of our Sts. Peter & Paul Parish. Her presence is felt in every corner of our community. She has poured her energy and talent into countless parish projects — most notably her unforgettable pyrohy (varenyky), which are cherished by all. With great joy, she often brings her homemade baked goods to share, turning simple gatherings into occasions of warmth and fellowship.



Though she has faced the challenges of age and occasional illness, Maria remains remarkably



active. She continues to lead and inspire, always proposing new ideas and initiatives for the benefit of the church. Her tireless spirit and generous heart uplift all who cross her path.

Above all, Maria is a woman of deep and abiding faith. Her days are rooted in prayer, and her life reflects the quiet strength of one who walks closely with God. She is a living example of Christian love — humble, joyful, and full of grace.

Her fellow parishioners hold her in the highest regard, grateful not only for her many contributions but for the beautiful soul that she is. Maria Koval-Melnykovych is a true blessing to our community — a woman whose life continues to inspire love, unity, and faith.

### Maria Koval-Melnykovych - April 27, 2025

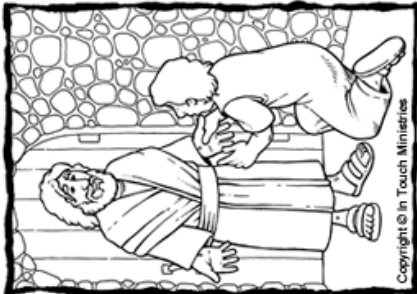
*"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

- John 20:29

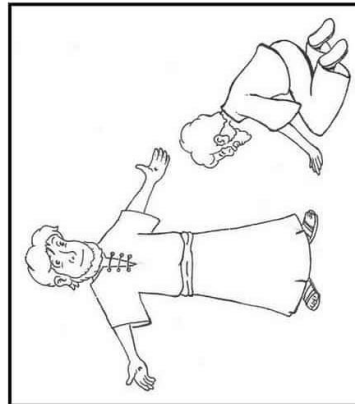
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RAMK	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**CAN YOU SPOT THE DIFFERENCE?**

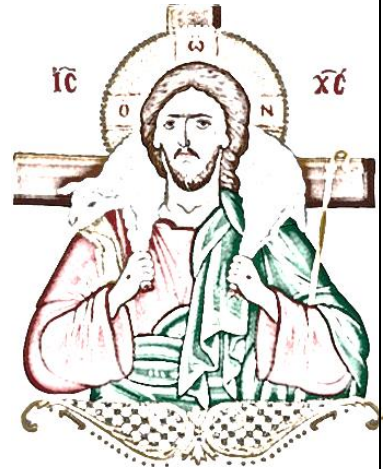


Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"  
Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me,  
you have believed; blessed are those who have not  
seen and yet have believed." John 20:28-29 NIV

# Orthodox Christianity 101

## THE MOTHER OF GOD AND THE SAINTS

We can judge the Church's attitude towards women by the high position accorded to the Most Holy Mother of God. The Church glorifies Her more than all of the saints and even more than the angels. She is praised in hymns as 'more honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim'. The Holy Virgin is the Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church — it is in Her person that the Church glorifies motherhood. Motherhood is an integral part of woman's dignity and it may be noted that those Protestant churches that have entrusted to women the celebration of the Eucharist and other priestly functions neither venerate the Mother of God nor pray to Her. Yet the church community deprived of the Mother of God loses its fullness in the same way that a community deprived



of the priesthood is not a complete Church. If fatherhood is realized in the person of the hierarchy — the episcopate and the priesthood — then motherhood is personified in the Church in the Most Holy Mother of God.

The Orthodox Church glorifies the Mother of God as Ever-Virgin (*aeiparthenos*). This term was upheld by the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 533 and emphasizes the virginity of the Mother of God before, during and after Christ's Birth. She is also called Most Holy, Most Pure and Immaculate. The Orthodox Church follows early church tradition in believing that the Holy Virgin after Her death rose again on the third day and was assumed bodily into heaven like Christ and the Old Testament saints Enoch and Elijah.

Very little is said in Holy Scripture about the Holy Virgin: her place in the New Testament is very modest, especially if we compare it with the place she occupies in the life of the Church. The veneration of the Mother of God in the Orthodox Church is based not so much on Scripture as on a centuries-old experience of many people to whom, in one way or another, the mystery of the Holy Virgin was revealed.

The Mother of God stands at the head of the host of saints glorified by the Church. The veneration of the saints and prayers addressed to them is an ancient tradition of the Church preserved from apostolic times. Accusations that the Church worships people on the same level as God, thereby breaking the commandment 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve', are unjust. Greek theology makes a clear distinction between worship (*latreia*) of God and veneration (*proskynesis*) of the saints. The latter are venerated not as gods, but as people who have attained a spiritual height and who have become united with God. The saints are closely connected with each other and with Christ. In venerating the saints we venerate Christ, Who lives in them.

Official numbering among the saints, or canonization, is a comparatively late phenomenon: there were no acts of canonization or glorification in the early Christian Church. A martyr who suffered for Christ soon after his death would become the object of reverential veneration by believers; they would pray to him and would celebrate the Liturgy on his tomb. To this very day there is a rule in the Orthodox Church whereby the Liturgy is celebrated on the relics of the martyr or a saint. This emphasizes the link between the Church on earth today, made up of living people, and the Church triumphant in heaven, made up of saints glorified by God. It also shows how the martyrs are the basis and foundation of the Church. 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity', said Tertullian.

The veneration of a particular saint is not a result of the act of canonization. Actually, the reverse is true: canonization comes as a result of the popular veneration of a saint. There are saints about whose lives almost

nothing is known, and yet their veneration is universal. A good example is St Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (the fourth century). He is glorified by Christians of both the Eastern and Western Churches, he is loved by both children and adults (Christmas holidays in the West would be unthinkable without Santa Claus visiting the home and bringing presents). Even non-Christians who pray to St Nicholas receive help from him. This universal veneration of the saint is rooted in the experience of many generations of people: he became the 'personal friend' of those thousands of individuals whom he has helped and whom he has saved from death.

Some people find it difficult to understand why it is necessary to pray to the saints when there is Christ. Yet the saints are not so much mediators between us and Christ: rather, they are our heavenly friends, able to hear to us and help us through their prayers. Someone who has no friends in heaven cannot properly understand this reverential veneration which surrounds the saints in the Orthodox Church. It has to be said, therefore, that those Christian communities which have no direct and living communion with the saints, cannot fully experience the completeness of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ uniting the living and the dead, saints and sinners.

### **THE HOLY ICONS**

In the Orthodox tradition the icon is not merely an adornment in the church building or an object to be used in worship: people pray before it, they kiss it and treat it as a sacred object.

In spite of the existence of icons from distant antiquity there have at various times been tendencies opposed to the veneration of icons. In the seventh and eighth centuries these tendencies culminated in the iconoclast heresy that was condemned at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. The perennial accusation of the iconoclasts against the venerators of icons was that of idolatry. The basic argument was the Old Testament prohibition to depicting God: 'You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God' (Ex.20:4-5). It is obvious, however, that the words quoted are directed at the idols of pagan peoples who worshipped them.

The New Testament is the revelation of God Who became man and Who could be seen by people. That which is invisible cannot be depicted in images, while that which is visible can be depicted as it is no longer the product of fantasy, but a reality. St John of Damascus presents us with the notion that the Old Testament prohibition of depicting the invisible God points towards the possibility of depicting Him when He becomes visible: 'It is obvious that when you contemplate God becoming man, then you may depict Him clothed in human form. When the invisible One becomes visible to flesh, you may then draw His likeness... Use every kind of drawing, word, or colour'.

The iconoclast heresy of the eighth century was a continuation of the Christological heresies discussed at earlier Ecumenical Councils. The defense of icons became a defense of the belief in the Incarnation of Christ, for iconoclasm was one of the ways of denying the reality of this Incarnation. For the Orthodox, the icon is not an idol substituting the invisible God, but a symbol and sign of His presence in the Church. The Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council concurred with St Basil the Great in saying that 'the honour rendered to the image goes over to the Prototype'. The Council insisted that, in bowing down to the icon, the Christian does not worship wood and colours, but the one depicted on wood — Christ, the Holy Virgin, the saints. There is therefore nothing in common between idolatry and the veneration of icons. The icon is not something standing before the human person as a sole and self-sufficient object for worship. It is not even something placed between the person and God. To use the expression of Fr Paul Florensky, the icon is a window onto the other world: through the icon the human person comes into direct contact with the spiritual world and those who live there.



# The Church is ...

We often speak of the idea of a “perfect” church—one where love is real, peace is present, and grace flows freely. And while no community is without flaws, the truth is, such a church can exist—not in perfection, but in purpose. It would exist if we all chose to live with open hearts, humble spirits, and compassionate hands. If we followed these reminders—not just with our words, but with our lives—the Church would truly become the Body of Christ in the world today.



1. The Church is not where we come to be noticed, but where we come to notice those who feel invisible.
2. It's not where we seek to be heard first, but where we learn to listen—especially to those whose voices tremble or go unheard elsewhere.
3. It's not where we come to showcase our blessings, but where we come to share them—so no one leaves in need.
4. It's not where we look for applause, but where we offer encouragement to the weary and forgotten.
5. It's not a place to prove our strength, but where we humbly hold up those who are weak.
6. It's not where we ask, “What do I get out of this?” but where we ask, “What can I give to someone else today?”
7. It's not where we seek peace for ourselves alone, but where we become peacemakers for others in turmoil.
8. It's not where we expect to be served, but where we gladly serve—even when no one is watching.
9. It's not where we compare struggles, but where we sit with others in theirs without judgment or distraction.
10. It's not where we constantly try to escape our own mess of life only, but where we enter into the mess of others with compassion and grace.

11. It's not where we come to unload our complaints, but where we come to listen to the silent cries of others—and help carry their crosses, just as Christ carried ours.

12. The Church isn't about always seeking comfort for ourselves, but about becoming comfort for someone else—offering a kind word, a silent prayer, a steady hand.

13. It's not a place where we expect to be always loved, but a place where we learn to love others as Christ loved: sacrificially, selflessly, and unconditionally—not just with words, but with presence and service.

14. It's not a place where we expect a lit path to heaven, but a place where we become a light to others—shining in places of despair, injustice, and loneliness.

15. The Church is not a gathering of perfect saints, but a family of sinners who keep showing up—who forgive each other, grow together, and strive to put others first and themselves last. Only then do they truly become the Church of Christ that through the Grace of God will be blessed!

In the end, the Church becomes what we make of it. Not the building, not the numbers of parishioners, not the variety of activities, but the hearts of the people within it is what matters. When we shift our focus from ourselves to others, from being served to serving, from seeking comfort to offering Christ—we no longer just go to church. We become the Church. A living, breathing, grace-filled presence in the world.

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*“The Church is a hospital, and not a courtroom; for souls are healed in it, not condemned.”*

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*The Church is not a place we go — it's who we become when we love, serve, and carry one another in Christ.*

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*“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

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*— John 13:35*

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## MESSAGE OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH ON THE REPOSE OF POPE FRANCIS - 22/04/2025



“In an atmosphere of great Paschal joy, this morning, Monday of Renewal Week, came the sorrowful news of the repose of Pope Francis, a precious brother in Christ, with whom from the very moment of his ascent to the papal throne, we had a fraternal friendship and collaboration for the good of our Churches, for their further rapprochement, and for the good of humanity.

Throughout these twelve years of his Papacy, he stood as a faithful friend, a fellow pilgrim and supporter of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a genuine friend of Orthodoxy, a true friend of the least of the Lord’s brethren, on whose behalf he often spoke, acted, and even washed their feet in an example of true humility and brotherly love.

We shall always remember him.

When in 2014, just one year after his election and inauguration, upon my proposal and initiative, we went to Jerusalem and prayed on our knees side by side before the Lord’s Tomb, and had meetings and discussions during those two or three days we spent together in the Holy Land; I said to him: ‘Your Holiness, in a few years we shall mark the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the convocation of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea of Bithynia. It would be a wonderful and symbolic act for us to go together, to celebrate this historic anniversary, and to speak about the further path of our sister Churches toward the common Chalice.’

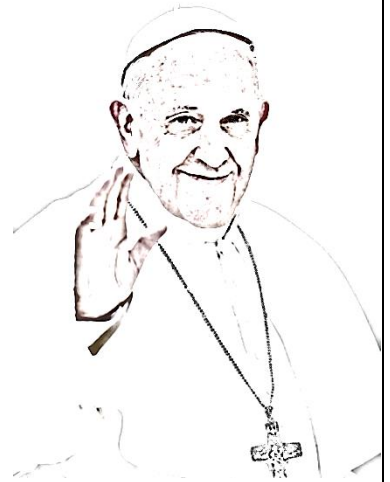
He showed enthusiasm and said: ‘It is a tremendous thought, a tremendous idea and proposal. If we are well, God willing, let us make this pilgrimage to Nicaea. If not—if the Lord does not permit it—then our successors.’

Indeed, he very much wished to come within the current year to celebrate this historic anniversary jointly, and he stated this many times in the media and to representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate who visited him from time to time in Rome.

As we say, it was not meant to be that he should come in person. If I myself am well, of course the Ecumenical Patriarchate will do something in this regard. It will not let this historic anniversary pass unnoticed. As for the Catholic Church, it will depend on the person, views, and intentions of the elected Pope—whether he will wish and when he will want to come with us to Nicaea (Iznik) and underline the importance of this great anniversary, a most significant event in the history of Christianity.

Today, as we gather at the Ecumenical Patriarchate with all the holy Hierarchs of the All Venerable Ecumenical Throne (that is, those serving in Türkiye) to exchange the fraternal greeting of the Risen Christ, we commemorate the beloved figure of the recently reposed Pope Francis and we all pray, ‘with one mouth and one heart,’ for the repose of his soul in the land of the living and in the tents of the righteous. We pray that the Lord of life and death will reward him for his many labours for the Church and humanity and will raise upon the Throne of Saint Peter a worthy successor, one who will embrace and adopt the visions of Pope Francis and continue his valuable work for all humanity—especially for Christendom, and even more particularly for the rapprochement of our sister Churches, with the ultimate goal of their full encounter in the common Chalice.

May your memory be eternal, brother Pope Francis.”



IN MEMORY OF



**MARIE  
PUPA**

+ APRIL 11, 1930

**ON THE 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
HER PASSING AWAY**



**“HER MEMORY BE  
FROM GENERATION  
TO GENERATION”**

LOVINGLY REMEMBERED BY  
SON GREG AND LINDA,  
MELISSA, MIKE, KADEN, KYLE,  
HEATHER, DAVE, ZACH, AVERY

