My Beloved Ones,

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΘΗ!
Christ is Risen!

I greet you with love and joy in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! As we come to the end of Bright Week, I would like to begin by turning our thoughts to this week’s Epistle Reading, which is not one of St. Paul’s letters. For all 40 Days of Pascha, we remind ourselves of the beginning of the earthly Church as we read from The Acts of the Apostles.

“Now many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles... The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested 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 and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life’” (Acts 5:12; 16-20). The reading for this Sunday of St. Thomas, can be seen as a kind of summary of the whole of Christ’s ministry: from calling the people to belief and healing, to conflict with the jealous rulers of the earth, and finally, the saving power of God.

This week’s Gospel also shows us the fulfillment of this salvation. Eight days after the Resurrection, the Disciples hid fearfully in the Upper Room. Even so, our Lord appeared to them from behind a locked door, where He broke bread, showed them the marks of the nails and the spear, before granting them the gift of remission of sins through the Holy Spirit. (John 20:19-23). Since Thomas was absent, he wished to see these things, and when our Lord granted his request to feel the marks, Thomas cried, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:27-28). We honor St. Thomas this Sunday because of his declaration that our Lord was both fully Man and fully God, and that through His Resurrection, we can turn to Him for strength and comfort to help us with weakness and doubt.

This first Sunday after Pascha is called Antipascha, which means “in the place of Pascha,” because now every Sunday of the year is dedicated to the Resurrection. Therefore, let us continue to joyfully praise the great mercy and power of our Creator’s loving desire to undergo even Crucifixion, so that we may join Him in the saving work of “...all the words of this Life...”

+ALEXIOS
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