

# Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebastia

2021-03-09

## St. Thomas Orthodox Church

A Parish of the [Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America](#)



### To our visitors...

Welcome! We hope your time with us is healing and worshipful. Please note that, although we have much respect for other Christian traditions, Holy Communion is reserved for properly prepared members of the Orthodox faith. Everyone is invited to partake of the blessed bread after the conclusion of the Liturgy.

May God's blessing be upon you!

## Hymns in Today's Liturgy

### ***Apolytikion* for the Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebastia (Tone 1)**

Be Thou entreated for the sake of the sufferings of Thy Saints which they endured for Thee, O Lord, and do Thou heal all our pains, we pray, O Lover of mankind.

### ***Apolytikion* of St. Thomas (Tone 3)**

O Holy Apostle Thomas, intercede to the merciful God, that He grant unto our souls forgiveness of sins.

### **Ordinary *Kontakion* (Tone 2)**

O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant, O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession, and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

## Epistle

### **Hebrews 12:1–10**

Brethren, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely; and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus: the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him Who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? "My son: do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by Him; for the Lord disciplines him whom He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short

time at their pleasure, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness.

## Gospel

### Matthew 20:1–16

The Lord spoke this parable: “The kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’ So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.”

## Synaxarion

On 9 March, in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the holy Great Forty Martyrs, who were martyred in the city of Sebastia of Pontus.

We fill up the lack in Thy sufferings, O Savior:  
For behold, the bones of us forty are broken.  
On the ninth, forty men's bones were broken.

All of these martyrs were Roman soldiers. When their commander threatened to strip them of their ranks, one of them responded, “Not only the honor of being a soldier, but take away our bodies, for nothing is more dear or honorable to us than Christ our God.” The angry torturers bound all of the holy martyrs and tossed them into the freezing lake. The torturers even heated a bath by the lake in sight of the

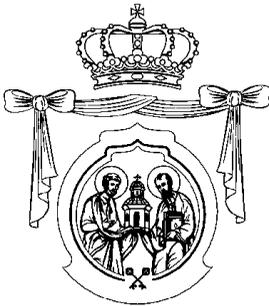
frozen men. One lost his courage and entered the bath. An extraordinary light appeared from Heaven and 39 wreaths descended upon their heads. Upon seeing this, a guard on the shore removed his clothes, confessed the Name of the Lord Jesus and entered the lake so that he could become worthy of the fortieth wreath, which indeed descended upon him. The local bishop, Peter, with his clergy went out into the dark of night and beheld the martyrs shining brightly in the water. Bishop Peter honorably buried them in 320.

By their holy intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

## Upcoming Events

|                  |  |       |               |
|------------------|--|-------|---------------|
| <b>Wednesday</b> | Daily Vespers  | 18:00 | St. Thomas    |
|                  | Parish Council                                       | 19:00 | <i>Online</i> |
| <b>Thursday</b>  | <i>Paraklesis</i>                                    | 18:30 | Holy Trinity  |
|                  | Orthros and Divine Liturgy for the Saturday of Souls | 08:30 | St. Thomas    |
| <b>Saturday</b>  | National Orthodox Youth Retreat                      | 12:00 | <i>Online</i> |
|                  | Great Vespers  | 18:00 | St. Thomas    |

We will stream services live and post updates on [our Facebook page](#), on [our Periscope channel](#), and on [our YouTube channel](#).



The Most Rev. Metropolitan JOSEPH,  
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The Right Rev. Bishop BASIL,  
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