



## THE ST. THOMAS CROSS

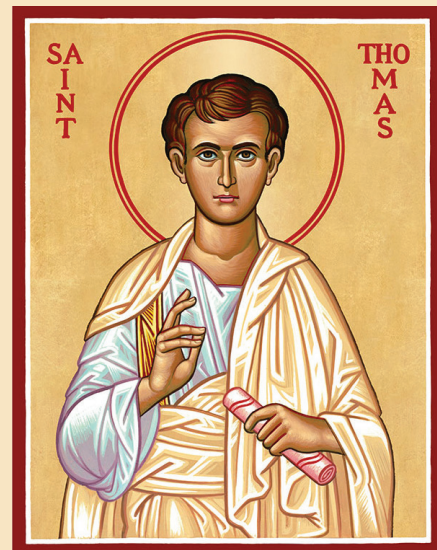
St. Thomas the Apostle is said to have designed this cross during his ministry in India. It is used commonly in the Eastern Church (instead of a crucifix), and is placed on the altar during the celebration of the Mass.

The cross is very symbolic:

- The steps at the bottom of the cross represent the climb to Golgotha (the mount on which Jesus was crucified)
- The cross is sitting on a Lotus flower, symbolizing Christianity supplanting itself over Buddhism (the predominant religion in India)
- The curved edges of the cross reflect flowers and therefore fruition and fertility rooted in our Christian life
- The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove over the cross — without the Body of Jesus — reminds us of the empty tomb and the glory of resurrected life.

A St. Thomas Cross currently graces the altar, generously provided by Fr. Joseph Kappilumakkal.

May this representation of our Patron Saint bring us in closer in unity with the World Church.



**Did you know that  
St. Thomas the Apostle  
is the Patron Saint of  
architects?**

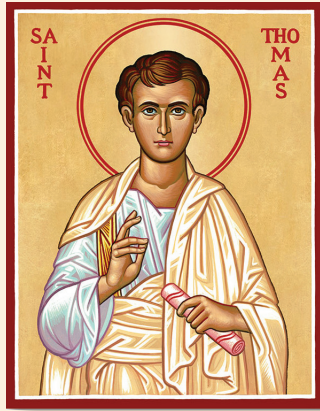
Stop by the Narthex this weekend to help build up our faith community with spiritual bricks. Begin thinking about:

*How do you build up  
St. Thomas the Apostle parish?*

*What builds you up at  
St. Thomas the Apostle parish?*

*How can St. Thomas the  
Apostle parish continue to be  
built up?*

Hope to see you at this  
celebration of our Patron  
Saint!



# THE ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS

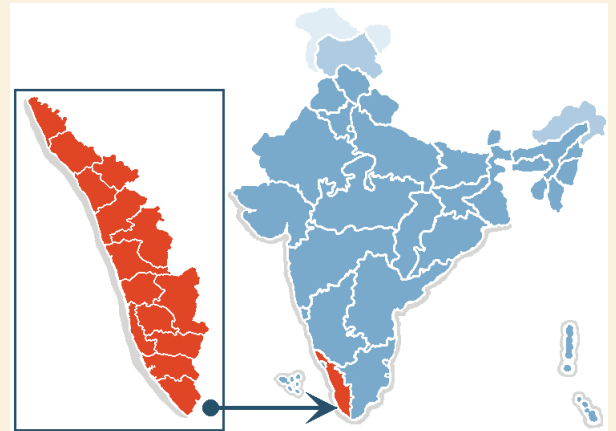
*This is a portion of the homily that was delivered by Fr. Joseph Kappilumakkal for the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle on July 3, 2022.*

*This year is the 1,950<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his martyrdom.*

Two books are attributed to him: 1) *The Acts of Thomas* and 2) *The Gospel according to Thomas*. They are considered Apocryphal books – not canonical – but a lot of historical evidence is available through these writings.

After the Pentecost, Thomas traveled to the Jewish colonies of the east and reached India in 52 AD. He reached the South Western state of India, namely Kerala (the highlighted area in the map to the right).

Thomas preached the Gospel in Kerala and established seven geographical parishes. He then moved to the adjacent state of Tamil Nadu. There he was martyred by a lance in 72 AD. Upon the site Thomas was buried stands the St. Thomas Cathedral.



The Christians of India are called St. Thomas Christians.

In India, Christians are only 2.5 percent of the population, but in Kerala there is a 22 percent Christian population. There are a large number of vocations, and many priests and nuns are working all over the world — including me here.

In America, there is one diocese known as the St. Thomas Syro Malabar diocese — here in Chicago, established in 2001. Its cathedral — Mar (Lord) Thoma (Thomas) Sleeha (Apostle) — is in Bellwood, off St. Charles road. There are also Syro Malabar dioceses in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. There are 50 parishes and 35 missions connected to the Diocese in the United States.

There are five Saints of Indian origin and 27 awaiting canonization as Blessed and Beatified, as well as Servants of God. The most recent saint from India is Devasahayam Pilla (name equivalent to Lazarus), canonized on May 16, 2022.