



Understanding the Daily Declarations

*A Brief Introduction
to the Fifteen Declarations
of the Holy Faith*

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Introduction

Thomasines believe the doctrines of these Daily Declarations were handed down to us by the Apostles and their successors. The text of the Declarations have been clarified over the years to present a clear understanding to new believers and those seeking information about our faith.

It is my hope that this page will assist in bringing even greater clarity for the brethren and for the public, in understanding each of the Declarations.

The Declarations as printed in this pamphlet are from the 2010 authorised edition.

May God bless you,
Isaac Mitch Adams, *Archdeacon for the Thomasine Church*

Understanding the Daily Declarations

I. I declare myself to be a servant of Yahweh God.

A. There are many deities that are worshipped in the world, however, Thomasines believe in and worship only one God, Yahweh, who is known as God the Father and the Creator of all that is good. He is the Divine Source – the Source of Truth and Light.

B. Other names of God include the Aramaic "Mar-Yah" which means "Lord Yahweh," and "Ya." This is often found in the phrase "Halleluyah", meaning "Praise Yahweh." Within English texts, the Hebrew form of God's Name is often depicted with the four letters "YHWH."

II. I declare myself to be one who worships the one and only Yahweh God who is in Jesus (Yeshua) Christ.

A. The first declaration is repeated in the sense of affirming our worship of the "one and only" true God Yahweh. In this English edition, it mentions our belief that God's presence was in Jesus Christ. This does not indicate that Thomasines believe as do some other Christians in a triune Godhead, but rather, in the divinity of Christ.

B. Our belief in the divinity of Christ is an acknowledgement of the Source of His strength and power and that it was Yahweh, His Father, who sent our Lord to the earth.

C. Christ is thought of as the Mirror of God and His Will.

III. I declare myself to be one who guards our Most Holy Faith from any attack by its enemy.

A. Thomasines believe in living a peaceful life among each other and amongst those of the world. However, while Thomasines practice peace towards all peoples, they are also responsible for protecting the Faith, the Holy Church and its people from those who are bent on destruction. This does not necessarily mean taking up arms, but this is more on the level of defending the Church's beliefs about its Scriptures, Traditions and Revelations.

B. If the members are physically attacked, believers are permitted to defend themselves appropriately.

IV. I declare my intentions to be steadfast in the belief of One God who is made known through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three aspects in One Supreme Godhead.

A. Thomasine believe that God reveals His Will and purposes, not only by His own being, but also through His Son and by the Holy Spirit. We refer to each of these as “aspects” within one Godhead.

B. According to Thomasine belief, the "Godhead" is the all-encompassing Sovereign Power that rules over humankind. To us, this does not mean there are three "persons" or "three beings" as one God. This is why we use the term "aspects" or "facets". The Godhead is how the Father rules over the heavens and the earth and how He delegates power to His Son, and other celestial beings.

V. I declare my belief in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God.

A. Thomasines believe, as mentioned above, that Christ is the Son of God. He was sent into the world to offer salvation to Israel and to the world as one of the most important Divine Messengers in the history of all humanity.

B. While we believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and that he is full of the power of God, we do not believe that he is equal to Almighty God the Father. While we speak of his worship, we do not worship Christ in the same manner as we worship the One God Yahweh.

VI. I declare my belief in the prophecy of Moses and the truth of the Law given through him.

A. The prophecy of Moses is thought of as the teachings which he handed down to the elders of Israel. The Law is none other than the Aurayta (Torah) given by God through Moses and the elders.

B. Additional laws and traditions were instituted by Moses, and these too are upheld by Thomasines.

VII. I declare my belief in the written Word of God the Scriptures given to Moses and to the Prophets and in the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

A. For Thomasines, there are Three Pillars of the Faith. These include: Scripture, Tradition, Revelation. The Scriptures contain the written words, history, instructions, psalms, praises and prayers of men who were inspired to record

these words of God.

B. The "Scriptures given to Moses" are those of the Law, often referred to as the first five books of the "Old Testament."

C. The Scriptures given to the Prophets are the texts of Scriptures containing the prophetic words of the Lord. These are also referred to as Revelation, all of began to be given in the early history of the Bible.

D. A glimpse of the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be seen in the words of the Prophets recorded in the "Old Testament," but also within the Law of Moses. That Gospel is contained in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and upheld by the Apostles in their writings.

VIII. I declare my belief in the Fire of the Word of God.

A. The "Fire of the Word of God" is a phrase that Thomasines use to refer to the Three Pillars of the Faith (Scripture, Tradition, Revelation), and the divine power and Source behind those Pillars.

B. This special "fire" is called a "Holy Fire of the Godhead" and it fills the believer with the truth of God. It permits the believe to have a special insight into the truths of God as revealed in the Three Pillars.

IX. I declare that I will resolutely never permit the Fire entrusted to me as a servant of God to be extinguished as long as there is breath within my body.

A. The ninth Declaration is a personal affirmation where one re-commits ones self to the sanctity of the Three Pillars and the importance of upholding them day to day.

B. Being a servant of God comes with the responsibility of holding up the holiness of the Holy Fire throughout the believer's entire life no matter what challenges he or she may face in doing so.

X. I declare my rejection of those who encroach upon all that is sacred in the Holy Land.

A. While Thomasines are expected to defend the Scriptures, traditions and revelations of the Church, along with her members, they are also expected to defend the Holy Land.

B. Thomasines believe the Holy Land, specifically Israel and its capital Jerusalem, was granted to the Jewish people by God Himself and as such, the right of Jews to live in the land, and to return to it from other countries, must be upheld.

C. Thomasines support the nation of Israel and believe in its government's right to defend itself from terrorist attacks, but Thomasines do not agree with Israel's government policies when they are clearly out of line with Biblical principles.

XI. I declare that the traditions and teachings given to us through the Holy Apostles shall always be within my heart and on my lips, for it was they who gave us, through our Lord Jesus: 1) baptism, 2) confession to God and to man, 3) the doctrine of the Twelve, 4) the sacred ministry, 5) anointing by the sacred oil of Yahweh, 6) the gathering together to break the Holy Bread of the Presence, 7) raising up of the Cross before my eyes and before the peoples, 8) assistance and prayer with anointing with oil of those who fall into illness, 9) observance of and devotion to the Word of the Fire of God, and 10) holy matrimony.

A. Again we see in this Declaration an affirmation of upholding the Pillars of the Faith. It speaks of the teachings of the Holy Apostles (the original Twelve and those who came after them) always being upon the believer's heart (genuine belief) and upon his or her lips (serving as a living witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ).

B. Thomasines believe the doctrines which were handed down by the Apostles and their successors, were originally taught by our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

C. The teachings of the Apostles, as they are outlined in this particular Declaration, are viewed as the Ten Sacraments of the Thomasine Faith.

1. Baptism. Baptism is the entry into the faith by immersion (our pouring) in water and in spirit. Baptism is one of the steps to a believer's new life in the faith.

a. Within the Thomasine faith, chrismation is followed after baptism. This "seals" the believer in the Spirit of holiness.

b. After chrismation, the believer undergoes confirmation. This is a process where the individual believer publicly affirms his or her stand with the Church and where the body of believers accepts the individual as one of their own brothers or sisters.

c. While children can be dedicated, they are not usually baptised or confirmed until they have reached an age of reason, where they understand the faith and what is required of them as believers. Thomasines have naming and dedication ceremonies for infants.

2. Confession to God and to man. Thomasines believe in the sacrament of confession. Confession is necessary when there are grave sins that have been committed.

a. Confession is to both God (in private prayer) and to man (our fellow brothers and sisters, and to a spiritual counsellor appointed within the Church)

b. The spiritual counsellor is often a scribe, priest or senior deacon. He or she listens carefully to the believer's confession, and instead of harshly condemning the repentant individual, he or she provides proper guidance and counsel from the Three Pillars of the Faith

c. Penance is necessary after making one's grievous sins known to our confessor.

1) The spiritual counsellor may prescribe penance in the form of additional volunteer work in humanitarian services, volunteering at one's church for activities that one would not normally participate, cooking or serving others, reciting additional prayers and Scriptures, etc.

2) One of the most common methods of penance is by making a sacrifice. Sacrifices may include offering a larger amount of food in one's alms-giving, or dedicating one's farm animal to the community (especially if it can provide food for others within the congregation or for the hungry in the world).

3. The doctrine of the Twelve. As has been mentioned above, the doctrine of the Twelve consists of the Three Pillars. These are teachings given by Christ Jesus to the Apostles. It also specifically refers to the text known as the Didache.

4. The sacred ministry. Thomasines view the ordination into holy orders as a sacrament. Ordination is not taken lightly, and it is a practice that is very rare since most people do not qualify for various functions of the ministry these days.

a. There is a specific hierarchy within the Thomasine Church which includes the Teacher of Righteousness, bishops, an archdeacon, priests and deacons.

b. Aside from those mentioned in the list above, there are other functions within the congregation that are fulfilled by lay ministers and others as they are required.

5. Anointing by the sacred oil of Yahweh. In this Declaration, the anointing of the sacred oil is in reference to the clergy.

a. When individuals are appointed to the clergy, they are anointed on the backs of the hands and upon the forehead with small amount of oil on the right forefinger of the consecrator if it is available, although it is not a requirement.

b. When a new Teacher of Righteousness is anointed, the oil is poured over his head, the backs and palms of the hands and upon the tops of both feet.

c. Olive oil is usually used in the sacrament of anointing, although some others may be used if authorised.

6. The gathering together to break the Holy Bread of the Presence. In the sixth Declaration we have mention of the Holy Qurbana, or Communion.

a. Holy Qurbana is the receiving of the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ Jesus.

b. Only baptised members may receive Qurbana. It is requested that the un-baptised

peacefully go outside or leave the congregation before Qurbana is offered. There is another service on Friday nights which offers blessed (not consecrated) bread and wine or water to catechumens. This was once referred to as the Bread of Fellowship. The Blessed Bread and Wine (or water) may be received by any member or any visitor to the local church or Thomasine family. It is blessed after welcoming the Sabbath on Friday evening.

c. Flat wheat bread and red wine are used for the offering. The bread is placed in the mouth of the believer and never in the hands except in some extreme circumstance.

d. It is always a priest or a deacon that distributes the bread. In some cases, a lay person might be required to distribute the bread, especially in an area where believers are isolated.

e. Traditionally Holy Qurbana takes place on Saturday morning (Sabbath), and in some cases, on Friday evening.

7. Raising up of the Cross before my eyes and before the peoples. When Thomasines say they are raising up the Cross, they are indicating that they are professing their faith in the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and what that sacrificed means. Raising up the cross "before the peoples," is in reference to one's active evangelism and how the believer carries him or herself in the world.

a. In the Thomasine Church, there is a ritual during the services where the priest or deacon raises up a Crucifix before the congregation. After the Crucifix or cross is raised up, the priest or deacon says, "Behold! The sliwa of Christ." The congregation stands and says, "Halleluyah, Halleluyah! I raise up the Cross before my eyes {with crossed hands before the eyes} and before the peoples (with crossed hands, palms facing forward)." The priest or deacon says, "We thank you, Yeshua Mshikha, for the work you did on the Cross." The congregation, with heads lowered, responds by saying, "Thanks be to Maran Yeshua Mshikha." The priest or deacon says, "Thanks be to Maran Yeshua forever and ever." The people, with both forefingers and both index fingers upon the forehead, respond with Amen and make the sign of the Cross and sit.

8. Assistance and prayer with anointing with oil of those who fall into illness. This Declaration refers to those who are either spiritually or physically ill.

a. A priest or deacon may anoint a physically ill member of the faith or a catechumen, reciting specific verses from the Psalms.

b. Those who have become spiritually sick due to neglecting prayer, not upholding the Three Pillars or after confession and repentance of a grave sin, are anointed by a priest or deacon.

c. Prayer is a necessary component of the rite of anointing a sick person with oil.

d. As is the case with the fifth Declaration, olive oil is the standard if it is available, although water that has been blessed by a priest or deacon may be used if necessary.

9. Observance of and devotion to the Word of the Fire of God.

10. Holy matrimony. Marriage within the Thomasine Church is not looked upon lightly. In fact, much preparation and maturity (physical, mental and spiritual) is required of a couple before a marriage can be authorised by the bishop.

a. Before marriage may be granted, a couple must undergo counselling to insure that both partners are ready for this step in their lives.

b. Marriage is permitted only between two individuals. The Thomasine Church, no matter what country it may reside, does not practice polygamy.

c. While marital arrangement is the norm in some countries where Thomasine may reside but not in others, a bishop's permission is always required before a couple may receive the rite of matrimony - even if the marriage was pre-arranged during the couple's childhood by the parents.

d. Divorce may only take place if one of the partners has become unfaithful or has passed away. Only a bishop may grant a divorce, but only as last resort. If appropriate, the bishop will likely require the couple to undergo marriage counselling to work out their problems in a civilised manner.

e. If a partner has lost their husband or wife due to death, an annulment is still necessary before the living partner may remarry. Only a bishop may annul a marriage.

f. Although clerics may marry, it is highly encouraged that they remain single so as to give themselves entirely to the work of Christ.

g. If a cleric is to receive a divorce due to unfaithfulness on his or her part, that cleric will likely be removed from the clergy for the rest of his or her life.

h. Marriage is only permitted between believers.

XII. I declare my belief in the peaceful life, and I will not take up the sword against my brother.

A. While, as noted in the comments on the third Declaration, believers defend the Three Pillars of the Faith from attack, members never take up arms against their own brothers and sisters.

1. If one member physically attacks another, the one being attacked is permitted to appropriately act in self-defence.

2. Any member who physically attacks another is subject to excommunication by the bishop.

XIII. I declare my belief in the Revelation of God through His servants the angels and spirits for the good of all mankind and in the progress to the Great Light of God.

A. In this thirteenth Declaration we have the believer's affirmation of belief in the Third Pillar – Revelation. The believer acknowledges that this revelation derives from God and is given to the celestial beings for assisting humanity in progressing in the truth according to the Will of God.

B. Personal interpretation and personal revelation is never practised within the Thomasine Church.

XIV. I declare my belief in observing the Law given to Moses and ratified by being sealed in the blood of the Lamb.

A. Thomasine are non-selective in the observance of the Aurayta (Torah), or Law of Moses given at Sinai.

B. While individuals among the Thomasines are at different levels of observance, the goal of the entire Church is to be perfected in the Way of Messiah, which is the Torah, and ratified by Christ on the Cross.

C. It should be obvious that some requirements within the Law can not be carried out due to the lack of a proper Temple in Jerusalem at this time. Biblical prophecy indicates

that animal sacrifices will return when the Temple is rebuilt.

D. Because Christ said that worship of God and love of our neighbour is paramount in our practice of the Law, Thomasines practice a "sending away" of those in the congregation who practice sin without repentance. For example, if one commits murder, not only would he be excommunicated (not permitted to receive Qurbana), but would also be removed from membership of the church and not permitted to return without permission of the Bishop. The practice of "sending away" or "casting outside the camp" is practised in place of stoning.

XV. I declare that I will resolutely honour and defend the Chair of St. Moses and the Throne of St. James and the Presence of the Archangel Michael through the continuation of the Twelve Holy Apostles who are always with us.

A. The Chair of Moses is a phrase that indicates the authority of the Law given by God at Sinai to His Prophet Moses.

B. The phrase in reference to St. James' Throne, refers to the authority of the Apostle James (Mar Ya'aqub the Righteous) and those who are appointed to sit upon his Throne. This throne was established by Messiah through his apostle Peter as head of the Church universal, and Mar Ya'aqub was appointed as the head of the Church at Jerusalem, and wherever its members reside in the world.

C. When Thomasines speak of the Presence of the Archangel Michael, they are referring to their belief that St. Michael is one of the appointed protectors of Israel and the Church. As long as the Church is faithful to the teaching of Jesus Christ, the presence of St. Michael will abide with her.

D. When referring to the "continuation of the Twelve Holy Apostles", Thomasines understand this to indicate Apostolic Succession.

E. The phrase "who are always with us" in the fifteenth Declaration refers to the belief that the spirit of the first century Apostles remains with those who are their successors.

NOTES

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