

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

SERVICES

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.



April 30, 2017 – Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

By Saint Gregory Palamas

The resurrection of the Lord is the regeneration of human nature. It is the resuscitation and re-creation of the first Adam, whom sin led to death, and who because of death, again was made to retrace his steps on the earth from which he was made. The resurrection is the return to immortal life. Whereas no one saw that first man when he was created and given life—because no man existed yet at that time—woman was the first person to see him after he had received the breath of life by divine inbreathing. For after him, Eve was the first human being. Likewise no one saw the second Adam, who is the Lord, rise from the dead, for none of his followers were nearby and the soldiers guarding the tomb were so shaken that they

were like dead men. Following the resurrection, however, it was a woman who saw Him first before the others, as we have heard from Saint Mark's Gospel today. "After his resurrection Jesus appeared on the morning of the Lord's Day [Sunday] to Mary Magdalene first."

...The Myrrhbearers are all those women who followed with the mother of the Lord, stayed with her during those hours of the salvific passion, and with pathos anointed him with myrrh. After Joseph and Nicodemos asked for and received the body of the Lord from Pilate, they took it down from the cross, wrapped it in a cloth with strong spices, placed it in a carved out tomb, and closed the door of the tomb with a large stone. The Myrrhbearers were close by and watched, and as the Evangelist Mark relates, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated opposite the grave. With the expression "and the other Mary" he means the mother of Christ without a doubt. She was also called the mother of Iakovos [James] and Joses, who were the children of Joseph, her betrothed. It was not only they who were watching the entombment of the Lord but also the other women. As Saint Luke relates:

"And the women, also, who had come with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher and how his body was laid. These women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of Iakovos, and the other women who were with them."

He writes that they went and bought spices and myrrh; for they did not yet clearly know that he is truly the perfume of life for those who approach him in faith, just as he is also the odor of death for those who remain unbelievers to the end. They did not yet clearly know that the odor of his clothes, the odor of his own body, is greater than all perfumes, that his name is like myrrh that is poured out to cover the world with his divine fragrance. For those who wanted to remain close by the body, the contrived an antidote of perfumes for the stench of decomposition and anointed it.

Thus they prepared the myrrh and the spices and rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. For they had not yet experienced the true sabbath, nor did they understand that exceedingly blessed sabbath that transports us from the confines of hell to the perfection of the bright and divine heights of heaven. Saint Luke says that "on the first day of the week, very early in the morning," they came to the sepulchre bearing the spices that they had prepared. And Saint Matthew says that those who came "late on the Sabbath towards the dawn of the Lord's day" were two in number. Saint John says that it was only Mary Magdalene who came, and that it was "morning, even though it was still dark." But Saint Mark says that three women came very early in the morning on the first day of the week. By "the

first day of the week” all the Evangelists mean the Lord’s Day [Sunday] and they use expressions like “late on the Sabbath,” “early dawn,” “early dawn,” “early morning,” “morning,” and “even though it was still dark” [to refer to the Lord’s Day which is Sunday]. They mean the daybreaking hour when the darkness fights with the light and the hour when the eastern part of the horizon begins to become light as it presages the day....

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary – who was, of course, the Mother of the Lord – went to look at the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake: for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards did shake and become like dead men. The other women came after the earthquake and the flight of the guards, and found the grave open and the stone rolled back.... "And the angel answered the women and said: fear not. Do you seek the Christ whom they crucified? He is risen. Here is the place where the Lord was placed. If you see the soldiers overcome with fear, do not be afraid. I know that you seek the Christ whom they crucified. He is risen. He is not here. For not only can He not be held by the keys, the bars, and the seals of hell, of death, and of the grave, but he is even the Lord of the immortal angels of heaven, and the only Lord of the whole world. See the place where the Lord lay. Go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead." And they departed, he says, with fear and great joy....

But even with all that they had heard on the same day of the resurrection from the Myrrhbearers, from Peter, and even from Luke and Cleopas that the Lord lives and that they had seen him, the disciples showed disbelief. That is why He castigates them when he appeared to all of them gathered together. When, however, he showed them many times through the witness of many that he was alive, not only did they all believe but they preached it everywhere.

Their voice poured out on all the earth and their words spread to the ends of the earth; and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by signs that accompanied it. For until the teaching is preached to all the earth, the signs were indispensable. Exceptional signs were needed to represent and certify the truth of the message. But excellent signs are not needed for those who accept the word through firm belief. Who are these [who have firm belief]? They are those whose deeds bear witness [to their faith]. “Show me your faith in your deeds,” he says. “Who is faithful? Let him manifest it with the deeds of his good life.” For who will believe that he who commits wicked acts and is oriented to the earth and material things has a true, exalted, great, and heavenly understanding which is, so to speak, exactly what piety is? Brethren, what does it profit a man to say that he has divine faith if he does not have deeds analogous to the faith? What did the

lamps profit the foolish maidens when they had no oil, in other words, the deeds of love and of compassion? What did it profit that rich man who, when he was burning in the unquenchable flame because of his indifference to Lazarus, invoked the father of Abraham? What did it profit that a man to accept an invitation to the divine wedding and that incorruptible bridal chamber when he did not have a suitable garment of good deeds? Of course, in so much as he believed anyway, he received an invitation and went to sit amongst those holy ones who were at the banquet. But he also received the examination and was ashamed because he was clothed in the wickedness of his attitude and works, through which his hands and feet were tied and he was lowered to Gehenna where wailing and gnashing of teeth reverberates. May no one who has the name of Christ experience [such a thing]. Rather let us all manifest a life analogous with the faith and enter the bridal chamber of unstained joy and eternal life with the saints, which is the resting place of all who perceive the true joy. (*abridged from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7

In those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Mark 15:43-16:8

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where He was laid.

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” So they went out and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Parish Life in Pictures



Above left: Fr. Joseph consults with cantor Herman Blaydoe before the Burial Service on Great Friday. *Above right:* “Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, you everlasting doors...” Fr. Joseph knocks on the door of the church during Resurrection Matins. *Below:* Fr. Joseph prepares to move the plaschanitsa (cloth

icon of the dead body of Christ) from the Tomb to the altar table (where it remains throughout the paschal season) during Compline of Holy Saturday.



On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 127:

Self-denial and the Holy Cross



“Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.’ (Matthew 16:24-25 RSV)

No one can practice true stewardship without practicing true self-denial. Self-denial and the Holy Cross lie directly in the path of every Christian who is truly following Christ. *“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”* Christian discipleship requires self-denial, self-sacrifice, even to laying down of life itself, if need be, for the sake of Him who took up His Cross and followed the will of His heavenly Father.

Orthodox Christians who see Christ on the Holy Cross are bound to withhold nothing that they possess, however dear it may be to them. If true Christians have any possession (including wealth, talents and time) that can be used to lead others to see and believe in the same Christ on the Holy Cross, they are to use those

possessions freely for that purpose. In His infinite wisdom, our heavenly Father has so designed His creation that he has chosen to use human agents to be co-workers with Him in the salvation of all humankind.

In fact, all of the heavenly realm is actively working to extend the Truth of the Holy Cross to all peoples, nations and tongues. If those who profess their Orthodox Christianity, their Baptism and Chrismation, as being signs of a life given back to God for His purposes do not let their *light shine before others* (see Matthew 5:16 RSV) they are neglecting not only their own Orthodoxy, but are ignoring the clear words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

How often do we find ourselves thinking about how much has been given for the extension of the Kingdom of God? Rather we should find ourselves thinking about how much has been held back from God's treasury. We should often consider how much of that which has been held back has been used for the pleasures and desires that simply gratify our own wills. How often do we find ourselves thinking about all those who faithfully do the work of God, are good stewards, are the people we would surely like to be? And then we close our eyes to the resources, talents and time that we have that can enable us to be just like them.

We love being at home. We love relaxing. We love entertaining ourselves. Ponder, rather, the needs of others. Then act for them in going, giving, working. *(from acrod.org)*

UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

The Young Women's Encounter and the Altar Boy Retreat (ABR) are scheduled for 25-28 June. The ABR is open to our Altar Boys ages 8-18. More information will be coming out on this event in the near future.

YWE registration information is now available on the diocesan website. The 40th Anniversary Alumni Day will be held at Camp Nazareth on Saturday, May 20, 2017. Family Day will be held at Camp Nazareth on Sunday, June 11, 2017. Keep an eye out for further details in future bulletins, or navigate your way to www.campnazareth.org.

CAMP NAZARETH

Camp Nazareth is eagerly awaiting and preparing for the arrival of the Summer Camping Season, and registration is now open. Apostle Thomas campers will be attending Week 2, July 23-29, 2017. May 15th is the deadline for clergy and volunteer applications, and is the last day for registrants to receive the \$20 early bird discount. For more information, please visit the Camp website.

REGISTRATION FOR CAMP WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO BE DONE ONLINE THROUGH THE CAMP'S WEBSITE – CAMPNAZARETH.ORG.



Left: “Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!” Fr. Joseph censes the faithful during the singing of the Paschal canon during Resurrection Matins. *Right:* The Artos which was blessed on Pascha, processed around the church on Bright Tuesday and blessed and distributed on St. Thomas Sunday.

COMMEMORATED TODAY: APOSTLE JAMES, THE BROTHER OF ST JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN

The Holy Apostle James, the son of Zebedee, was the brother of Saint John the Theologian, and one of the Twelve Apostles. He and his brother, Saint John, were called to be Apostles by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who called them the “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). It was this James, with John and Peter, who witnessed the Raising of the Daughter of Jairus, the Lord’s Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Saint James, after the Descent of the Holy Spirit, preached in Spain and in other lands, and then he returned to Jerusalem. He openly and boldly preached Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, and he denounced the Pharisees and the Scribes with the words of Holy Scripture, reproaching them for their malice of heart and unbelief.

The Jews could not prevail against Saint James, and so they hired the sorcerer Hermogenes to dispute with the apostle and refute his arguments that Christ was the promised Messiah Who had come into the world. The sorcerer sent to the apostle his pupil Philip, who was converted to belief in Christ. Then Hermogenes himself became persuaded of the power of God, he burned his books of magic, accepted holy Baptism and became a true follower of Christ.

The Jews persuaded Herod Agrippa (40-44) to arrest the Apostle James and sentence him to death (Acts 12:1-2). Eusebius provides some of the details of the saint's execution (CHURCH HISTORY II, 9). Saint James calmly heard the death sentence and continued to bear witness to Christ. One of the false witnesses, whose name was Josiah, was struck by the courage of Saint James. He came to believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. When they led the apostle forth to execution, Josiah fell at his feet, repenting of his sin and asking forgiveness. The apostle embraced him, gave him a kiss and said, "Peace and forgiveness to you." Then Josiah confessed his faith in Christ before everyone, and he was beheaded with Saint James in the year 44 at Jerusalem. Saint James was the first of the Apostles to die as a martyr. *(from oca.org)*

First Confession Class of 2017



Left to Right:
Luke Connour,
Olivia Brady,
Addison Robin-
son, and Aurora
Rodzianko com-
pleted their First
Confession class
just in time for
Pascha. They were
recognized after
liturgy last Sun-
day.

Congratulations,
and many years!



May Anniversaries and Birthdays



Anniversaries:

Ronnie & Katrina Robinson 1st Kari & Mary Diane David 4th
Alex & Valentina Makowelski 18th Chris & Nicole Nicolaus 27th
Brad & Bernadette Karbowsky 28th

Birthdays:

Charlotte Flade 6th Helen Janowiak 12th Amelia Flade 15th
Jennifer Popescu 20th Olivia Wright 24th Andy Single 27th
Stephen Sproul 30th

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Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org>

Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Grace Bishop GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbyteria Katie Baker and family, Alicia Barosio and family, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Deanna Jarrett, Tucker Karl and family, Robert Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Kristen McNeil, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectaros and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the newly reposed servants of God Steve Stephanadis and Alexi Makowelski, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)