

WE HONOR THE MYRRHBEARING WOMEN

Jesus Christ spoke to everyone, both men and women, with the same love and the same message. He healed many women and was friends with Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. Several women were followers of Jesus along with the twelve disciples.

from the Gospel reading of Saint Mark 15:43 to 16:8:

After Jesus' death, Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body of Jesus in fine linen cloth and provided a tomb in which Jesus was buried.

The women who were followers of Jesus went to see where He was buried.

In the early morning after the Sabbath some of the women went to anoint Jesus' body with oil and myrrh, a sweet smelling spice, which was a burial custom of the people at that time.

Along the way they wondered how they would roll away the heavy stone which covered the opening to the tomb. When they got there they saw that the stone had already been moved away. At first they were worried that someone might have moved the body of Jesus.

But when they went into the tomb, they were amazed when they saw an Angel sitting there. The Angel pointed to the linen cloth in which Christ's body had been wrapped, showing that it was empty.

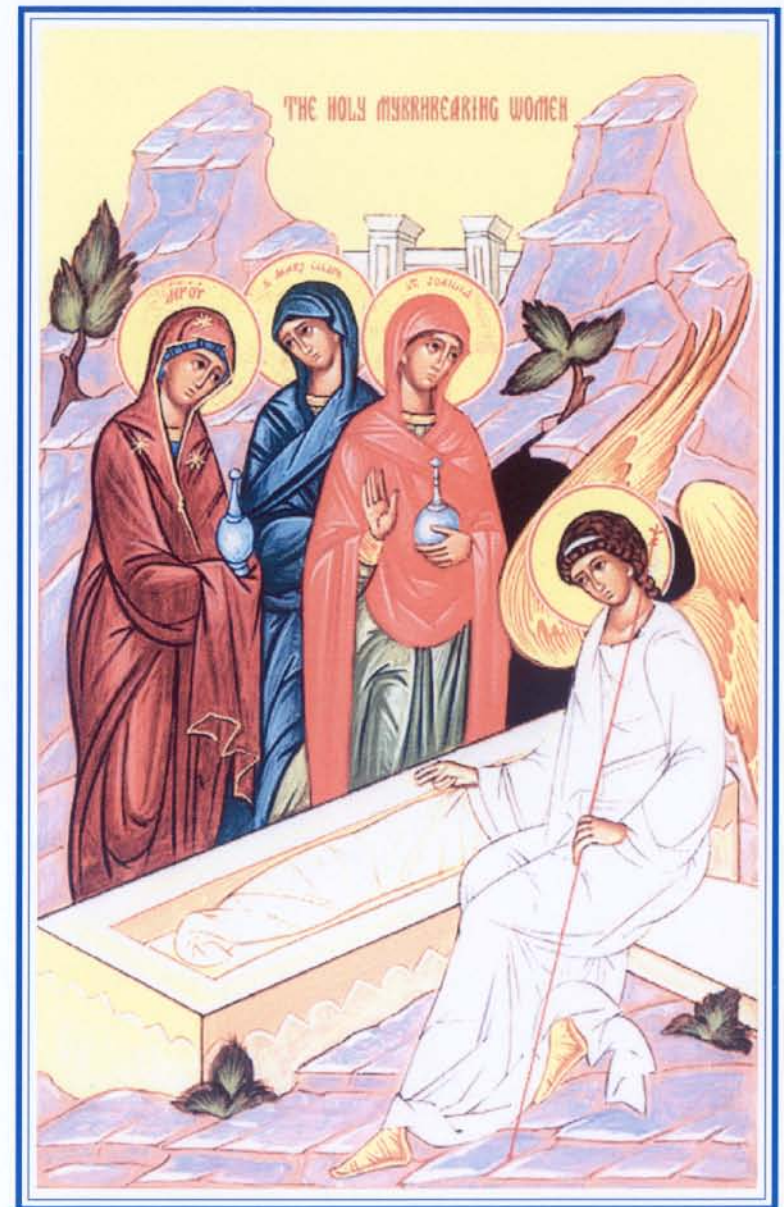
The Angel told them not to worry and that He was not there -- Christ had Risen from the dead!

It was a special blessing from God that these women were the first to discover the empty tomb and to know that Christ had Risen.

We remember the Myrrhbearing Women on the third Sunday of Pascha (the second Sunday after Pascha.)

The Myrrhbearing Women

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!



What we learn from the story of the Myrrhbearing Women:

For their **love and faith**, Joseph of Arimathea and the Myrrhbearing Women are commemorated as saints.

After Jesus was crucified, it was considered dangerous for anyone to admit that they knew Him, because any person who was crucified was considered to be a criminal. And the bodies of criminals were not honored with a funeral but instead were thrown into a pit.

Joseph was a wealthy nobleman who asked Pilate for the body of Jesus and buried Him in a tomb that he had built for the time when he himself would die. Joseph gave his own tomb so that Jesus could be buried with dignity. This was a brave thing to do.

When Jesus was on the Cross, the only disciple who was there was John. The other men disciples were afraid that they might be arrested because they were known to be friends of Jesus, so they went away. But the women followers stayed at the Cross.

Although the followers of Jesus loved Him very much, no one completely understood His words when He had talked to them about the Resurrection. Everything else Jesus had foretold about Himself had come true, including His death on the Cross. But no one yet understood how He would arise from the dead.

In the Orthodox Church, the Myrrhbearing Women are called "**Apostles to the Apostles**" because they were the first witnesses to the Resurrection. Jesus could have first revealed His Resurrection to anyone, but He chose the group of faithful women.

The story of the Myrrhbearing Women teaches us that **faith in the Resurrection** is a gift we receive from Christ Himself. He reveals Himself to each of us as our Resurrected Lord.

The lives of the Myrrhbearing Women, as well as the lives of all the apostles and saints throughout the centuries, and our lives too, are blessed by our belief in His victory over sin and death. Christ promised us that everyone who believes in Him and the Resurrection will have **Eternal Life**.

QUESTIONS TO HELP US THINK ABOUT IT ...

Circle the correct answer.

1. When Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body of Christ so that he could bury Him, this showed that Joseph:
 - A. Was a brave man.
 - B. Loved Jesus very much.
 - C. Had faith in Jesus' teachings.
 - D. All of the above.

2. Myrrh is a sweet smelling spice. We learn that the women went to anoint the body of Jesus with myrrh. Do you remember another time when some people brought myrrh to Christ? When was that and who brought it?
 - A. Peter brought it for Jesus to use when Lazarus died.
 - B. John the Baptist brought it when he baptized Jesus.
 - C. It was a gift of one of the three Wise Men at Jesus' birth.
 - D. It was a gift when He changed water to wine at a wedding.

3. Why were the women worried when they saw that the stone had been moved from the opening to the tomb?
 - A. They thought that maybe they were at the wrong tomb.
 - B. They were worried that someone had moved Jesus' body.
 - C. They were afraid that someone would blame them.
 - D. They were not strong enough to put the stone back in place.

4. What did the Angel tell the women?
 - A. The Angel told them that Christ had Risen from the dead.
 - B. The Angel told them to never tell anyone what they saw.
 - C. The Angel told them to put their spices on the linen cloths.
 - D. The Angel did not say anything but just pointed to the cloths.

5. What do the lessons in this Gospel story mean to our lives?
 - A. We know that Christ is Risen and is our Lord and God.
 - B. Everything that Christ said in the Bible is true.
 - C. Faith in the Resurrection is a gift to us from God.
 - D. All of the above.