

There are two lives; one of which we knew, the other we did not know of.

The one is mortal, the other immortal; the one linked with human infirmity, the other to incorruption; one is marked for death, the other for resurrection.

The Mediator between God and man, the Man Jesus Christ, came, and took upon Himself the one, and revealed to us the other.

The one He endured by dying; the other He revealed when He rose from the dead.

Had He then foretold to us, who knew His mortal life, the Resurrection of His Body, and had not visibly shown it to us, who would believe in His promises?

So, becoming Man, He shows Himself in our flesh; of His own will He suffered death; by His own power He rose from the dead; and by this proof He showed us that which He promises as a reward.

Saint Gregory Dialogos



**15 May is Holy Myrrhbearers Sunday**

**Matins Gospel:** Luke 24:1-12

**Epistle:** Acts 6:1-7

**Gospel:** Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

When Thou didst descend unto death, O Life Immortal, then didst Thou slay Hades with the lightning of Thy Divinity. And when Thou didst also raise the dead out of the nethermost depths, all the powers in the Heavens cried out: O Life-giver, Christ our God, glory be to Thee.

**Seasonal Kontakion:**

Though You went down into the tomb, You destroyed Hades' power, and You rose the victor, Christ God, saying to the myrrh-bearing women, "Hail!" and granting peace to Your disciples, You who raise up the fallen.

### ***Readings and saints for this week:***

**Monday, 16 May:** Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60; John 4:46-54  
Theodore the Sanctified; Martyr Peter of Blachernae

**Tuesday, 17 May:** Acts 8:5-17; John 6:27-33  
Andronicus & Junia; Nectarius of Meteora

**Wednesday, 18 May:** Acts 8:18-25; John 6:35-39  
Martyrs Peter, Dionysius & Paul; Julian the Martyr

**Thursday, 19 May:** Acts 8:26-39; John 6:40-44  
Hieromartyr Patrick of Prusa; Memnonus the Wonderworker

**Friday, 20 May:** Acts 8:40; 9:1-19; John 6:48-54  
Martyr Thalleleus; Mark the Hermit

**Saturday, 21 May:** John 10:9-16; Acts 26:1, 12-20; John 10:1-9  
Constantine & Helen, Equal-to-the Apostles; Pachomios the Righteous New Martyr



# ***Evangelion***

***A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith***

15 May 2016

## **He is Risen!**

Today, on the Sunday of the Holy Myrrhbearers, we hear Saint Mark's account of how the holy women had gone to the tomb of Christ to anoint His body, only to be met by an angel with the news that He was Risen.

We have been hearing and celebrating the news of Christ's Resurrection for the past two weeks, and we know that the Resurrection is at the centre of our faith. Yet it must have been rather a shock for these women, who were already traumatized by the Crucifixion, to be met with the news that Christ's body was no longer in the tomb. They can hardly be blamed for being frightened and it is not surprising that it took a while for them to grasp what had happened.

We are used to celebrating the Resurrection of Christ at Pascha, yet this Gospel may help to remind us of the newness of the Resurrection. In the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we see the power of God breaking into our world in a quite dramatic way. This can be rather unsettling, for it turns our normal expectations on their head. Like the holy women at the tomb, we may not know what to expect when we allow God into our lives.

Yet the angel tells the women not to be afraid for Christ is Risen. He has not left them, but has rather gone ahead of them to Galilee, and they are given the task to tell the apostles of His Resurrection. In the same way, Jesus Christ goes ahead of us. He breaks through our closed doors in order to call us follow Him in His Risen Life. This can be unsettling because it leads us into the unknown. Yet we know that He goes before us and will always lead us and guide us.



Let us arise in the early dawn, and instead of myrrh, offer praises to the Master; and we shall see Christ, the Sun of Justice, who causes life to dawn for all.

Paschal Canon of Saint John of Damascus

## Saints Nicodemus and Joseph

Together with the Holy Myrrhbearers, we also commemorate the secret disciples of the Saviour today, who sought to minister to Christ's body after His crucifixion.

**Nicodemus** was probably a Jerusalemite, a prominent leader among the Jews. As a Pharisee he was learned in the Law and instructed in the Holy Scriptures. He had believed in Christ when, at the beginning of the Saviour's preaching of salvation when he came to Him by night. Furthermore, he brought some one hundred pounds of myrrh-oils and an aromatic mixture of aloes and spices out of reverence and love for the divine Teacher (John 19:39).

**Joseph** was from the city of Arimathea. He was a wealthy nobleman, and one of the counsellors who were in Jerusalem. He went boldly unto Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and together with Nicodemus he gave Him burial. Since time did not permit the preparation of another tomb, he placed the Lord's body in his own tomb which was hewn out of rock (Matthew 27:60).



### Saint Pachomius the Great

Today, 15 May, we also commemorate one of the great saints of the Alexandrian Church, **Saint Pachomius the Great**. He was a pagan Egyptian who was conscripted into the army. While stationed at Thebes he encountered the charity of Christians who brought food to the young recruits of his regiment. He exclaimed: "Oh God, with your help, if I am delivered from the tribulation in which I now find myself, I will serve the human race in your name." Soon after his release from the army he was baptised and placed himself under the direction of the hermit Palamon. Seven years later his elder died and when he prayed for guidance an angel instructed him that "the will of God is to put oneself at the service of humanity in

order to call them to Himself." He proceeded to gather disciples together, basing their life on the model of the early Christians who shared all things in common. St Pachomius' monastery at Tabennesi soon expanded into a whole family of monasteries and he is known as the founder of coenobitical or communal monasticism. Humble of heart, he was able to combine a great firmness with a goodness and a profound humanity. He reposed in 346.



If you see a man pure and humble, that is a great vision. For what is greater than such a vision, to see the invisible God in a visible man, the temple of God.

Saint Pachomius the Great

## The Holy Myrrhbearers

Today the Church commemorates the Myrrh-bearing women, who came to the Christ's tomb early in the morning in order to anoint His body, and to whom His resurrection was first announced.

The gospels tell us of various women who followed Jesus as He went around Galilee, preaching and healing the sick. They supported Him from their own means, and remained faithful to Him when He was arrested and crucified.

It was these women who came seeking Christ's body early in the morning. The Church identifies them as including the holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Lord; Mary Magdalene; Mary, the wife of Cleopas; Joanna, the wife of Chouza; Salome, the Mother of James and John; Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and Susanna.

The Holy Myrrhbearers present us with an example of faithfulness to Christ. They had not only followed Him in His earthly life, but they remained faithful to Him in His death. They showed considerable courage in coming to the tomb seeking to anoint His body. They did not know how they would get into the tomb, and yet did not let this deter them. They did not go empty handed, but took spices with which to anoint His body.

The faith of the Holy Myrrhbearers was not in vain, for they discovered that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, and they were met by an angel who gave them the joyous news that Christ was not in the tomb, but that He had risen and had gone on ahead of them to Galilee.

---

When at dawn, the women with Mary came and found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher, they heard from the angel: Why seek among the dead (as if He were a mortal man) Him Who lives in everlasting light? Behold the grave-clothes. Run and tell the world that the Lord is risen, and has slain death. For He is the Son of God Who saves mankind.

Paschal Canon of Saint John of Damascus



The Myrrhbearers rose at dawn and came to your tomb with haste. They were seeking you, O Christ, that they might anoint your spotless body, and instructed by the words of the Angel, they proclaimed the joyful signs to the Apostles, 'The author of our salvation has risen, despoiling death but granting the world eternal life and His great mercy'.

From the Stichera of the Holy Myrrhbearers