



Welcome!

Whether you're searching for a new church home or just visiting, we're glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

This Week

Wednesday, April 25

- 6:30 pm Daily Vespers
- 7:00 pm Bible Study (Acts 5:12 ff)

Saturday, April 28

- 4:30 pm Confessions
- 5:00 pm Great Vespers

Sunday, April 29

- 9:15 am Adult Education
- 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
- Church School after Divine Liturgy

Paschal Greeting

Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!
Christos voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese! (Russian)
Christos anesti! Alithos anesti! (Greek)

To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*
Mat. Janet Mihalick, *Choir Director*

Third Sunday of Pascha: Holy Myrrhbearers

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org
April 22, 2018

Announcements

➤ The men of our parish will sponsor our annual Mother's Day Brunch in honor of the women of our parish on Sunday, May 13. **Men of the parish** are reminded to give a **minimum \$10** contribution to Bob Madalinsky to sponsor the cost of the brunch. Contributions must be in by Sunday, May 6.

➤ **Our March hoagie sale** will be held on Wednesday, April 25. Italian Hoagies and wraps are \$6.50 each and the Turkey hoagies and wraps are \$7.00 each. Orders can be placed by calling 412-974-9912, faxing 724-926-4052 or emailing rjmbmsam1@verizon.net. Orders are due on Sunday evening, April 22. Orders can be picked up between noon and 1 pm April 25 at the church hall.



➤ **Church School Students** who are saving and collecting money in their Coin Boxes for Orthodox missions around the world should bring their coin boxes in to church by next Sunday, April 29. Please see Mary Hoffman for more information!

The Holy Myrrhbearers

- Mary Magdalene
- Mary, the Mother of the Lord
- Joanna, steward of Herod
- Salome, mother of James and John
- Mary, the wife of Cleopas
- Susanna
- Martha, sister of Lazarus
- Mary, sister of Lazarus
- Joseph of Arimathea
- Nicodemus



Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm: Known to be Hospitalized;** Georgiann Robes (Sewickley). *Home recovery* (none). *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Olga Bednar, Garnette Kerchum, Olga Tryszyn, Mary Zapp.

➤ **From Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. **From Doris M. Wasilko** for the departed servants from the Wasilko & Dyczko families; for the health of Helen Billak on her birthday. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of Helen Billak on her birthday. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for special intentions. **From Raisa Burd** for the health of Yevgeniy, Vladimir, Marina, Polina, Roman, Elizabeth, Veronika and Katia. **From John & Olga** for the health of Anatoly & Galina Vilkov and for the health & salvation of our families. **From Alina Maksymova** for the departed servants, Ekaterina, Alexander, Rose, James and Yrii; for the health of Victoria, Gennadii, Yevdokiya, Elizabeth, Emilia, Justin and Anna. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servant, (father) Charles (4/20/01); Happy Birthday & Many Years to Helen! **From Donya Yewisiak** for the health of Lois Fuller. **From Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Galina, Slava, Bruce, Marina, Valentina, Victor, Gina and Andrei; for the health of Tatyana, Sergey, Veronika, Diana, Edward and Christopher.

Thank You

➤ **to Jim and Leslie Wokutch** who are sponsoring the bulletins for the month of April (\$60) as well as all the monthly categories of Holy Bread (\$50), Communion Wine (\$40), Candles (\$50), and Incense(\$10) in memory of Dn Joseph Mell and Olga Mell. May God richly bless them for their generosity and love for God's Church

St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

Myrrhbearers

On this day, the third Sunday of Pascha, we celebrate the memory of the Holy Myrrhbearing Women. We also commemorate St. Joseph of Arimathea, who was one of the seventy secret Apostles. We also remember St. Nicodemus, who came to Christ at night and was one of the leaders of the Jews.

We remember the women because they were the first to truthfully bear witness to the Resurrection, while Joseph and Nicodemus were the first to bear witness to the burial of Christ. These two facts are both true and well known by us. Nicodemus was immediately banished from the synagogue and was forbidden to rejoin it.

The reason they are called "Myrrhbearers" is this: since that Friday was the day before the Passover, for great was that Saturday, Joseph and Nicodemus struggled to bury the Lord's Body, anointing It with ointments according to the custom of the Jews, but not in a fittingly proper manner. They were able only to apply some aloes and a bit more myrrh on His most pure Body before wrapping Him in thin linen and laying Him in the tomb that was hewn out of rock. They strongly desired to anoint Him properly and fulfill all that had been omitted due to the hurried manner of the burial. When they arrived at the tomb, they saw many signs, such as two radiant angels who were inside the tomb and another who was seated on the stone. They then saw Christ and worshiped Him, but Mary Magdalene thought He was the gardener and inquired concerning the Lord's Body. Yet, we should know that there were more Myrrhbearers than those mentioned by the Evangelists, for they named only those who were more well known and were silent concerning the others.

Thus, the Church has designated this day, the first Sunday after Thomas Sunday, to commemorate these women who preached the Resurrection and the many other signs that confirmed and verified the Resurrection of Christ. Therefore, Christ's Church has determined to celebrate these women as the ones who were the first to behold Christ risen from the dead, who announced to all the prophecy of salvation, and who lived their lives in Christ in a fitting manner as ones who had been taught by Christ Himself.

Hymns and Readings for Today

Paschal Troparion

Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death,
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Troparia of the Sunday *Tone 2*

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life
Immortal,

Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy
Godhead!

And when from the depths Thou didst raise the
dead,

all the powers of heaven cried out:

O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!

The Noble Joseph,
when he had taken down Thy most pure body from
the tree,

wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices
and placed it in a new tomb.

But Thou didst rise on the third day, O Lord,
granting the world great mercy.

Kontakion of the Sunday *Tone 2*

The angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the
tomb and said:

Myrrh is fitting for the dead,

But Christ has shown Himself a stranger to
corruption!

So proclaim: The Lord is risen;

granting the world mercy!

Kontakion of the Sunday *Tone 2*

Thou didst command the myrrhbearers to rejoice, O
Christ God!

By Thy resurrection, Thou didst stop the
lamentation of Eve, the first mother!

Thou didst command them to preach to Thine
apostles:

The Savior is risen from the tomb!

Kontakion of Pascha *Tone 8*

Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal,

Thou didst destroy the power of death.

In victory Thou didst arise, O Christ God,

proclaiming, “Rejoice!” to the Myrrhbearing
Women,//

granting peace to Thine Apostles, and bestowing
Resurrection on the fallen.

Prokeimenon (Psalm 28) *Tone 6*

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Tine in
heritance!

Epistle (Acts 6:1-7)

Now 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.

Gospel (Mark 15:43-16:8)

Then 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 Josés
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 quickly and fled from the tomb,
for they trembled and were amazed. And they said
nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Hymn to the Theotokos of the Feast

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:
“Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: ‘Rejoice, your
Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!
With Himself He has raised all the dead.’” Rejoice,
O ye people!

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem! The glory of the
Lord has shone on you. Exult now, and be glad, O
Zion! Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the
Resurrection of your Son!

Communion Hymn of the Sunday

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O
Zion.



Today in Church School

Today's lesson: The Myrrhbearers

Questions to ask/review:

- Why were women going to the tomb? Why on Sunday? (could not be done on the Jewish Sabbath)
- What is myrrh? What did they find? What did they do? (the tomb was empty, then went to tell the disciples)
- What were the Jewish burial customs? (rub the body with myrrh)
- What customs do we hold today? (funeral service, we do not destroy the body through cremation, “Memory Eternal”, eating boiled wheat)
- Where was Jesus' body put after He died? Can you remember whose tomb it was? (Joseph of Arimathea put His body in a new tomb)
- We usually bury people in the ground and fill the grave with dirt. How was the tomb of Jesus sealed? (stone)
- How did the women feel when the stone was rolled away? How would you feel if the grave of a loved one were found dug up? (at first, they thought someone may have stolen the body but Jesus's body wasn't stolen; He had risen from the dead!) How did they feel now? What did they do?
- What is the meaning of death? Why does God allow death? How did death enter the world? (Adam and Eve sinned, our world is fallen and broken)
- Are you afraid of dying? Why or why not? (it is normal to be afraid, but Christians must trust in God's power to save us)

Suggested activities at home:

- Read the scripture before bed: Luke 23:55-24:9, Mark 16: 1-11
- Plant herbs in egg carton or planter.
- Make sweet-smelling bags of potpourri or spices for your child's drawers or the icon corner.
- Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, like the myrrh-bearing women, let us draw near to you each day. Amen.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATEA

On this Sunday we remember the Myrrhbearing Women, and also read about Joseph of Arimathea, who asked for and buried the body of Jesus Christ. Risk and courage are the outstanding elements of their stories.

Picture the women on the way to the tomb of Christ that very early, still-dark morning. It wasn't the safest time of day for unaccompanied females to be on the road under any circumstances. But on this particular morning the Jewish authorities were hyper-vigilant and suspicious, and a detail of guards had been posted at the tomb. There were plenty of reasons for the women simply to be too afraid to go and anoint the Lord's body.

Yet the Gospels tell us that they expressed only one concern: "Who will roll away the stone?" They were intent on doing what was proper for a beloved person who had died, and so they found their courage. Nor did they run away from the angel at the tomb, of whom they were indeed afraid, as Mark 16:8 tells us. They stayed, heard the angel's command, and rushed to carry it out by giving the apostles the good news of the resurrection (Luke 24:9).

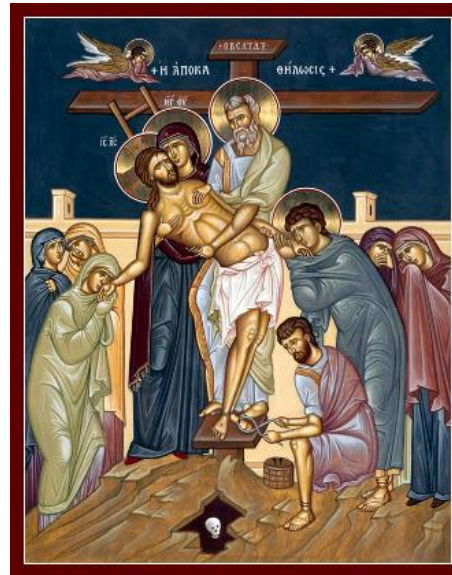
Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of the Lord, but a secret one. The Gospels give us a few facts about him. He was a rich man, prominent in the community, and a member of the Sanhedrin, the council of Jewish leaders. It was due to his public visibility and his position as a council member that he kept his discipleship secret.

So Joseph was probably not a person of great courage. Like many people with much to lose, he was not going to risk his place and possessions readily. Yet, while the disciples fled and hid, Joseph stepped forward and declared himself a loving friend of the Lord at the moment when it was most dangerous to do so.

Pontius Pilate had just condemned Jesus Christ to death. There had been no public outcry of protest; His followers were demoralized, fearful, and silent. Even Pilate—perhaps especially Pilate, with his self-protective and hesitant nature—must have been impressed by the bravery of this man coming forward, alone, to ask for the body of the executed preacher.

The Gospels tell us that Joseph was a good and just man, and had not consented to the Sanhedrin's decision to condemn Jesus. This was an act of fortitude. But asking for the body was even more of a risk, because it brought him to the notice of the Romans and of his fellow Jewish leaders, most of whom had wanted Jesus to die. Only by "taking courage," as Luke writes, could Joseph make such a request.

The danger faced by the Myrrhbearing Women as they walked to the tomb was real. So was the fear of loss of position and security faced by Joseph. But they all found their courage, because they were "waiting for the Kingdom of God" (Mark 15:45). They saw that Kingdom in Jesus Christ, and fear could never really hold them back again.



HOLY SÆTURDÆY REVISITED

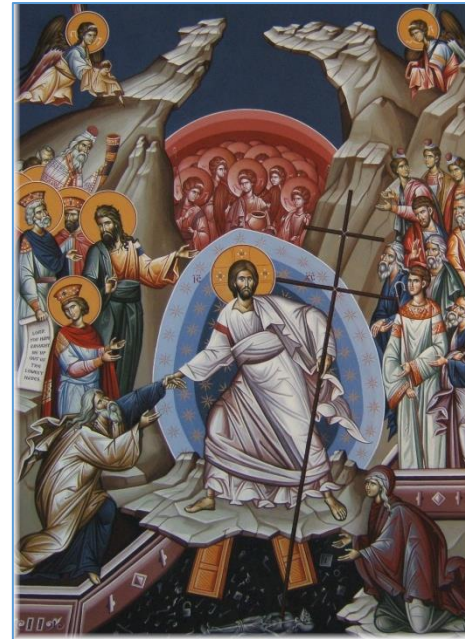
Father Alexander Schmemmann has written that Holy Saturday is often ignored or misunderstood. It's as if there is a day of sorrow (Holy Friday) that is quickly replaced by a day of joy (Pascha.) But, Fr. Schmemmann says, the services of Holy Saturday connect the two days. They commemorate an event in which "sorrow is not simply replaced by joy, but is itself TRANSFORMED into joy."

The event Father Schmemmann refers to is Christ's descent into hell, where He overcomes the final power of death and brings forth the people it held captive. Holy Saturday's services are essential to understand this, and to take part in it. During these services the liturgical colors are changed from dark to Paschal white, and we triumphantly sing, "Let God Arise!"

A book by Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev, "**Christ the Conqueror of Hell**," is an excellent resource for those who want a deeper understanding of Holy Saturday. The book's first section traces Scriptural and apocryphal references to Christ's victory over death and His destruction of hell's power. The next part examines patristic literature and liturgical texts. Finally, Abp. Hilarion offers an epilogue on the theological significance of Christ's saving act.



The Old Testament (Septuagint translation) promises that God "will deliver them out of the power of Hades" (Hosea 13:14) and I Peter 3:19-20 tells us that Christ fulfilled the promise by preaching "to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah..." The Orthodox Church teaches that Christ's descent was thus a "second chance" for those who perished in the Flood described in Genesis, who had no chance to encounter Christ and the Gospel.



The book contains imagery used by the Fathers, such as Death quivering and becoming agitated as Jesus appears, while the dead perceive light shining in the darkness, raise their heads from bondage, and behold the brightness of Christ. It also offers examples of liturgical poetry, as when Christ addresses Hades: "Not only will you give back those whom you have taken and whom I have resurrected and now take with me as I leave here, but also those who will be sent to you in the future will arise..."

The recurring message of the book is that Christ's descent into hell gave every person a chance to know Him and rise with Him. The book ends with that message:

We do not know if everyone followed Christ when he rose from hell, nor do we know if everyone will follow him to the eschatological heavenly kingdom when he will become "all in all." We do know that, since Christ's descent...the gates of paradise have been opened for all who wish to enter through them. This is the faith of the early church, inherited from the first generation of Christians and cherished by Orthodox tradition. This is the never-extinguished hope of all those who believe in Christ, who once and for all conquered death, destroyed hell, and granted resurrection to the entire human race.