

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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SUNDAY OF THE MYRRHBEARERS (Second after Pascha) 8 May 2011

The holy myrrh-bearing women, Joseph of Arimathea, and the righteous Nicodemus; Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian; Ven. Arsenios the Great (+450).

Priest: *Christ is risen ... (alone, once)*

People: *Christ is risen ... (twice)*

FIRST ANTIPHON

Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing to His Name, make his praise glorious! (R.:) Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! Say to God: How awesome are thy works; let all the earth worship Thee, and sing to Thee! (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (R.:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

May God have mercy upon us, and bless us, and may He cause His Face to shine upon us, and have mercy on us! (R.:) Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead; who sing to Thee: Alleluia!

That Thy way may be known upon earth, thy salvation among all nations! Let the nations give thanks to Thee, O God, let all give thanks to Thee! (R.:)

May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear Him! (R.:)

Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

CHRIST IS RISEN, with the following verses:

Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: and let them who hate him flee from before his Face.

As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish: as wax melts before the fire.

So do the wicked perish from before the Face of God; but let the righteous be glad!

This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice in it!

Glory... Now and ever ...

ENTRANCE HYMN: *In the gathering places bless ye God the Lord from the springs of Israel.* **Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing unto Thee: Alleluia!**

AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

TROPARION OF RESURRECTION (Tone 2): When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee!

TROPARIA FOR JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA AND THE MYRRH-BEARERS: 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. // The angel came to the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb and said: "Myrrh is fitting for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption!"

TROPARION OF SAINT JOHN (Tone 2): O Apostle John the Theologian, the beloved of Christ God: hasten and deliver thy people powerless in argument; for He on Whose bosom thou didst lean accepts thee as an intercessor. Beseech Him, therefore, to disperse the cloud of the stubborn nations, asking for us safety and great mercy.

TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT (Tone 4, Russian): Like the zealous Elijah thou didst become, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. A dweller in the wilderness, thou didst steady the world by prayer. O Father Anthony, intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

KONTAKION OF PASCHA (Tone 8): O Christ God, though Thou didst descend into the grave, yet didst Thou overthrow the power of Hades, and rise as an Immortal Conqueror. Thou didst greet the myrrh-bearing women with joy, and to Thine Apostles Thou didst send Thy peace, and to the fallen O Lord, Thou didst bring resurrection.

LIVING: We pray for the health and well being of Abie (Abraham), Sula, Nancy, Fran, George (Botsis), Dolores (Sipos), Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Diane, Karyn, Brian, Maria, Marius, Justin, Sara, and the baby Christina.

DEPARTED: Petruța, Peter, Michael, William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Joseph, Katherine.

NOTES FOR THE THOMAS SUNDAY LITURGY

SPECIAL HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS: The angel cried out to the Lady full of grace: rejoice, rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again I say: rejoice! For your son is risen from his three days in the tomb, and with himself He has raised all the dead. Rejoice, rejoice all you people! Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, the glory of the Lord has shown on you. Exult now, exult and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the resurrection of your son!

INSTEAD OF "WE HAVE SEEN THE TRUE LIGHT": **Christ is risen. . . (once)**

AT THE VERY END OF THE SERVICE:

Priest: Christ is risen! **People:** Indeed He is risen!

Arabic: *Al Maseeh qam! Haqan qam!* Greek: *Hristós anesthi! Alithós anesthi!*

Romanian: *Hristós a inviat! Adevarat a inviat!*

Slavonic: *Hristós voskresey! Voyistino voskresey!*

Priest: *Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death death ...*

People: *... and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!*

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Their voice has gone out into all the earth.
The heavens declare the glory of God.*

The Reading is from the First Universal Epistle of Saint John
(1 John 1:1-7)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

If Saint Thomas is the Apostle who touched the hands and sides of Christ searching to assure himself of the Resurrection, Saint John is the Apostle (and Evangelist: that is, he also authored one of the Gospels) who leaned his head on Christ's bosom at the Last Supper. John was the youngest and most intimate disciple of the Lord; his Gospel and epistles have always been regarded as the "highest," most spiritual sections of the New Testament.

Our faith is rooted in the preaching of people such as these, people who have seen Christ, looked upon Him, touched Him with their hands, and subsequently spread the Good News: the light of God has come to dwell in our midst, has even descended to the depths of hell, in order to raise us up; the Life, the true life that Adam forsook in Eden, was made manifest, and we are invited to taste of it; God wants to have fellowship with us.

And Saint John reminds us that all of this is *not ideology, but life*. Faith in the Lord is not "believing *that ...*" but believing *in*. And believing in Christ means living in Christ, embodying the Good News. This is the proclamation that "was from the beginning", the proclamation that the Apostles received

from the Lord: **God is light and in him is no darkness at all.** Therefore, we are called to repent and rejoice—that is, to abandon whatever darkness we may have stumbled into, and to accept the call we heard on Pascha at midnight: “Come receive light from the Light that is never overtaken by night!”

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Mark

(Mark 15:43-16:8)

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. And he bought a linen shroud, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back; for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has 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 to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were exceedingly afraid.

Today we commemorate Joseph of Arimathea, “the noble Joseph” that is mentioned in the hymns of Great Friday, and the myrrhbearers—the women disciples who came to anoint the body of Christ and found the tomb empty.

These people most likely did not grasp the mystery of Christ during His earthly ministry. Yet, they displayed extraordinary affection for Jesus of

Nazareth in his darkest hour: when all disciples had abandoned, denied, or betrayed Him, the women (and the Apostle John, also commemorated today) stayed with him during his ordeal; and when all were scrambling to distance themselves from the Crucified One, Joseph and Nicodemus went to Pilate to ask that they be allowed to give Jesus a proper burial; Joseph had the nobility of heart to offer his own grave for the one who died a stranger to all.

We remember the noble Joseph every time we bring our gifts of bread and wine into the altar, and place them on the holy table. This happens at the Great Entrance, while the congregation finishes singing the Cherubic Hymn; the priest places a large veil over the wine and the bread, censes the gifts, and says: *“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.”* We seek, in other words, to approach the altar with the reverence of the noble Joseph.

The Resurrection is not a normal event in history; it is something that bursts the categories of fallen creation. That is why, when faced with the resurrection, the myrrbearers react with holy fear, and are *awestruck*. That is also why we have no icon of the resurrection per se: we either depict Christ descending into hell, to burst open the prison holding Adam, Eve, and their descendants; or we depict the women at the empty tomb. These myrrbearing women are also forever remembered. We sing about them on Sundays, saying that “they boasted to the apostles” about the Resurrection of Christ. And we boast together with them, announcing the death of death, the end of mortality, the dawning of a new life in Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday, 14 May: Vespers at 6:30, followed by our discussion group.

Next Sunday (15 May): blessing and installation of the new parish council

STUMP THE PRIEST/ ASK ABOUNA: Instead of a regular sermon, the priest (“abouna” is Arabic for “father”) will attempt to answer any questions on any topic from anybody. Your occasion to ask abouna ... stump the priest!

ANYONE INTERESTED IN LEARNING HOW TO MAKE KIBBEE? Let us try to agree on a Saturday (21 May? 28 May?) in the early afternoon, when some of the younger ones in our parish can learn the well-guarded “Secrets of Excellent Kibbee” from the older generation.