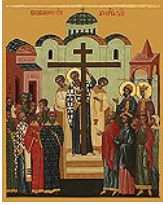


✠Bulletin✠

Week of April 26th to May 2nd



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

3rd SUNDAY OF PASCHA - Tone 2 Myrrhbearing Women

Hieromartyr Basil, Bishop of Amasea (322). Martyrs Cyril, Chinedu, and Tasia, of Axiopolis (ca. 304). St. Stephen, Bishop of Perm (1396). Righteous Virgin Glaphyra of Nicomedia (ca. 322). Sts. Andrew and Anatole (5th c.), disciples of St. Euthymius the Great. St. Richarius, abbot, in Picardy (645). St. Calantius of Tamassos on Cyprus (8th c.). St. George of Cyprus (1091). St. Ioannicius of Devic (Serbia) (1430). New Martyrs of Novo Selo (Bulgaria) (1876). New Hieromartyr Ilija Rodich, priest, of Bosnia (1942).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday April 26, 2026 – Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women

Bishop Gerasim Visit

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Weekly Schedule

Sunday April 26, 2026

- Lunch following Divine Liturgy
- Inquirers & Catechism classes

THE BRAVERY AND COURAGE OF THE MYRRHBEARING WOMEN

By Archimandrite Cleopa (Ilie)

Among the great virtues adorning the lives of the holy Myrrhbearing Women, the most striking were their holy zeal for Christ, their reverence, and their courage of soul. The Jews and Pilate placed a protection and fortification at the Tomb of Christ, our Savior, that His disciples could not come by night and steal Him! They rolled a huge stone up against the Lord's Tomb, sealed it off, and placed strong and armed soldiers on watch. But all of this did not scare or frighten the holy Myrrhbearing Women. Their great zeal, sacred reverence, and courage of soul passed over all the Jews' obstacles, and all the guards at the Tomb did not shake their resolve. But one thought, but one desire led their minds and hearts— to serve the funeral of their dear Savior with fullness of faith and with reverence.

Solomon once said, *One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found* (Ecc. 7:28). And here are women who are more brave than men. Men, the disciples of Christ, were hiding from fear of the Jews. Peter, fervent and firm in faith, thrice denied the Lord, of which he then repented and bitterly wept (cf. Luke 22:62). But women, by nature timid and weak and often afraid even when there is no danger, here, at the service of the burial of our Most Holy Savior, turned out to be stronger and braver than men. They were not afraid of the Jews' wrath or the brutality of the soldiers, and the guard at the Lord's Tomb also did not agitate their hearts.

The disciples, men, affrighted and disbanded in all directions, as the Savior had predicted to them beforehand. But the holy women gathered themselves. The men were hiding, but the women went out in the light of day, heading to the market and buying myrrh and spices to anoint the Life-bearing Body of Christ. O, blessed women, how were you not afraid to go out alone at night, and how did you dare to approach that place guarded by royal soldiers, and how did you not fear, but strove to roll away the stone, break the seal, open the tomb and anoint the Body of the Lord with spices? These ascetic feats sprang from the zeal, reverence, and great bravery of your souls.

Feeble women by nature, but not in your minds and hearts; for womanly weakness did not appear in you in any way, but all your feats surpassed the bravery of men. Upon you were truly fulfilled the words of Scripture, which say, *My strength is made perfect in weakness* (2 Cor. 12:9), and again, *God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty* (1 Cor. 1:27; cf. Psalm 8:2, Matt. 21:16). The words of our Most Holy

Savior were truly in your hearts, Who said, *fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul* (Matt. 10:28). And again, the Holy Spirit says, *Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord* (Psalm 30:24). You completed the apostolic work before the apostles. You displayed the faith and courage of the souls of the holy martyrs before them.

Elias, the great prophet, ablaze with Divine zeal, rebuked Ahab, and you confounded the guards of the Lord's Tomb. Gideon once crushed a multitude of Midianites with three hundred soldiers (cf. Judges 7:25). You, along with the righteous men Joseph and Nikodemos, stronger than all of the Jews' and Pilate's fortifications became fearless ministers, ready even unto death to serve Him Who came to serve and lay down His soul for the redemption of the whole of mankind. You, O holy women, together with the Most Pure Virgin Mary, the mother of our eternal Savior, with great zeal and bravery of soul gathered to celebrate the very first service to the Savior. Therefore, you were blessed even before the apostles to preach the Resurrection of the Lord.

Beloved faithful!

Who are these holy Myrrhbearing Women who followed Christ together with the apostles and were accounted worthy to be witnesses to the Lord's sufferings, and to anoint His holy Body with spices as it lay in the Tomb? The holy Gospel briefly provides us their names and deeds.

The first and most full of spiritual zeal and courage is Mary Magdalene, from the city of Magdala in Galilee.

The other holy Myrrhbearers are Maria, the mother of James (Mark 16:1) and of Joses (Mark 15:47), who is the cousin of the Mother of God; Mary, the wife of Cleopas (John 19:25), and Salome, the mother of the Sons of Thunder (Matt. 27:56; 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10). Then there is Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, and many others serving Him out of their own means (Luke 8:3). Among the Myrrhbearers were Martha and Mary, the two sisters of Lazarus from Bethany, where the Savior often stayed with the holy apostles on the way to Jerusalem or Galilee.

What were the main virtues of these holy Myrrhbearing Women? Above all, they firmly believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah proclaimed by the prophets, Who came to earth to save mankind. Then, they

led a life pure and holy, in prayer and fasting, abstinence, and almsgiving, abiding in sacred love for one another, and, as they were able, lovingly rendering hospitality to Jesus and His holy disciples.

However, the faith and zeal of the holy Myrrhbearing Women are not limited to this. They didn't just receive the Lord into their homes, wash His feet, serve Him at the table, and provide Him the opportunity to rest, but more than that, they followed after Christ with zeal, and were witness to His miracles and boldly confessed that He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

But the Myrrhbearing Women's greatest bravery was revealed during the Lord's sufferings. After the disciples deserted Him in fear and Peter denied Christ, the only ones following Him from afar were the holy Myrrhbearing Women with the Mother of God at the head, Mary Magdalene, and the apostle of love, John, for it's impossible to ever cast-off Divine love.

The bravery and courage of the Myrrhbearing Women was seen on the path of the Cross to Golgotha. They alone, with St. John, accompanied the Lord to the crucifixion and were witnesses to His suffering. They alone prayed for Him with tears and deep sighs, such that the Savior, moved with compassion for them, said, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children...For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* (Luke 23:28-31).

At Golgotha the holy Myrrhbearing Women, together with the apostle of immortal love, were also the sole witnesses to the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. They saw Him bleeding and falling beneath the weight of the Cross. They saw Him naked, without a robe, stretched out upon the Cross. They saw how His hands and feet were pierced with nails, and how He fainted under the Cross from pain. They heard the blasphemous words of the Jews, the repentant confession of the thief, and the heart-rending prayer of the Savior: *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (Matt 27:46).

The Myrrhbearing Women saw how the sun was darkened, how the heavens groaned, how the dead arose from the graves, and they heard the prayer of the Son of God for the forgiveness of the Jews-murderers: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:34). They, these women, braver than the apostles, more full of zeal than the disciples, saw how they cast lots for Christ's tunic, sewn by the hands of the Mother of God, and heard His last word: *Father, into thy hands I commend My spirit* (Luke 23:46).

How great was the zeal, the firmness of their faith, and the bravery of soul of the holy Myrrhbearing Women! They didn't fear the Roman soldiers, so bloodthirsty. They didn't fear the Jews' fury, not fearing God, and were by no means afraid of the death of the Lord on the Cross, like those having no hope! But the bravery of the holy Myrrhbearing Women was not limited to Golgotha. They were there on Friday evening when they removed the Lord from the Cross, and together with Joseph of Arimathea they bought a shroud and spices, anointed His Body with the spices, *and wrapped Him in the linen, and laid Him in a tomb which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph beheld where He was laid.*

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, that is, Sunday, they came unto the tomb at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were afraid. And he saith unto them, Be not afraid: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the tomb; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept (Mark 15:46-16:10).

Do you see the zeal of the Myrrhbearers, and their bravery and firmness of faith in the Son of God? Do you see the courage of these holy women? The disciples sat, hiding and locked away in a room from fear of the Jews, but the Myrrhbearers bought a shroud and spices to anoint the Body of Jesus. The disciples wept and lamented the death of the Lord, but the Myrrhbearers ran to Golgotha at sunrise to see His Tomb. In fear, those waited for news from Golgotha, but these, entering into the Tomb, received from the Archangel Gabriel the news that the Lord is risen, with the words, "Weep no more!" Then, by his command, they ran back and told the apostles that Christ is risen—He is no more in the grave!

So much courage and faith, so much steadfastness and boldness these women had. The men sat, hiding, but the women ran to the Tomb, entered within, bearing spices, encouraging one another, spoke with the angels, and were the first to see the Life-bearing Tomb and the shroud folded nearby. They feared neither darkness of night, nor the soldiers guarding the Tomb, nor death, nor angels—nothing. They had but one desire—to see Jesus and anoint and kiss His holy Body. The Myrrhbearing Women were the first and most worthy witnesses of the crucifixion, death, burial, and Resurrection of the Lord. They were the first to proclaim to the apostles and the whole world that Christ is risen, and that death, the devil, and hell are vanquished, and Paradise is open wide.

Where now are such women, loving Christ with such firmness of faith and good deeds as the Myrrhbearing Women from the Holy Gospel?

Still, the number of holy women in the Christian Church increased and sometimes even exceeded the number of men. Recall the great host of the holy martyrs, such as Thekla Equal-to-the-Apostles; Barbara, killed for Christ by her own father; Ekaterina; Irina; Mary; Sophia with her three daughters; Fevronia; Tatiana and Philothea of Argesh, and the great number of venerable women who labored in monasteries and deserts, becoming vessels of the Holy Spirit and working wonders. Let us mention but a few of these: Mary of Egypt, Euphrosynia, Xenia, Pelagia, Melania, and also the venerable Parasceva of Iasi, Theodora of Sihla, and many others.

All of these holy brides of Christ, disciples of the holy Myrrhbearers and ascetics of prayer of the Church, pray for us all.

Beloved faithful!

Today is the day of Christian women. They are the successors of the Myrrhbearing Women, the daughters of the Resurrection, the handmaidens of the Lord, lanterns of faith, the soul of the family. Christian women, believers of the Orthodox Church, preserve the flame of faith and ancient traditions and the holy flame of prayer and piety in our homes more than men. Believing women are at the same time good mothers, dedicated Christians, honest and hardworking wives, and models for society. Faithful women are the first to church, the first in prayer, in fasting, labors, alms, reading good books, in care for the sick and for all. They preserve the spiritual warmth of faith, love, patience, and peace in church, family, and society.

Schedule of Services

Saturday – May 9th

5:30 pm – Vespers

Wednesday – May 20th Feast of Ascension

5:30 pm – Divine Liturgy

Saturday – May 30th

5:30 pm – Vespers with Litya

Feast of Pentecost

Prayer Requests

Walter Kallaur – brother of the Constantine & Arlene Kallaur

Heather (Helen) Auld

Anne and Scott Peatross

Nicholas Kowalski

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,

Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,

Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,

Roman, Mykola

Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

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The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

Priest: “Blessed is the Kingdom...”

Choir: “Amen.”

Priest: “Christ is risen... “ (2 ½ times)

Choir: “and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!”

(The Divine Liturgy is begun in this manner until the Leavetaking of Pascha.)

Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)

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!”

Tone 2 Troparion (Pentecostarion)

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 arise on the third day, O Lord, //
granting the world great mercy.

Tone 2 Troparion (Pentecostarion)

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 great mercy.’”

Tone 2 Kontakion (Pentecostarion)

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!”

Tone 8 Kontakion (Pascha)

Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal,
Thou didst destroy the power of death.
In victory didst Thou arise, O Christ God,
proclaiming, “Rejoice!” to the Myrrhbearing Women,//
granting peace to Thine Apostles, and bestowing Resurrection on the fallen.

Tone 6 Prokeimenon

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance! (Ps. 27:9a)

*V. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!
(Ps. 27:1a)*

Acts 6:1-7 (Epistle)

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.

Tone 8

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. O Lord, Thou hast been gracious to Thy land; Thou hast turned back the captivity of Jacob. (Ps. 84:1)

V. Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. (Ps. 84:10)

Mark 15:43-16:8 (Gospel)

Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went into 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 quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Explanation of Today’s Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

43-47. Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went into 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. While yet a servant of the law, the blessed Joseph recognized Christ as God, and this is why he dared to do such a praiseworthy deed of courage. For he did not stop to think to himself, “I am a wealthy man, and I will lose my wealth if I ask for the body of

one condemned by the ruler's authority, and I will be slandered by the Jews." No such thoughts did he harbor, but placing all other considerations second, he begged to bury the Body of the One condemned. "Pilate wondered if He were already dead," for Pilate thought that Jesus would endure on the cross for a long time, as did the thieves. So, he asked the centurion if Jesus had already died some time before. Joseph then took the Body, having bought linen, and when he had taken It down from the cross, he wrapped It in the linen, and buried reverently that which was worthy of all reverence. For Joseph too was a disciple of Christ, and he knew that it was necessary to honor the Master. He was *noble*, that is, devout, pious, and blameless. And he held the rank of "*counsellor*", a title which conferred duties of public service and responsibility; for the counsellors supervised the affairs of the marketplace, and danger often befell one holding this position because of the evil doings in the market. Let the wealthy, and those engaged in public business, heed that Joseph's high rank in no way hindered him from living a virtuous life.

1-8. 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. The women had no understanding of Christ's divinity while they sat by the tomb, and they brought myrrh with which to anoint His Body in accordance with the Jewish practice, so that It would remain fragrant and not begin to have the foul odor of decay. Myrrh also dries things out, and thus it absorbs the moisture of the body and preserves it from corruption. Thinking such thoughts as these, the women rose and came to the tomb "very early in the morning," or, as Matthew says, "after the sabbath," or, as Luke says, "at early dawn." [Mt. 28:1; Lk. 24:1] All four Evangelists say, "On the first of the sabbath" [*mias Sabbaton*], meaning, on the first day of the week (for "sabbath" was also the name they gave to the seven days of the week considered together, so that the "first day of the

sabbath" meant Sunday). As the women approached the tomb, they talked among themselves about who would roll away the stone. While they were thinking about this, the angel rolled away the stone without their noticing. Matthew says that the angel rolled away the stone after the women had come to the tomb [Mt. 28:2] On this point Mark is silent, because Matthew had already said who rolled away the stone. Do not be troubled that Matthew says that the angel was sitting on the stone, while Mark says that after they entered the tomb, the women saw the angel sitting on the right side. It is likely that they first saw the angel sitting on the stone outside the tomb, as Matthew says, and that he then went before them into the tomb, where they saw him again. Some say that the women mentioned by Matthew were not the same ones mentioned here by Mark. Mary Magdalene, however, was with all of them, as she was fervent and aflame with zeal. The angel who appeared to the women said, "Be not afraid". First, he takes away their fear, and then he announces to them the good tidings of the Resurrection. He calls Jesus "the Crucified", for the angel was not ashamed of the Cross, which is the salvation of mankind and the beginning of good things. "He is risen." How do we know this? Because "He is not here". Do you want further assurance? "Behold the place where they laid Him." This is why the angel had moved away the stone, to show them the place. "But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter." He names Peter separately from the other disciples, as Peter was the foremost of the apostles. Also, because Peter had denied the Lord, the angel singles him out by name so that, when the women came and said that the Lord had commanded them to tell the disciples, Peter could not say, "I denied the Lord, and therefore I am no longer His disciple. He has rejected me and abhors me." The angel added the words "and Peter", so that Peter would not be tempted to think that Jesus found him unworthy of mention, and unworthy to be ranked among the Lord's disciples, because of his denial. He sends them [out of Judea] into Galilee, delivering them from tumult and from their great fear of the Jews. Fear and amazement had taken hold of the women at the sight of the angel and at the awesome mystery of the Resurrection, and because of this "neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid." Either they were afraid of the Jews, or they were so in awe of what they had seen that their minds were confounded. For this reason, "neither said they anything to any man", and they even forgot the command the angel had given them.

Paschal Hymn to the Theotokos

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

Receive the Body of Christ; taste the fountain of immortality!

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*At the Dismissal, the Priest says: “Glory to Thee, O Christ...” and the choir
sings “Christ is risen from the dead...” (thrice).*

And unto us He has given eternal life.

Let us worship His Resurrection on the third day!