



## ***Message from Fr. Michael....***

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

Christos Anesti! Christ is risen! Meci han qam! Christos Imviat! Christos Vaskrese! On this second Sunday following Pascha, we commemorate the Myrrhbearing Women, the Righteous Joseph of Arimathea, and the Righteous Nicodemus. They were our Lord's faithful followers who witnessed His crucifixion and Resurrection. The Gospel of St John tells us that Nicodemus was a Pharisee who spoke to Christ under the cover of darkness, spent a hundred pounds for the purchase and acquisition of myrrh and aloes. Nicodemus was actually cast out of the synagogue and suffered for having disclosed the Jewish plots to hide, cover up, and deny the truth about our Lord's Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Joseph, Jesus' disciple, pleaded for the body of our Lord from Pilate, gave money for a shroud, gave up his own tomb which had been hewn out of rock, and was then caustically persecuted by the Jews for proclaiming the truth about our Lord and his crucifixion and resurrection. The myrrhbearers, who selflessly sacrificed all for the treasured myrrh with which to anoint and care for the Body of our Lord, and then announced the Resurrection of the Crucified, when others hid for fear of the Jews. The myrrhbearers loved the Lord that they did not possess fear, and they revealed the truth of His Crucifixion and Resurrection and suffered for it.

In a way, we are all myrrhbearers. Since the Body of Christ, in the words of St. Paul, is the Church, therefore all members of the Church are members of the Body of Christ. We confess the truth of the Lord's Crucifixion and Resurrection, and therefore, have become myrrhbearers. We can appreciate the difficulty in becoming a myrrhbearer, to care for the Body of Christ, to care for the Church. As the world has become obsessed with self gratification, it attempted to condemn the Church, because the Church's values are contrary to those of this materialistic and selfish world, 'which lies in evil'. Those who have drifted away accomplish the will of this world, and of the Prince of this world, Satan, and have fled from the Price of Peace.

In this world, one must possess faith in the Church, the Body of Christ. Those who lack faith have little time and patience for the Church/the Body of Christ. For instance, recently a woman approached me and said: 'You are so lucky, you have a beautiful church'. I was astonished by such an attitude. First, the entity of 'luck' does not exist. Second, the little that we have here belongs not to us, but to God. Lastly, anything that is here is not the result of luck, but of one of the following: it is the result of God's undeserved blessing, which can be given to us and can be taken away from us. Or alternatively, it is the result of sweat, blood, sacrifice and hard work. In other words, it is the product of myrrhbearing, selfless caring for the Body of Christ. Myrrhbearing is not exclusively the act of participating in the sacraments, preaching the Gospel and confessing the Faith. It is also doing things which are difficult because they require our sacrifice.

Those who sing in church are myrrhbearers.  
Those who clean the church are myrrhbearers.  
Those who prepare the flowers for the services are myrrhbearers.  
Those who bake Prosfora are myrrhbearers.  
Those who labor for our church are myrrhbearers.  
Those who sew vestments and altar-coverings are myrrhbearers.  
Those who prepare the coffee fellowship or donate food are myrrhbearers.  
Those who donate icons or make offerings of money are myrrhbearers.  
Even those who simply come and pray for the salvation of all are myrrhbearers.

All those who work for the Body of Christ, the Church, in this world, but are not of this world, are myrrhbearers, because they show that they too selflessly love Christ.

The reward for being a myrrhbearers is the Kingdom of Heaven through being risen with our Lord. May we all always be caretakers of sharing the truth of our Lord's Crucifixion and Resurrection, through our being myrrhbearing witnesses in His name. In the risen Christ, I remain

Your faithful and humble servant,

+Fr. Michael

# Saints and Feasts Commemorated

## Clement the Hymnographer

### Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

About the beginning of His thirty-second year, when the Lord Jesus was going throughout Galilee, preaching and working miracles, many women who had received of His beneficence



left their own homeland and from then on followed after Him. They ministered unto Him out of their own possessions, even until His crucifixion and entombment; and afterwards, neither losing faith in Him after His death, nor fearing the wrath of the Jewish rulers, they came to the sepulchre, bearing the myrrh-oils they had prepared to anoint His body. It is because of the myrrh-oils, that these God-loving women brought to the tomb of Jesus that they are called the Myrrh-bearers. Of those whose names are known are the following: first of all, the most holy Virgin Mary, who in Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40 is called "the mother of James and Joses" (these are the sons of Joseph by a previous marriage, and she was therefore their step-mother); Mary Magdalene (celebrated July 22); Mary, the wife of Clopas; Joanna, wife of Chouza, a steward of Herod Antipas; Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus; and Susanna. As for the names of the rest of them, the

evangelists have kept silence (Matt 27:55-56; 28:1-10. Mark 15:40-41. Luke 8:1-3; 23:55-24:11, 22-24. John 19:25; 20:11-18. Acts 1:14).

Together with them we celebrate also the secret disciples of the Saviour, Joseph and Nicodemus. Of these, Nicodemus was probably a Jerusalemite, a prominent leader among the Jews and of the order of the Pharisees, learned in the Law and instructed in the Holy Scriptures. He had believed in Christ when, at the beginning of our Saviour's preaching of salvation, 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, who was from the city of Arimathea, was a wealthy and noble man, 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, as the Evangelist says (Matt. 27:60).

## James the Apostle and brother of St. John the Theologian

James was one of the Twelve, like his brother John (celebrated on Sept. 26), whom the Lord called "Sons of Thunder," because they became great preachers and because of their profound theology. It was the Saint's boldness in preaching the Gospel that Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great, could not endure, and so he took him into custody during the days of the Passover, and slew him with the sword (Acts 12: 1-2); and thus he drank the cup of which the Saviour had spoken to him prophetically (Matt. 20:23). As for Herod, the following year he went down to Caesarea, and, as the Acts of the Apostles records: "Upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration" to the elders of Tyre and Sidon; and the flatterers that surrounded him "gave a shout, saying, 'it is the voice of a god, and not of a man.' And immediately an Angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and like his grandfather (see Dec. 29) "he was eaten of worms and gave up the spirit" (Acts 12:21-23)

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Angelo Romas, Persa Nizamis, Mitry Ganim, Ted Simon, and Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon. Please notify Fr. Michael if you have anyone else who should be included for special prayers. May they be under the grace and tender watch of our Lord.

#### **ATTENTION ALL YOUTH WORKERS**

Whether it be teaching our youth to Greek dance or conducting Sunday School or Greek lessons or working with our Youth of our Parish IN ANY CAPACITY, The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit have mandated that everyone working with the Youth must complete a background check and online Youth Safety training through Sterling. Please contact the Metropolis of Detroit and speak with the Metropolis Youth Director about details at (248) 823-2411. Please go on the YouthSafetyPlatform.goarch.org website and register.

### **Wisdom of the Fathers**

They [the women] had followed Him ministering to Him, and were present even unto the time of the dangers. Wherefore also they saw all; how He cried, how He gave up the ghost, how the rocks were rent, and all the rest.

#### **St. John Chrysostom**

Homily 88 on Matthew 27, 4th Century

And these [the women] first see Jesus; and the sex that was most condemned, this first enjoys the sight of the blessings, this most shows its courage. And when the disciples had fled, these were present.

#### **St. John Chrysostom**

Homily 88 on Matthew 27, 4th Century

*Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "ANTIDORON" (blessed bread) which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast" that followed worship in the early Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. We hope that you will return often to worship with us.*