

WHY WAS THE STONE ROLLED AWAY?

There can be no denying the important role the Myrrh-bearing Women played in the Resurrection narrative. Matthew's Gospel tells us that because of concerns expressed by the Jewish Sanhedrin to Pontius Pilate, Roman soldiers were sent to guard the tomb of Christ, lest some "grave robbers" would come and steal His Body and perpetuate the "myth" that He had risen from the dead. These men were trained to do whatever was necessary to carry out their orders. The Myrrh-bearing Women had their own "order." Their assignment was to anoint the Body of their fallen Master so that, according to Jewish law, proper burial could be given to It. One can only wonder what would have transpired if the Myrrh-bearers had confronted the Roman soldiers!

Thankfully, they did not, for the guards were nowhere to be found. Furthermore, their chief concern of "Who will roll away the stone for us?" was eliminated. To their surprise, when the Myrrh-bearers arrived at the tomb, they discovered that the stone had already been rolled away!

The removal of the stone did not happen to accommodate the Lord's exit from his three-day grave. On the contrary, the stone was removed so that the WITNESSES—and us as well—could clearly see into the tomb and gaze upon its vast emptiness. The Myrrh-bearers were able to follow the command of the angel and "...see where thy laid Him." Indeed, CHRIST HAD RISEN!

Because of their faithful service to Jesus, not only did the Myrrh-bearing Women see the empty tomb—they were privileged to be among the first who encountered the Risen Lord Himself.

Ss Constantine & Helen

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Pacific

THE MYRRHBEARERS



May 4, 2014

3rd Sunday of Pascha: Myrrh-bearing Women

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3rd Sunday of Pascha— Myrrh-bearing Women

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

Apolytikia - Entrance Hymns

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη (Hymn of the Resurrection) Tone 5

Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.

Ὅτε κατήλθες (Hymn of the Day) Tone 2

When You descended unto death, O Lord who yourself are immortal Life, then did You mortify Hades by the lightning flash of Your Divinity. Also when You raised the dead from the netherworld, all the Powers of the heavens were crying out: O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory be to You.

Ὁ εὐσχήμων Ἰωσήφ (Joseph of Arimathea) Tone 2

When he took down Your immaculate Body from the Cross, the honorable Joseph wrapped it in a clean linen shroud with spices and laid it for burial in a new tomb. But on the third day You arose, O Lord, and granted the world Your great mercy.

Ταῖς μυροφόροις (Myrrh-bearing Women) Tone 2

The Angel standing at the sepulcher cried out and said to the ointment-bearing women: The ointments are appropriate for mortal men, but Christ has been shown to be a stranger to decay. So go and cry aloud, The Lord has risen and granted the world His great mercy.

Kontakion

Εἰ καὶ ἐν τάφῳ Tone 8

Though You went down into the tomb, O Immortal One, yet You brought down the dominion of Hades; and You rose as the victor, O Christ our God; and You called out Rejoice to the Myrrh-bearing women, and gave peace to Your Apostles, O Lord who to the fallen grant resurrection.

Epistle Reading

Acts 6:1-7

IN THOSE DAYS, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, "it is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Procho-

ros, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaos, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Gospel Reading

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

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 taking him down, wrapped him in the 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 Jesus saw where he was laid.

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and 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 anyone, for they were afraid.

Today

✠ 2 year Memorial for Konstantinos Kritikos; 2 year Memorial for Katherine Kaldis; Philoptochos Meeting; Summer Camp Parent's Meeting after Sunday School

This Week

- ✠ SAT, 5/10— Byzantine Chant 4-5 p.m.; Bible Study 5-6 p.m.; Great Vespers 6:30 p.m.
- ✠ SUN, 5/11— 4th Sunday of Pascha: Paralytic; Mother's Day

To Our Visitors:

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us. Just a reminder, however: the Sacrament of Holy Communion is a manifestation of the *unity of the Body of Christ*. As such, only those who are members in spiritual good standing of the Orthodox Church – and who have prepared themselves for the Sacrament – may partake of the Holy Chalice. However, *everyone* is welcome to come up with our people at the end of the service to receive blessed bread.

Please be sure to join us at Coffee Hour following Services.