



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

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St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, April 26, 2015

ON THIS DAY, THE *THIRD* SUNDAY OF PASCHA, WE COMMEMORATE THE FEAST OF THE MYRRH BEARING WOMEN (THEOTOKOS, MARY MAGDALENE, MARY, WIFE OF CLEOPAS, JOANNA, WIFE OF CHOUZA, SALOME, MOTHER OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE, MARY AND MARTHA, SISTERS OF LAZARUS, AND SUSANNA), AS WELL AS JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA, THE HIDDEN DISCIPLE, AND NICODEMUS, THE DISCIPLE WHO WENT TO THE LORD AT NIGHT. ON THIS DAY WE ALSO COMMEMORATE Holy Priest-Martyr Basil, Bishop of Amasia (+322); Righteous Glaphyra and Justas (+322); and George. *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!

You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often! Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

Reflection About Today's Religious Theme:

On this *Third Sunday of Pascha*, the Church commemorates the first Apostles to proclaim the Resurrection: *the women who witnessed the burial of Christ and who when coming to anoint His Body found that the Resurrection had taken place.* Remembered also are *Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.*

Scripture mentions seven of the Lord's women disciples by name: Theotokos, Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James and wife of Cleopas; Joanna, the wife of Chouza, a steward to Herod Antipas; Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee; Susanna; and Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus. Luke 8:1-3 records women disciples traveled with our Lord and supported Him and the Twelve out of their means.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./2./11. Hymn for the Feast of Pascha (our Lord's passover from death to life):

Sung three times after the opening of the Divine Liturgy, before the Small Entrance, and after the distribution of Holy Communion: : Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.

3. Small Entrance Exclamation of the Priest:

On the occasion of today's feast, the Priest intones the following at the Small Entrance: "In your choirs, bless the Lord, you of Israel's wellspring. Save us, O Son of God, who did rise from the dead, we sing to You: Alleluia!"

4. Resurrectional Hymn - Second Tone (Today) – (Hymnal-pp.102-105):

Sung after the Small Entrance: When You descended into death, Life immortal, You vanquished the power of hell by Your resplendent divinity, and when You raised the dead from the depths of darkness, all the heavenly powers cried out triumphantly: O giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You.

5. Hymn for Sunday of Myrrh Bearers – (Hymnal-pp.158-161):

Sung after the Small Entrance: The noble Joseph took Your most pure Body down from the tree. He wrapped it in clean linen, anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb. But on the third day, You rose, O Lord, bestowing on all the world Your great mercy.

6. Another Hymn for Myrrh Bearers Sunday– (Hymnal-pp.162-165):

Sung after the Small Entrance: The Angel stood by the tomb and cried out to the myrrh-bearing women: Myrrh would be fitting to anoint the dead, but Christ has shown Himself to be free from corruption. Therefore, proclaim that the Lord is risen, bestowing on all the world His great mercy.

7. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

8. Kontakion of Pascha – (Hymnal-pp.274-277):

Sung after the Small Entrance: Into the grave You descended, Immortal One, yet You destroyed the power of Hades, and as victor You arose, O Christ our God; You proclaimed to the Myrrh Bearing Women a greeting of joy, You brought peace to Your Holy Apostles, and to the fallen You granted resurrection.

9. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp.304-307):

Today , the following hymn is sung instead of "Axion Estin" or "Truly it is proper to call you blessed...": The Angel cried out to the woman full of grace: Rejoice, O Pure Virgin; again I say, rejoice, for your Son is risen from the tomb on the third day. Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you. Exult and be glad, O Zion. Be radiant, pure Theotokos, in the resurrection of your Son.

10. Communion Hymn – (Hymnal-pp.318-319):

On the occasion of today's feast, the following hymn is sung instead of "Aineite" or "Praise the Lord": Receive the Body of Christ; drink from the font of immortality.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom
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Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Luke 5:14-19)

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they remembered His words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Epistle Reading (Acts 6:1-7)

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." What they said pleased the whole community,

and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Gospel Reading (Mark 15:43-16:8)

Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if He were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether He had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that He was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph brought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

When the Sabbath was over, 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, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified. He has been raised; He is not here. Look, there is the place they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.” So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

THIS WEEK’S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

“Glory in His Holy Name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.”

(1 Chr. 16:10)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

The Compassion of Jesus

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” - Jesus Christ

Today, we remember the *compassion* of the Myrrh Bearing Women, of Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus. Their love for our Lord is well-known and for this reason, I wanted to highlight this attribute we call *compassion*.

Tucked in the midst of the 50 verses of Luke chapter 7, we find five verses that give us great insight into the heart of Jesus. As He approaches a little town called Nain, a funeral procession is just coming out of the gate of the city. A man has died. St. Luke is careful to point out that the man was the *“only son of his mother”*. As a widow, the death of her only son relegated her to a life of poverty and degradation. Sounds of her deep bewailing brought tears to the eyes of all who heard. A considerable crowd from the town is with her. Just as the cemetery comes into view, she meets Jesus. *“And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her...” (vs. 13)*

“Splanchnizomai” the Greek word for *compassion* literally means “to be moved as to one’s bowels” (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of *love* and *pity*). Someone once observed that *Jesus felt the pain of that woman in His guts*. It is interesting that this deep empathy drew out of Jesus a much higher level of response than anyone expected, as well as the desire to meet the real need of the widow... *“and (He) said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ Then He came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And He said, ‘Young man, I say to you, Arise.’ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.” (vs. 13-15)*

Nearly every day, God places someone in our life who is consumed with deep pain. Today, it may be a friend whose father has died. Tomorrow, it could be a couple who have tragically abandoned their marriage. Others we might meet include the teenage girl – pregnant, scared and confused, or a set of parents whose son or daughter has been killed in the line of military or civil duty. Yet another could be someone’s daughter who attempted

suicide. Too often, we are so busy and preoccupied that we trivialize another's pain. *We are aware, but not touched. Even our own pain is masked and dismissed.*

Christ-like compassion sees beyond the surface and begs for a truly empathetic "*from the bowels*" response. Could Jesus have seen the widow and merely walked by? I don't believe so. His very nature compelled Him to go beyond the "expected" and to fulfill "*the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.*" (*James 5:11*) I believe that God has no greater plan than to use His people as His ambassadors of compassion and mercy, like those we call to mind today – the Myrrh Bearers, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus. *But let's not stop with them.*

Indeed, I believe God is using and desires to use all of us. Indeed, may we always be cheerful givers of our time, talents, and treasures to enrich God's blessings here and everywhere . . . today, and always. Our reward is knowing that someone in pain like I referenced above who might visit here *after us* will be restored, renewed, and refreshed to go back "into the world" and live their life as God intends.

In closing, let's slow down a bit and really pay attention to those who are "in our path". Next time, look beyond what is apparent to see the real need. Let us offer ***the compassion of Jesus***. Lives will be turned around. Not just theirs... but ours as well. Amen!

And on this 554th Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!



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WORSHIP & COMMUNITY SCHEDULE

Today is the 3rd Sunday of Pascha

Sunday, April 26: (Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing Women):

7:45 a.m. Orthros

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy, followed by Blessing of the Prayer Shawls

10:45 a.m. Religious Education Classes (*for all ages*)

11:45 a.m. Let's Eat™ Join us at Broadway Diner, 535 S. Glynn St., Suite 1009, Fayetteville, GA 30214. It's easy – no reservations, Dutch Treat...join us!

Tuesday, April 28:

7:00 p.m. Catholic Orthodox Ecumenical Gathering - Cathedral of Christ the King

Thursday, April 30:

6:30 p.m. Choir Practice

Saturday, April 30:

11:00 a.m. Sacrament of Baptism

Sunday, May 3: (Sunday of the Paralytic):

7:45 a.m. Orthros

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy, followed by Greek Fest Planning Meeting

10:45 a.m. Religious Education Classes (*for all ages*)

Prayer Shawls Blessing Today

Two OCMC mission teams will be sent to Alaska this summer. These teams will be working in partnership with the Diocese of Alaska to reach out to the youth and foster their growth and involvement in the Church. The camp setting enjoyed by the teams and the participating youth will incorporate lessons on the Faith, living as Orthodox in this world, a Christian understanding of social media, as well as arts and crafts, music, and sports. Youth in these rural villages have a unique need for fellowship and community. Today, Fr. George will offer the blessing of our prayer shawls to be delivered to the DiLullo family in AK! Thanks to Susan and all those who assisted with this effort.

Please contact Susan Kleto at (770) 253-8469 or sbkleto@gmail.com to either become a participant in this ministry, to receive yarn, to receive sew-in labels, to receive a Prayer Guide, or if you have any questions or suggestions.

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!