



My Beloved Ones,

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

As we continue through this Paschal season, our Church has dedicated this Sunday to the Myrrh-bearing Women. Consider, my friends, the followers of Christ after His betrayal and arrest in Gethsemane. Apart from John the Beloved Disciple (and before his denial, Peter), each of the remaining Disciples fled from the Garden in fear. Of those who followed Christ during His earthly Ministry, the women showed greater courage as they watched their Lord and Master suffer and give up His spirit.

We read in last week's Gospel that "*On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews...*" (John 20:19)

Even after the Lord's Resurrection, the Disciples still lived in fear of what might happen to them. Think about the bravery exhibited by these women, who, as the Gospel said, "*...went to the tomb when the sun had risen...*" Remember also that the tomb was under heavy guard. Such was their respect and love for the Lord, that they were willing to brave the dark journey—and the possible consequences—to honor Him. Our Lord, in His infinite love for mankind, bestowed the gift of proclaiming His Resurrection to those who had never wavered in spirit.

I ask us to consider their example by reflecting on what sort of love we have in our hearts for our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, it is very easy for some to say, "Yes, I am a believer, and that is because I hope for eternal life." While it is true that, as St. Paul says, we have hope in Christ's Resurrection, do we love Christ's because of our promised rewards; or do we love Him as did the Myrrh-Bearers?

Out of a deep sense of love, they not only put their lives in jeopardy, but they gave of their time and resources to anoint Him. While we cannot honor Christ's earthly Body with aromas and spices, we can receive His Body with love and honor during the Eucharist. Then, when we approach to receive His Body and His Blood during the Divine Liturgy, we must ask ourselves again: with what kind of love shall we offer to Him? Again, we must know in our hearts if it is a love motivated by hoped for rewards, or because we truly love Him?

If we truly love Him, we must listen to Him and act according to His Will, and we must first love our neighbor. I hope and pray that each and every one of you will make the conscious decision to proclaim the true love we each should have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta