



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 Bearers. Consider, my friends, the followers of Christ after His betrayal and arrest in Gethsemane. Apart from John the Beloved Disciple and Peter (before his denial), 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.

Think about the bravery exhibited by these women, who, as the Gospel said, “...went to the tomb when the sun had risen...” (Mark 16:12) 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 and dangerous journey to honor Him. Our Lord, in His love for who serve Him faithfully, bestowed the gift of proclaiming His Resurrection to the ones who had never wavered in spirit.

Let us also reflect upon two Myrrh Bearers where were men: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. They were, the Gospels tell us, members of the Sanhedrin and secret Disciples. I can only imagine their pain, to see their peers and elders plot against the Lord, and to know that they alone could not stop the events of His Passion. However, even after the Crucifixion, at great risk to themselves, they publicly removed Jesus from the Cross, preparing our Lord for burial in Joseph’s own tomb.

I ask us to consider their examples 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 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 respect, they not only put their lives in jeopardy, but they gave of their time and resources to anoint Him.

Even in this time of necessary physical distance from our friends and neighbors, I pray that we demonstrate our love for Him through the others: whether this means calling our friends and loved ones to offer comfort, or assisting those who are in need, and struggling during this isolation. Truly, then we will be living out His Gospel message of

love and charity, just as the Myrrh Bearers did. We do this, not for vainglory, or to receive heavenly blessings, but because, if the Myrrh Bearers could risk their lives for their Lord and their God, how much more could we do, who continue to live in shelter and peace?

I hope and pray that each one of us will make the conscious decision to proclaim the true love we each should have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**+ALEXIOS**

Metropolitan of Atlanta