



My Beloved Ones,

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη!
Christ is Risen!

As we continue this Paschal season, our Church has dedicated this Sunday to the Myrrh Bearing Women. Consider, that after Christ's betrayal, ten of the eleven remaining Disciples fled in fear. Of all those who followed Christ, the women did not turn away as they saw their Lord give up His spirit. This Sunday's Epistle is appropriately written by the one faithful member of the Twelve and speaks to the joy the Myrrh-Bearers felt.

The First Letter of John begins by declaring the historical and spiritual reality that Christ is the Incarnate Word of God, who existed before the Creation of the world, and who lived and walked among men, before dying and rising from the grave.

"We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete." (1 John: 1-4) As Christians, our joy can only be complete if we believe that we live in fellowship with the God-Man who conquered death.

In this Sunday's Orthros Gospel, the Myrrh-Bearers receive the joyous news of the Resurrection, and rush to tell the Eleven. However, St. Luke tells us that, for the Disciples, *"...these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them."* (Luke 24:11) St. John continues in his Epistle, *"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth..."* (1 John: 5-6) The Disciples are still shocked, and their hearts are too full of despair and sadness to accept the Resurrection. Only when Peter runs to the Tomb and sees the linen clothes does he begin to believe, but only a little. Having betrayed His Lord only three days before, he must first ponder these things in his heart, and so *"...he went home, amazed at what had happened."* (Luke 24:12)

At the conclusion of this week's liturgical Gospel, the ending is different. St. Mark tells us that the women *"...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."* (Mark 16:8) The beauty of this ending poses a question to us the reader. St. Mark allows us to stand in front of the empty Tomb: do we truly believe? Will we go to our homes and be silently amazed, or will we loudly proclaim that Christ is Risen, and that salvation has been given to the whole world? As St. John concludes his Epistle, *"...if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."* (1 John: 7)

+ALEXIOS
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