

SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2021
THIRD SUNDAY OF PASCHA
HOLY MYRRHBEARING WOMEN & ST TAMARA, QUEEN OF GEORGIA

The Myrrh-bearing women are those women who followed the Lord, along with His Mother. They remained with her during the time of the saving Passion and anointed the Lord's body with myrrh. Joseph and Nikodemos asked for and received the Lord's body from Pilate. They took it down from the Cross, wrapped it in linen cloths and spices, then they laid it in a tomb, and then they placed a great stone over the entrance of the tomb.

According to the Evangelist Matthew (27:57-61) Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses (Mark 15:40) were there sitting opposite the sepulchre, and they saw where He had been laid. This other Mary was the Mother of God. Not only were these present, but also many other women, as Saint Luke says (24:10).

Today the Church honors Saints Mary Magdalene (July 22), Mary the wife of Cleopas (May 23), Joanna (June 27), Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee (August 3), Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus (June 4), and the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, who was the stepmother of her husband Joseph's sons James (October 23) and Joses (October 30). Today we also also remember Saint Joseph of Arimathea (July 31), who was a secret disciple (John 19:38), and Saint Nikodemos, who was a disciple by night (John 3:3; 19:38).

The holy right-believing Queen Tamara of Georgia is honored twice during the year: on May 1, the day of her repose, and also on the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women. Saint Tamara was the only child of King George III. Upon his death in 1184, she became Queen at the age of twenty-four. Despite her youth, she ruled the country with such wisdom and godliness - leading it to unprecedented military triumphs over the neighboring Moslem countries in defense of her kingdom, fostering arts and letters, and zealously strengthening Orthodoxy - that her reign is known as the Golden Age of Georgia. After her coronation, she convoked a local council to correct disorders in church life. When the bishops had assembled from all parts of her kingdom, she, like Saint Constantine at the First Ecumenical Council, honored them as if she were a commoner, and they Angels of God; exhorting them to establish righteousness and redress abuses, she said in her humility, "Do away with every wickedness, beginning with me, for the prerogative of the throne is in no wise that of making war against God." Saint Tamara called herself "the father of orphans and the judge of widows," and her contemporaries called her "King" instead of "Queen." She herself led her army against the Moslems and fearlessly defeated them; because of the reverence that even the enemies of Georgia had for her, entire mountain tribes renounced Islam and were baptized. She built countless churches and monasteries throughout her kingdom, and was benefactress also to the Holy Land, Mount Athos, and holy places in Greece and Cyprus. She has always been much beloved by her people, who have memorialized her meekness, wisdom, piety, and obedience, and peace-loving nature in innumerable legends, ballads, and songs; the poem written in her

honour by Shota Rustaveli, "The Knight in the Panther Skin," is a masterpiece of Georgian literature. The great Queen Tamara departed the earthly kingdom for the heavenly in the year 1212.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL *Four stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 2, followed by six stikhera for the Myrrhbearing Women*

Resurrection, tone 2:

Come, let us worship the Word of God
begotten of the Father before all ages,
and incarnate of the Virgin Mary!
Having endured the Cross, He was buried as He himself desired.//
And having risen from the dead, He saved me, the erring one.

Christ our Savior nailed to the Cross the bond against us,
He voided it and destroyed the dominion of death.//
We fall down before His Resurrection on the third day.

With the Archangels let us praise the Resurrection of Christ!
He is our Savior, our Redeemer.
He is coming with awesome glory and mighty power//
to judge the world which He made.

The Angel proclaimed You as the crucified and buried Master.
He told the women: "Come, see the place where He lay!
He is risen as He said, for He is almighty."
We worship You, only immortal One.//
O Christ, the Giver of life, have mercy on us!

Feast, tone 2:

Early in the morning,
the Myrrhbearing Women brought spices to the tomb of the Lord.
They found the stone unexpectedly rolled away,
and they asked among themselves:
"Where are the seals of the tomb? Where are Pilate's guards?"
The radiant Angel came to the wondering women and proclaimed to them:
"Why do you seek weeping the Life Who gives life to the human race?
Christ our God has risen from the dead as almighty,//
granting us incorruption, life, enlightenment and great mercy!"

O women disciples, his is the day of resurrection..."
why do you mingle myrrh with tears?

The stone is gone; the tomb is empty;
behold corruption destroyed by life!
The seals witness that the guards of the godless have watched in vain.
Mortal nature has been saved by the flesh of God.
Hell is wailing.
Go with joy, and proclaim to the Apostles:
“Christ has slain death as the first-born of the dead.//
He awaits you in Galilee!”

The Myrrhbearers came early to Your tomb, O Christ,
seeking You to anoint Your most pure Body.
Enlightened by the Angel's words
they proclaimed joyous tidings to the Apostles:
“The Leader of our salvation has been raised;
He has captured death,//
granting the world eternal life and great mercy!”

from the litya, tone 1:

“O myrrhbearing women,
why have you come to the grave?
Why do you seek the Living among the dead?//
The Lord is risen, take courage!” cried the Angel.

The women came with fear to the tomb,
hastening to anoint Your Body with sweet spices.
Not finding it, they were perplexed and questioned one another,
as they did not know of Your Resurrection.
But an Angel appeared to them and said://
“Christ is risen, granting us great mercy.”

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb, seeking the Lord.
They saw an Angel, who shone like lightning, sitting on the stone.
And he said to them: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?
He is risen, as He said;
in Galilee you will find Him.”
Let us cry out to Him://
“O Lord, risen from the dead, glory to You!”

GLORY... tone 6

The Myrrhbearing Women reached Your tomb
and saw the seals of the tomb broken.
They wailed as they did not find Your most pure body:
“Who has stolen our hope?”

Who has taken the dead One, naked and anointed,
the sole consolation of His Mother?
How can the Life of the dead have died?
How can the Capturer of hell have been buried?//
But arise in three days as You said, O Savior, and save our souls!”

NOW AND EVER... The Dogmatic of the Resurrection in tone 2:

The shadow of the Law passed when grace came;
as the Bush burned, yet was not consumed,
so the Virgin gave birth, yet remained a Virgin.
Instead of a pillar of flame, the Righteous Sun has risen.//
Instead of Moses, Christ, the Salvation of our souls.

***APOSTIKHA: We sing the first stikheron of the Resurrection in tone 2. Then we sing
LET GOD ARISE ... and the Paschal verses, until the Glory...***

Resurrection, tone 2:

Your Resurrection, O Christ our Savior,
has enlightened the whole universe,
calling back Your creation.//
Glory to You, O almighty Lord!

GLORY... Pentecostarion, tone 5:

Joseph, together with Nicodemus,
took You down from the Tree,
Who clothe Yourself with light as with a garment.
He gazed on Your body – dead, naked, and unburied,
and, in grief and tender compassion, he lamented:
“Woe is me, my sweetest Jesus!
A short while ago, the sun beheld You hanging on the Cross,
and it hid itself in darkness.
The earth quaked in fear at the sight.
The veil of the Temple was torn in two.
Lo, now I see You willingly submit to death for our sake.
How shall I bury You, O my God?
How can I wrap You in a shroud?
How can I touch Your most pure body with my hands?
What songs can I sing for Your exodus, O compassionate One?
I magnify Your Passion.
I glorify Your burial,
and Your holy Resurrection,
crying, ‘O Lord, glory to You!’”

now & ever... and the rest of the Paschal verses:

“This is the day of resurrection...”

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 2

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal,
You slew hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.
And when from the depths You raised the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried out://
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!”

Pentecostarion, tone 2:

The noble Joseph,
when he had taken down Your most pure Body from the Tree,
wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices,
and placed it in a new tomb.
But You rose on the third day, O Lord,//
granting the world great mercy.

Pentecostarion, tone 2:

The Angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb and said:
“Myrrh is fitting for the dead;
but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption!
So proclaim: ‘The Lord is risen,//
granting the world great mercy.’”