

SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2023
THIRD SUNDAY OF PASCHA
HOLY MYRRHBEARING WOMEN
HOLY APOSTLE JAMES

The Myrrh-bearers

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 Nikódēmos 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 remember Saint Joseph of Arimathea (July 31), who was a secret disciple (John 19:38), and Saint Nikódēmos, who was a disciple by night (John 3:3; 19:38).

Holy Apostle James

The Holy Apostle James, the son of Zebedee, was the brother of Saint John the Theologian, and one of the Twelve Apostles. He and his brother, Saint John, were called to be Apostles by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who called them the "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). It was this James, with John and Peter, who witnessed the Raising of the Daughter of Jairus, the Lord's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Saint James, after the Descent of the Holy Spirit, preached in Spain and in other lands, and then he returned to Jerusalem. He openly and boldly preached Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, and he denounced the Pharisees and the Scribes with the words of Holy Scripture, reproaching them for their malice of heart and unbelief.

The Jews could not prevail against Saint James, and so they hired the sorcerer Hermogenes to dispute with the apostle and refute his arguments that Christ was the promised Messiah Who had come into the world. The sorcerer sent to the apostle his pupil Philip, who was converted to belief in Christ. Then Hermogenes himself became persuaded of the power of God, he burned his books of magic, accepted holy Baptism and became a true follower of Christ.

The Jews persuaded Herod Agrippa (40-44) to arrest the Apostle James and sentence him to death (Acts 12:1-2). Eusebius provides some of the details of the saint's execution (CHURCH HISTORY II, 9). Saint James calmly heard the death sentence and continued to bear witness to Christ. One of the false witnesses, whose name was Josiah, was struck by the courage of Saint James. He came to believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. When they led the apostle forth to execution, Josiah fell at his feet, repenting of his sin and asking forgiveness. The apostle embraced him, gave him a kiss and said, "Peace and forgiveness to you." Then Josiah confessed his faith in Christ before everyone, and he was beheaded with Saint James in the year 44 at Jerusalem.

Saint James was the first of the Apostles to die as a martyr.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL *Three stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 2 (spiral bound Vespers book), followed by three stikhera for the Myrrhbearing Women and three for St. James*

Myrrhbearing Women, 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!”

St. James, tone 4:

You drew men up from the depths of vanity
with a fisherman's rod of grace.
You obeyed the commands of the Teacher, O worthy James,
Who enlightened all your thoughts
and revealed you as an Apostle and holy preacher,//
for you expounded His incomprehensible divinity, O most blessed one.

The illumination of the Spirit descended on you in the form of fire
and made you a divine vessel, O blessed one,

dispelling with power the darkness of godlessness;
enlightening the world with the brightness of your all-wise words,
O preacher of mysteries, O leader of the Apostles,//
James, the eye-witness of Christ.

You illumined those lying in the darkness of ignorance
with the lightning flash of your preaching, O glorious James.
You revealed them to be sons through faith of the Master and God
Whose passion and death you did imitate with zeal.
You became an heir of glory, O wise one,//
as one speaking from God, and a most faithful disciple.

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.

Readings for Saint James

The reading from the Holy Epistle of the Holy Apostle James.
James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the
twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings. My brethren,
count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the
testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its
perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking

nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits. Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

James 1:1-12

The reading from the Holy Epistle of the Holy Apostle James.

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God,"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart,

this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and The Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

James 1:13-17

The reading from the Holy Epistle of the Holy Apostle James.

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. **James 2:1-13**

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...

GLORY... St. James, tone 1:

You followed Christ and despised the world,
keeping His teachings in your treasury, O godly James.
You were revealed to be His Apostle.

Therefore, going to the nations with the commandments of the Savior,
you enlightened the souls in the darkness of delusion and passion,//
that they might believe in the consubstantial Trinity.

now & ever... 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 we sing ‘Christ is Risen’, once

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!”

Saint James, tone 8

You were called to be a disciple and warrior of Christ, one of the
exalted choir of Apostles.
With your brother John, you abandoned all to follow the Master,

O James;
you were filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaimed Him to all.
You bowed your head to the sword, the first of the twelve to shed
your blood!//
We celebrate your memory, O blessed one!

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.’”