

May 3, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Holy Archangel Michael's Serbian Orthodox Church,
Hibbing, MN,

I greet you in the name of the Risen Lord.

Christ is Risen!

Today we celebrate the Holy Myrrh Bearing Women. As the Gospel tells us, "Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. They bought spices that they might anoint Jesus's body."

Also in this same Gospel reading, Mark 15:43-16:8, we hear the makings of a famous priestly prayer pertaining to Joseph of Arimetha who asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. "Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen."

During every Divine Liturgy, the priest enters the altar after the great entrance, places the Holy Gifts on the altar, takes the cloth (aer) from his shoulders and says, "The Noble Joseph when he had taken Thy Most Pure Body down from the tree, anointed it with spices," the priest touches the cloth (aer) to the rich fragrance of the incense in the sensor, "wrapped it in fine linen," the priest wraps the cloth around the Precious Gifts, "and placed it in a newly hewn tomb." If it is customary to close the altar doors it symbolizes the sealing of the tomb.

So if Joseph's noble actions have become such an integral part of the Divine Liturgy, then what do the Myrrh Bearing Women represent?

Well, if Joseph's noble, but customary action was enough for him to bury the Lord in his own soul. Then the Myrrh Bearing Women's noble, but customary action was enough for them to be the first to witness the Resurrection of the Lord in their own souls. Including Mary Magdalene out of whom He had cast seven (many) demons.

Thereby, the Myrrh Bearing Women represent the ability of each and every Orthodox Christian to witness the Resurrection of Jesus Christ within themselves. Let us go to the tomb of our hearts to anoint the Lord Jesus Christ and hope that He has been Resurrected in our souls.

Truly He is Risen!

With the blessings of God,
Father Constantine "Dean" Franck