

divine providence. "A time to speak, a time to be silent". More than ever today, when, despite the crisis on many levels it is a very blessed period, Christians need to be silent and pray.

It is certain that prayer will come out a victor, if we Christians seriously take the matter of our salvation and of the salvation of the whole world. The liturgical prayer which is shot forth and embraces the heights of the heavenly habitations and the bowels of Hades, moves the mystical threads of history and consoling us in the present moves us simultaneously into the future, there where Love will close history.

The Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy is a par-excellence loving action through which a Christian comes out, "goes out" of his own self and learns to love and to embrace others, according to the model of the crucified Savior. With His incarnation, the "explosion" of love, Christ emptied Himself: An all-expensive myrrh closed up in a vessel. The vessel broke and the universe filled with fragrance. We also partaking in His life, brethren, become living myrrh-containers of grace, people who exude "a scent of spiritual fragrance" and this is the most effective preaching in the quagmire of today's crisis of human civilization.

Archim. E. T.

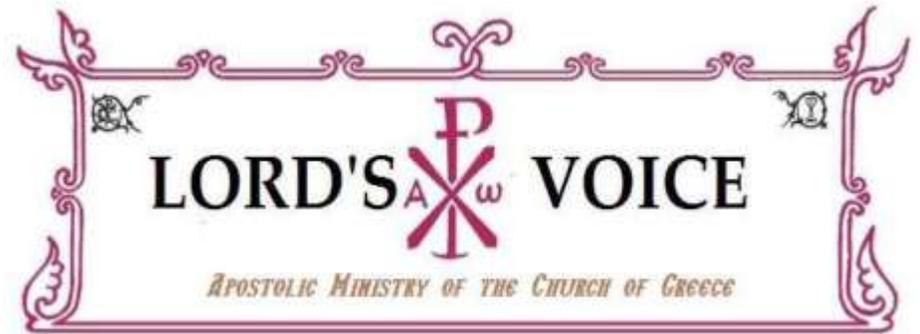
SUNDAY, May 4, 2014 Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

Pelagia the Nun-martyr of Tarsus, Hilary the Wonderworker, Euthemios, Bishop of Madytos, **TONE OF THE WEEK: Second, Eothinon** Fourth Orthros Gospel.

EPISTLE Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7, **GOSPEL** MARK 15:43-47; 16:1-8

NEXT SUNDAY MAY 11, 2014 Sunday of the Paralytic, Methodius & Cyril, Equal-to-the Apostles Illuminators of the Slavs, Renewal of Constantinople, Hieromartyr Mocius.

EPISTLE Acts of the Apostles 9:32-42, **GOSPEL** JOHN 5:1-15



62nd Year

MAY 4, 2014

PAMPHLET #18 (3179)

THE MYRRHBEARERS AND BURIERS OF CHRIST

Today's gospel passage, beloved brethren, refers to Joseph of Arimathea, who was a noteworthy member of the Jewish Sanhedrin and a goodly-dispositioned person who had believed in Christ's preaching concerning the Kingdom of God. He seemed to not have been daunted by the death of Christ, to the contrary of the other disciples, so for this reason the text clarifies to us that "he dared" to go ask for the body of the Lord from Pilate. So for this reason also we chant so beautifully in our churches: "The daring of the disciples ceased, while Joseph of Arimathea excels"! He took the body from Pilate after Jesus' death was ascertained and wrapping it in a clean sheet, he buried it in his own new tomb.

The myrrhbearing women on Sunday dawn arrived at the tomb in order to put aromas on the dead body of Christ. They were granted however to learn from an angel dressed in white and glistening, who is standing to the side of the tomb, that Christ resurrected. He urges them furthermore to look at the empty shrouds and to go announce to the disciples who were mourning and crying (Mark 16:10) that Christ resurrected. He simultaneously makes special mention of Peter because, according to the Fathers, he had need of consolation and certification that his triple denial was forgiven. They were in ecstasy and amazement together.

SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN

THE GOSPEL OF MARK 15:43-47; 16:1-8

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. And he bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back; for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." And they 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.

During the Divine Liturgy

During the Divine Liturgy we are granted with God's grace to live all these events, precisely as Joseph and the myrrhbearing

women lived them. Nothing happens by chance here. The coverings of the chalice and paten, which in the sacred Prothesis symbolize the swaddling clothes of the newly born Christ, during the Great Entrance, which is an image of the journey to Golgotha and the empty tomb which is the holy Altar Table, the covers "become" shrouds. As soon as the Precious Gifts are placed before their changing into the Body and Blood, the Priest-Joseph certifies that "the noble Joseph from the wood taking down your immaculate body, with a clean sheet wrapped it and with aromas in a new tomb having buried it he placed it". Aromas are the incenses which we offer at that time.

The daring which Joseph and Nikodemos showed, as also the myrrhbearing women were basically something at first glance unexpected. One would expect that the "manifest" disciples of Christ would show analogous daring. And something like this did not happen. They followed Christ, they heard His teaching, they saw His miracles, they were co-transfigured on Tabor, but in the end they abandoned Him. How much one admires Christ's longsuffering, to leave Himself to the burial cares of His secret disciples! Also how dangerous and premature for one to put down another brother for lack of boldness as regards the matter of the confession of faith! The daring and courageous ones were silent and the obscure ones excelled.

In our day

In our day it is very important to distinguish the conditions: when to be silent, when to speak, when to confess, when to defend. Discretion is necessary which according to our Fathers is the crowning of virtues. The untimely word and boldness when the circumstances don't call for that, many times creates scandals and an impasse and explosive conditions, while they betray a haughty, arrogant, zealous, audacious and show-offy spirit, in the end a factious spirit and lack of faith, in other words of trusting in