

the Myrrh-Bearing Women



Boys and girls,

Jesus had many disciples both men and women who were His followers. To Jesus, women were equal to the men. There was a Jewish custom that stated it was improper for a man to speak to a woman in a public setting. Jesus spoke openly to women in public places.

Since women played an important role in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, it's time for you to be introduced to seven of these Biblical women. They were Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Joanna, Salome, Susanna, Mary of Bethany and Martha of Bethany. Mary and Martha and their brother were friends with Jesus. As you can see, Mary was a common name.

Five of these women were wealthy. Many times, their money helped to feed Jesus and the twelve apostles. Their large houses provided much needed shelter for the men.

Jesus healed many women of their diseases. It may have been a disease affecting the body, the mind or the spirit. Mary Magdalene was one of these women who was cured by Jesus. She was possessed with evil spirits. She became a devout disciple of Jesus. She and Salome, two courageous women, chose to be there with Jesus as He hung on the cross. And Mary the Theotokos, with all the love a mother's heart could possess, was there watching her son suffer horrible pain. These women did not desert Jesus.

It was highly dangerous being a follower of Jesus, a convicted man, and especially to be there witnessing His crucifixion. Their love for Jesus was stronger than their fear.

According to the Jewish law, the bodies of those crucified had to be removed before sundown. Joseph of Arimathea, a temple council member and a secret follower of Jesus, went to Pilate to beg for permission to remove the body of Jesus from the cross for burial. He and a man called Nicodemus quickly removed the body and carefully wrapped it in a clean, linen cloth called a shroud.

Myrrh a sweet smelling gum from the bark of a tree and spices were placed between the folds of the linen cloth. They carried Jesus' body to a nearby garden burial site that belonged to Joseph. A huge stone was placed at the entrance of the cave-like tomb.

The women witnessed the passion, crucifixion, and burial of Jesus. He was indeed gone. It seemed so very hopeless. Their love for Jesus continued onward. They went out and spent their money to buy ointments and sweet spices to honor the body of Jesus. These women became known as the Myrrh bearers.

It was they who came to Jesus' grave early the following week. They knew Jesus was dead, but having seen how hurriedly the two men had prepared the body of Jesus for burial, they planned to attend to the body properly, anointing it and wrapping it with all the customary care, love and attention His body deserved.

Mary Magdalene was ahead of the other women. She couldn't figure out how they would get into the tomb, but her faith was strong. To her surprise, the stone had been moved away from the entrance. We know the end to this story.

The Myrrh-bearers were the first people to receive the angel's message and the resurrection of Jesus. They showed us how faith, hope and love played a role in their lives.

Where in this story do we see these three virtues of love? Do we have them? The Myrrh-bearers sacrificed all their precious myrrh, ointment with which to anoint the BODY OF CHRIST.

All members of the Church are members of the BODY OF CHRIST. We are like the myrrh-bearers too, know the truth of the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Today, we are to be members of the Church the BODY OF CHRIST.

When you look at the church, you will see members sharing their gifts for their church, the BODY OF CHRIST. Examples of members could be the men who carry the envelopes; the lady who bakes for the church; the women who sing; the cantor who leads the church in singing.

What can you as a member do?

Anything you do for your church is important, singing along with the priest in the Divine Liturgy. (Do you sing that you sing with the angels?) Listen to the Divine Liturgy to learn.

If you are a boy, you can be an altar boy.

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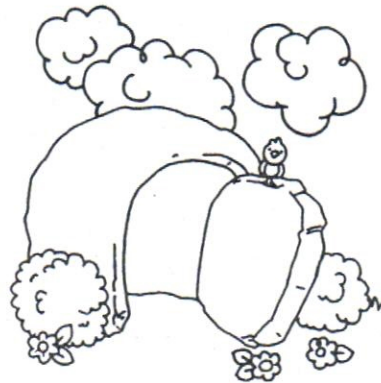
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You can come to all your ECF classes and especially be attentive to the lesson. You can love others as Jesus loves us. You can be a kind and good person reflecting what Jesus teaches us. Remember when you are in church that it is not just another building; IT IS GOD'S HOUSE - Heaven on Earth.



empty tomb

Show the women how to get to the place of burial.

