

Simply Orthodox

Myrrh-bearing
Women



Through the Tears

Written by the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky
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“She turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ She supposed Him to be the gardener and said to Him, ‘Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’” (John 20:14)

How long was He standing there? How long do you wait for a woman to go on weeping? It's not an easy question to answer. Crying is therapeutic. As the fathers say, tears wash the windows of the soul. But they were talking about weeping for one's sins. This was not the case. It's odd about life. When we are born, we cry because we were slapped. Then we cry when we are hungry or need tending. Later, we cry when we are angry, frustrated, or because we have learned to control parents with our tears. Then when somebody special enters our life and takes hold of our heart, we feel we cannot do without him, and so we even pray that he will always remain. Bitter tears come when that doesn't happen.

So it was with Mary Magdalene. She felt abandoned and alone, angry at Jesus' murderers, frustrated at having been helpless to save Him. Yet none of that was true. She wasn't abandoned, and she wasn't alone. She must have known that He told the apostles: "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me;" and "because I go to the Father" (John 16:17). The little while had not quite passed, yet there He was the whole while she was weeping.

Not only priests but all persons have been in a similar situation, where somebody is crying and we are standing by helplessly and passively, because our presence is ignored. The weeper goes on ignoring not just us, but the Christ who comes to save the suffering through us. The one who had been baptized into Christ and had put on Christ is capable of reminding the one who feels forsaken that she is not alone. We make a difference

because He does.

Jesus Christ never comes alone. He brings the ideal Comforter from the Father, the Holy Spirit. That's why He told the apostles that He had to leave them for awhile. Mary Magdalene finally recognized the Lord, because He had become a man, but the Holy Spirit can never be seen; nevertheless, He is "everywhere present and fills all things" as we confirm by the prayer to Him. People of our secular society do not know that the Holy Spirit is with us, around us and in us, but we are sure of that – which is why the answer to the question "Why are you weeping?" has no really good answer. At least not for a believing Christian. If we say we are crying because we had lost somebody, then that person is with Christ. If we say that we are alone, it's because we cannot see Christ for our tears. If we feel abandoned, we have decided to feel that way only because we chose to ignore what we know in our hearts – God is everywhere. As the Psalm says:

“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there....

If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ even the night shall be a light to me’.
(Psalm 139:7,11)

Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ had to endure the trial of the Cross alone, but in all other times and situations He is with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And so it was in the garden, when He encountered the woman who loved Him more than life itself. So He left her without satisfying her desires: "Don't hold onto Me," He said to her, because He had not yet ascended to His Father, but rather she should hold onto the faith she had in Him even when she didn't understand Him or His words, which was much of the time.

Mary Magdalene is a paradigm of faith, hope, and most of all love, giving us a prime example for our own lives at the times we feel abandoned, forsaken and alone.

Prayers from the Pentecostarion:

When you cried to the Myrrh-bearers, 'Rejoice!', Christ our God, you ended the lament of our foremother Eve by your resurrection, while you ordered your Apostles to proclaim, 'The Saviour has risen from the grave'.

Kontakion Sunday Myrrh Bearing Women

www.anastasis.org.uk

Church Schedule

**Vesper Service
Saturday 7pm**

**Divine Liturgy
Sunday 10am**

**Church Address:
6 Oxford Street
Collingwood VIC
(Melway 44 B6)**

The Scripture Readings and Commemorations

Sunday, May 3rd, 2009

3rd Sunday of Pascha: Holy Myrrh-bearing Women



EPISTLE READING

The Reading is from Acts 6:1-7

¹ Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, ⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. ⁷ Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from Mark 15:43-16:8

⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Pilate marvelled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵ So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷ And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James observed where He was laid. ^{16:1} Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ² Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³ And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶ But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷ But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." ⁸ So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

New King James Version sourced from www.biblegateway.com

The Lives of Saints Commemorated:

Sunday 3rd May, 2009.

Martyrs Timothy the Reader and his wife Maura of Antioch in Egypt (286)

These holy martyrs were husband and wife. During the persecutions of Diocletian, the governor Arian demanded that Timothy hand over his sacred books (these were rare at that time, and as a Reader he was entrusted with their care). Timothy refused, saying that he would no more do so than a father would hand over his own children to death. He was brutally tortured and, when he refused to yield, the governor summoned Timothy's wife Maura, thinking that she would urge her husband to bow to the idols, but instead she confessed herself to be a Christian too. She in turn was subjected to many tortures, and finally the couple were crucified facing one another, where they hung for nine days, encouraging one another in the Faith, before they met their blessed end. They had been married for less than a month when they received their crowns.

St Theodosius, abbot of the Kiev Caves Monastery and founder of cenobitic monasticism in Russia (1074).

"Our righteous Father Theodosius was born in 1009, not far from Kiev, and brought up in Kursk. From early childhood he showed the wisdom of an elder, avoiding childish games and refusing to wear anything but the poorest of clothing. When he was about thirteen years old, and his father died, he began to humble himself even more, going out to work with the serfs in the field. His mother went so far as to beat him in her attempts to make him behave more respectably. Hearing of the labours of Saint Anthony of Kiev, he fled to him secretly and was accepted by him as his disciple. He was tonsured at the age of twenty-four by Saint Anthony's disciple Nikon, and was elected Abbot of the Caves Monastery in 1057, since Saint Anthony refused this out of humility, and lived his whole life as a hermit. It was Saint Theodosius who introduced in Russia the cenobitic rule of the Monastery of Studium in Constantinople, and under his guidance many monks attained to great holiness, and the monastic life spread. When Prince Svyatoslav drove out his elder brother the pious Prince Isyaslav, and ascended to the throne of Chernigov in his place, Saint Theodosius courageously rebuked him, and continued reproving him even when threatened with exile. At the request of Prince Shimon, the son of a Varangian (Viking) prince, the Saint wrote a prayer for the nobleman's forgiveness of sins, and, at his behest, had it placed in his coffin, whence arose this custom in Russia. He reposed on May 3, 1074, being sixty-five years of age." (Great Horologion)

assembled by John Brady www.abbamoses.com/months/may.html

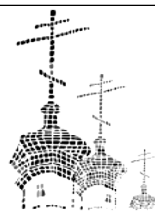
Fr Igor will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at **St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Ballarat**

fourth Saturday of the month
commencing 10am.

Contact Spiro 53347439 or spirot@iprimus.com.au

Church Address:

116 Humffray St, BALLARAT



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