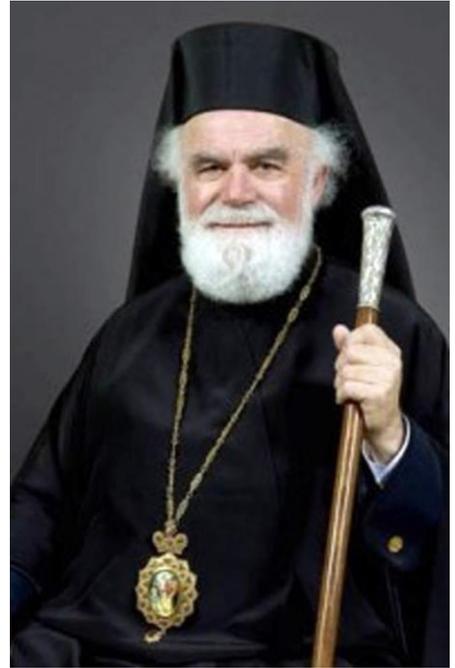


My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday, we are blessed to celebrate the righteous Myrrh Bearers: those women who brought the spices and aromas to the Sepulcher of Christ. They were pious women, having taken it upon themselves to fulfill the ritual of purification of a deceased person. They ventured out early on Sunday morning, with great emotion at being able to fulfill this obligation for the Master they had chosen to follow for so many years. Surely the Myrrh Bearers must have also felt concern at the thought of who would roll away the large stone that secured the Lord's tomb.

The one thing these holy women did not observe was fear. Days after all but one of the Twelve had abandoned our Lord, these women chose to risk punishment by honoring the Body of a man whom the Temple authorities had considered such a notorious criminal, that St. John records Pilate granting a group of soldiers to guard the tomb.

St. John Chrysostom writes of the Myrrh-Bearers that *"Their logic asks questions; their voices are silent; but their hearts help them to walk."* When the women arrive at the Tomb their question is answered at the sight of the Angel; their mouths are opened by the Angel's proclamation, *ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ! Christ is Risen*; and the Resurrection of our Lord is the fulfillment of their hearts' joy.



These things are all the emotions and experiences we had during Pascha this year, but the question arises: what sort of love do we have in our hearts for our Lord Jesus Christ? It is very easy for some to say, "Yes, I am a believer, and that is because I hope for eternal life, granted to me through Christ's Resurrection." While it is true that St. Paul that we have hope in Christ's Resurrection, do we love Christ's because of our promised rewards; or do we love Him as did the Myrrh-Bearers?

Out of a deep sense of love, they not only gave of their time and resources to anoint Him—they also put their lives in jeopardy, all in order to fulfill the obligation to their Lord. While we cannot claim to honor Christ's earthly Body with aromas and spices, we can receive His Body with love and honor during the Eucharist.

However, when we approach to receive His Body and His Blood during the Divine Liturgy, even then must ask ourselves constantly: with what kind of love shall we offer to Him? Again, we must know in our hearts if it is a love motivated by hoped for rewards, or because we truly love Him?

If we truly love Him, we must listen to Him and act according to His Will, and we must first love our neighbor. I hope and pray that each and every one of you will make the conscious decision to proclaim the true love we each should have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**+ALEXIOS**  
Metropolitan of Atlanta