

**Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the
British Isles and Ireland
Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East**

Charity number: 1192469

Sunday 26 April 2026. Issue 26.

Tone 2

**Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women, Pious Joseph of
Arimathaea, & Righteous Nicodemus**

**Epistle Reading
Acts (6:1-7)**

Prokeimenon in Tone II

The Lord is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation.

Verse: With chastening hath the Lord chastened me, but He hath not given me over unto death.

In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministry. And the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said: "It is not right that we should forsake the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. And we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochoros, and Nikanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nikolaos a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Alleluia.

Verse 1: May the Lord hear you in the day of afflictions; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you.

Verse 2: O Lord, save the king, and hearken to us in what day soever we call upon Thee.

Gospel Reading Mark (15:43-16:8)

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea (a prominent council member who was also looking for the Kingdom of God), came forward. He boldly went in to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate wondered if Jesus was already dead. Calling the centurion, he asked him whether Jesus had been dead for a long time. Having been assured of this by the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Accordingly, Joseph bought fine linen, took Jesus down and wrapped him in the linen cloth. Having placed him in a tomb which had been cut out of a rock, he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus, saw where Jesus had been laid. When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices in order to come and anoint him. Very early on the first day of the week, they arrived at the tomb when the sun had risen. They were saying among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone was [already] rolled back, although it was extremely large. Entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen! He is not here! Behold, the place where they laid him! But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He goes before you into Galilee. There you will see him, as he told you.' " They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had come upon them. They said nothing to anyone because they were afraid.

Troparion of the Resurrection. Tone 2.

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!

Noble Joseph Troparion

The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the Tree, wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb. But Thou didst rise on the third day, O Lord, granting the world great mercy.

Myrrhbearing Women Troparion

The Angel came to the Myrrhbearing Women at the tomb and said: Myrrh is fitting for the dead; but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption! So proclaim: The Lord is risen, granting the world great mercy.

Holy Pascha Kontakion

When thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal, thou didst destroy the power of hades. In victory didst thou arise, O Christ God, proclaiming 'Rejoice' to the myrrh-bearing women, granting peace to thine apostles and bestowing resurrection on the fallen.

Myrrhbearing Women

The myrrh-bearers had brought funeral spices and ointments to finish committing Christ's body to the grave. They were the first to see the empty tomb and were instructed by the risen Lord to bring the joyful news to the apostles. Ss. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are also commemorated on this day.

There are eight women who are generally identified as the myrrh-bearers. Each of the four Gospels gives a different aspect of the roles of these eight

women at the cross and at the tomb on Easter morning, perhaps since the eight women arrived in different groups and at different times. The eight are: Mary Magdalene; Mary, the Theotokos (the Virgin Mary); Joanna; Salome; Mary the wife of Cleopas (or Alphaeus); Susanna; Mary of Bethany; and Martha of Bethany. Of the eight, the first five are the more prominent and outspoken. The last three are included according to tradition. Five of these women were also very wealthy; the women of means were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and Mary and Martha of Bethany.

A confusing aspect in Gospel references to these women is that two of the Marys had a son named James. Mary, the wife of Alphaeus, was the mother of James, one of the Twelve Apostles; the Virgin Mary was the step-mother of James, the Lord's brother (Matthew 13:55, Galatians 1:19).

In Western tradition, James, the son of Alphaeus, and James, the Lord's brother, have sometimes been identified as the same person. In Eastern tradition, James, the Lord's brother was Bishop of Jerusalem from 30-62 AD and never left the vicinity of Jerusalem. He is the James who rendered the decision of the council of Jerusalem in 48 AD (Acts 15:13-19). Eastern Tradition links James, the son of Alphaeus, with evangelism abroad, especially in Egypt where he was martyred.

One helpful tip that can clear up the confusion between these two Marys is the passage that refers to the Virgin Mary as the mother of James and Joseph (Matthew 13:55). This Joseph is also called Barsabas, Justus, and Judas (Acts 1:23 and 15:22). Therefore, in Matthew 27:56, the women looking on from afar at the cross were Mary Magdalene, the Virgin Mary (that is, Mary the mother of James and Joseph), and Salome (the wife of Zebedee and the Virgin Mary's step-daughter).

Matthew refers to Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary," who is probably the Virgin Mary also from the context (Matthew 27:61 and 28:1). Such Church Fathers as St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Gregory Palamas support this interpretation. Similarly, St. Gregory of Nyssa identifies "Mary, the mother of James" (Mark 16:1 and Luke 24:10) as the Virgin Mary also.

These eight women had been together a lot during Jesus' three-year public ministry. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and others (Luke 8:3) are described as providing for Jesus out of their possessions (that is, acting as deaconesses). These same women had faithfully followed him from Galilee and had come up with him to Jerusalem (Matthew 27:55, Mark 15:40-41, and Luke 23:55).

Source: Orthodox Wiki

Services this week

Thursday 30 April, 8:10am

**Holy Apostle James, Hours and Holy Liturgy, St Helen's
Chapel.**