



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΒΟΣΤΩΝΗΣ

**Pascha 2013
Metropolitan Methodios**

This past year, the Pew Research Center and the Gallup poll reported that a small percentage of Americans are active in their religious communities, and few are attending worship services. But, why is it that on Easter night our churches are filled with hundreds of brethren, even those who attend rarely, if at all? I'm convinced it is a flickering light that draws us to the empty tomb to be engulfed by its unwaning light, to partake of the joy and hope of Easter. Perhaps we do not know why, but, nevertheless, something draws us to church tonight to accept the gift of Life victorious over death. What draws all of us to church is a faith inculcated to the depths of our hearts—one often unconscious and inactive, but very much present. What draws us to church tonight resembles what attracted the Myrrh bearing women whose secret hope was surely not to find and anoint a dead corpse, but to see their Savior alive, risen from the dead.

We sinners come to the tomb with our doubts and our failures hoping that we may be exalted in the light of a resurrected faith. We come to have our doubts consumed by the flame which flashes from the tomb. We come hoping our hearts may be filled with divine gladness, that our eyes may glow with the light which radiates from an empty grave. We come that our souls may be filled with joy, and our voices with the victory hymn which echoes to the ends of the earth.

Momentarily, we will hear the Gospel of St. Mark informing us that the myrrh bearing women fled from the empty grave bewildered and trembling. In another Gospel we read that on the same day, two disciples, Luke and Cleopas made their journey to Emmaus in sad disappointment because their great hope in Jesus had apparently died with His death and burial. They didn't recognize the Risen Lord.

Sadly, and all too often, we do not recognize the Risen Lord on our life's journey either. The Gospel of John records Thomas' doubt in the Resurrection. Like us tonight, those closest to Jesus were blinded by their fears, their doubts, and their fallen expectations. Not unlike the Myrrh-bearing women, we find the tomb a fearsome place.

The powerful imagery (which we heard in last night's service) of the Prophet Ezekiel walking through a valley filled with dead men's bones is an apt description of so much that is happening in our world. The signs of sin and death devastate us. The moral decay and violence which mark our society—as they did recently in Boston, Cambridge and Watertown—can so overwhelm us, that the hope present in our Lord's Resurrection eludes us.

Like the disciples on their way from the Easter event of Resurrection, we can turn so in on our self-interests—our plans and dreams, our shattered hopes and moral shortcomings—that we fail to recognize the Risen Lord in our midst. And, like Thomas, we can set the narrow limits of human knowledge as the boundaries of our undertaking, rather than grasp the limitless horizons of faith.

As have Christians for 2,000 years, let us overcome our fears and our doubts to proclaim that, indeed, Christ is Risen. Easter is the new Passover. It is the Resurrection of Christ which leads us from spiritual slavery to freedom, from sin to righteousness, from sadness to joy, from darkness to light, from death to life, from a culture of cruelty to a community of compassion, from this world to the kingdom to come.

My brothers and sisters, on His cross Christ bore our individual sins and shortcomings, our weaknesses, our spiritual sickness and death. Rising from the tomb, He raises Adam and Eve and every one of us to newness of life in Him. It is this message that we are called to share (the message of faith and love) to a world that knows too much pain and division. Let us proclaim to all the world, "Come, receive the light from the unwaning light and glorify Christ who is risen from the dead".