

SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARER WOMEN

At dawn the women went to the tomb of Jesus. They were met there by an angel who said to them, **“Do not be afraid! He is not here; for He has risen!”** They heard the words of life, even as they stood before the tomb. Then Jesus appeared to them, the giver of all hope, who confirmed the message and said, **“Do not be afraid, do not yield to fear!”** **This is the message of hope!** It is addressed to us, today. These are the words that God repeats to us today.

These women were honored with being the first witnesses to Christ’s resurrection. They were the first to know the joy that Christ had defeated death, that hope was fulfilled, and that despair and grief were not all that was left to them. They were the first commissioned with going and telling others that Christ had risen from the dead. These women were not seeking the excitement of some great commission, but they received this as a result of their desire to love and serve Christ even after death.

Christ died but has risen, trampling down our despair, trampling down injustice, trampling down persecution, trampling down sickness, trampling down war, trampling down evil, and trampling down death.

Christ is victorious! This is the hope that we have, our hope to go on. Today, we acquire a fundamental right that can never be taken away from us, **the right to hope!** It is a new and living hope that comes from God. It is a gift from heaven, which we could not have earned on our own.

Over these weeks, even the boldest hope can dissipate. Jesus' hope is different. He plants in our hearts the conviction that **God is able to make everything work unto good, because even from the grave, He brings life!** His light dispelled the darkness of the tomb. Today, He wants that light to penetrate even to the darkest corners of our lives.

Today, I greet you all, the faithful of our temples. I am happy that I can pray the Divine Liturgy with you all through Facebook. In my heart, there is a constant prayer for our parishioners in the Beltsville parish, the parish of Baltimore, and for our missionary parishes in Abingdon and Hagerstown.

I wish you all good health and the grace of God!

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

FR. SERHII DEIAK