10/05/2022

Sermon by Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden at the Metropolitan Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Oslo



Reverend Fathers,

Your Excellency Madam Ambassador of Greece to Norway Anna Korka,
Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Χριστός Ανέστη – Christ is Risen!

There has been no event in history that has been scrutinized more than the Resurrection of our Lord. Yet, the Myrrh-bearing women, who visited Christ's Holy Sepulchre "very early in the morning on the first day of the week" to anoint His body with myrrh, had no fear.
The Myrrh-Bearers remained undaunted and feared neither the Jews, nor the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb, nor the Pharisees and Scribes of that era, because they were fulfilling their duty toward someone who had died and was very

beloved to them. This is reminiscent of what Antigone did when she buried her dead brother Polynices, despite a decree to the contrary issued by the King of Thebes Creon, thus placing her desire to honor divine law and her love for her brother above the law of mortal men – as we are taught in Sophocles' ancient tragedy.

The only thing that concerned the Myrrh-bearing Women was "who would roll away for us the stone from the entrance of the tomb", because it was "very large". As they entered the tomb, they saw that it was empty; however, they heard the Angel telling them that Jesus would meet them in Galilee.

The sacred Evangelist writes that "they trembled and were amazed, neither they said anything to anyone; for they were astonished". The Lord rewarded the courage and boldness of the women, which is why they were deemed worthy to see the Angel of the Lord with their own eyes and speak with him. They were overcome with awe and spiritual astonishment, realizing that the Lord had Risen and that He would meet them in person once again in Galilee. This amazement they felt is a direct result of the spiritual advancement and uplifting they had attained; a gift from the Risen Christ to reward the Myrrh-bearing Women.

We are called to search out for these very same emotions experienced by the Myrrh-Bearers as they hastened back to Galilee to proclaim the good news of the Resurrection in the faces of our suffering and downtrodden Ukrainian brothers and sisters, who we pray will soon experience their own personal resurrection.

We have gathered here today in prayer at our Metropolitan Church to supplicate the Lord of peace for an immediate end to the fighting in Ukraine and to grant peace to the entire world, as we recall Christ's own greeting to His Disciples – "peace be unto you".

Yesterday, we organized a concert of solidarity on site at our Metropolitan Church in conjunction with the Ukrainian Society of Norway, with the proceeds going toward the purchase and dispatch of medicine to Ukraine to provide relief to our wounded brethren.

I am deeply grateful to our Reverend Clergy and the Parish Council of our Metropolitan Church for this touching initiative, as well as to all the volunteers who contributed to the organization of this concert.

I reiterate yet again to our Ukrainian brethren that all our churches and parishes in Scandinavia are at their disposal. You may use our churches to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and other holy services in your mother tongue, adhering to your rites and preserving your ancestral customs and traditions. Amen!











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