



Rebirth and Renaissance

Explore the resurrection stories from Scripture, the empty tomb, the experience of Thomas, and the bewilderment of the disciples.

What can we learn about sinning and forgiving, and the transforming power of faith?

PRAYERS

OPENING PRAYERS— FROM ON HIGH DID YOU DESCEND:

“From on high did You descend, O merciful Lord, for us did You endure three days in the tomb that we may be released from passions in this world, You who are our resurrection and our life Glory unto You O Lord.”

PASCHAL HYMN:

“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.”

CLOSING PRAYERS— ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM’S PASCHAL SERMON:

“Let none fear death, for the death of the savior has set us free. Christ is risen and the demons have fallen. Christ is risen and the angels rejoice.”

PASSAGES

John 20:1-29: Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance. She went running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put

him!” Then Peter and the other disciple went to the tomb. The two of them were running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and saw the linen cloths, but he did not go in. Behind him came Simon Peter, and he went straight into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth which had been around Jesus’ head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed (They still did not understand the scripture which said that he must rise from death.) Then the disciples went back home. Mary stood crying outside the tomb. While she was still crying, she bent over and looked in the tomb and saw two angels there dressed in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. “Woman, why are you crying?” they asked her. She answered, “They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!” Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not know that it was Jesus. “Woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who is it that you are looking for?” She thought he was the gardener, so she said to him, “If you took him away, sir, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned toward him and said in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (This means “Teacher.”) “Do not hold on to me,” Jesus told her, “because I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God.” So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and related to them what he had told her. It was



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late that Sunday evening, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. Then Jesus came and stood among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing

the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you.” Then

he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive people’s sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (called the Twin), was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” Thomas said to them, “Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” A week later the disciples were together again indoors, and Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands; then reach out your hand and put it in my side. Stop your doubting, and believe!” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Do you believe because you see me? How happy are those who believe without seeing me!”

PRAXIS

FROM VESPERS ON GREAT FRIDAY:

“He whom none may touch is seized; He who looses Adam from the curse is bound. He who tries the hearts and inner thoughts of man is unjustly brought to trial; He who closed the abyss is shut in prison. He before whom the powers of heaven stand with trembling stands before Pilate; The Creator is struck by the hand of his creature. He who comes to judge the living and the dead is condemned to the Cross; The Destroyer of hell is enclosed in a tomb. O thou who dost endure all these things in thy tender love, Who hast saved all men from the curse, O longsuffering Lord, glory to thee.”

PATRISTICS

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM:

- “If Christ did not rise again, neither was he slain, and if he was not slain, our sins have not been taken away. If our sins have not been taken away, we are still in them, and our entire faith is meaningless.”

- “Baptism is the Cross. What the Cross then, and Burial, is to Christ, Baptism has been to us, even if not in the same respects. For he died himself and was buried in the flesh, but we have done both to sin. ... Here he hints, along with the duty of a careful walk, at the subject of the Resurrection. ... For if you have shared in Death and Burial, much more will you share in the resurrection and Life. ... After the Resurrection to come had been set before us, he demands of us another, a new conversation, which is brought about in the present life by a change of habits.”

PARTICIPATION

Enter in to the story of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection by participating in the cycle of services during Great Lent and Holy Week.

Learn more about your own baptisms by speaking with your parents and godparents about the event, looking at pictures, hearing special memories and so on.

Visit the web site that documents the Service of the Resurrection of Christ at the Church of His Holy Tomb. Miraculous fire lights the church since the 4th century: <http://www.holylight.gr/enmain.html>.

Read pertinent selections from the Bible.



The Resurrection

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