

YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD

Each year, the 3rd Sunday of Pascha finds our Holy Orthodox Church commemorating the MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN. These brave souls, who had followed Christ throughout His earthly ministry, were so committed to serving their Master that they were willing to challenge the authority of Rome and risk their very lives to carry out an important aspect of their Jewish tradition: the proper preparation of a body for burial.

Have you ever wondered why the Myrrh-bearers felt that this was so essential? For the Jews, the human body was considered to be a sacred vessel that needed to be treated with care – even after death. The Old Testament is filled with stories, that exhibit this type of treatment for those who have departed this life. The prescribed ritual of anointing a body with oils and spices was a lengthy and costly process. The women had to return to the tomb early because Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who claimed Christ’s Body from Pilate, lacked the time to complete their labors as sunset approached on that first Holy Friday.

In a Christian context, the body is treated with the same reverence. In his first Letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul poses this question: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16) While this verse has a broad meaning relating to the unity of the entire church, it nevertheless is viewed as comparing our bodies to a “temple” that should be cared for in a special way.

From the day of our baptism, when we “put on Christ,” the Lord wishes to dwell in all of us. May we all strive to keep our “temple” pure, so that the living God will be able to be a positive force in our lives!