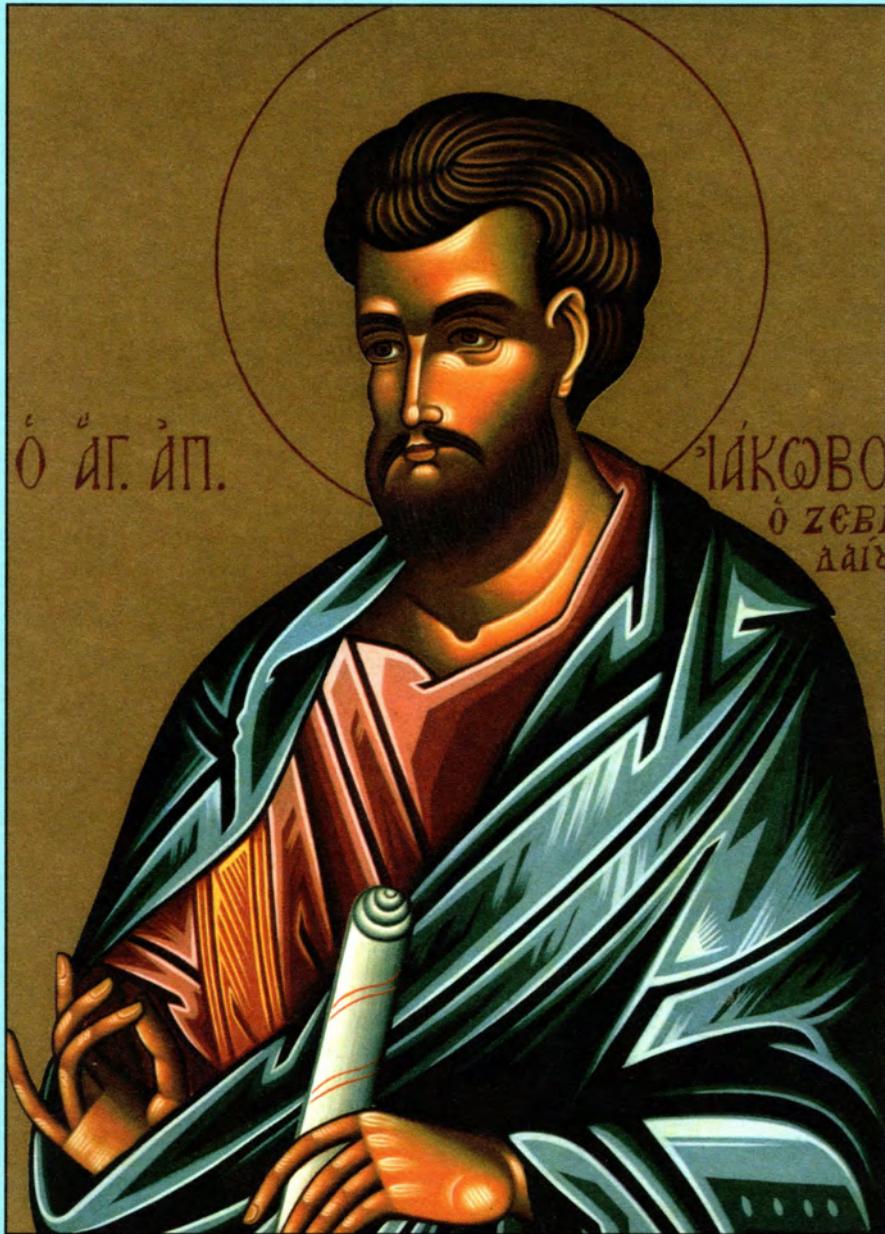


SUNDAY OF THE OINTMENT-BEARING WOMEN
FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLE JAMES, THE BROTHER OF JOHN



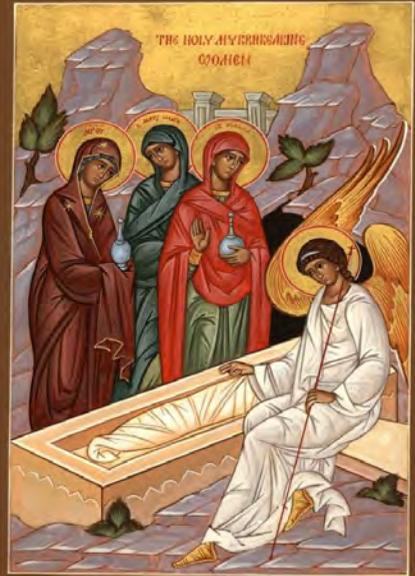
Icon of the Saint James -- April 30th

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this third Paschal Weekend, the Church calls us to remember the Ointment-Bearing Women, those seven women who came to anoint the body of Jesus and carry out the traditional Jewish practices of burial. This remembrance places emphasis on one of the essential activities that true followers of Jesus Christ are called to engage in, namely that of **service to others**. In imitation of Jesus, followers find ways to integrate **service to others** into their lives. This is in accord not only with the words of Jesus but also in accord with the way He lived. Jesus told His disciples that anyone who aspires to follow Him must think of being of **service to others**. We truly begin to imitate Jesus when we make **service to others** a priority in our lives. You will recall that His entire life was dedicated to helping others. We are called to “follow” Him in this effort.

In the scriptures the seven myrrh-bearing women are named: Mary Magdalene; Mary the mother of James and wife of Clephas; Joanna, the wife of Chusa, who was steward to Herod Antipas; Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee; Suzanna; and Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus. So that we might not think that **service to others** is something that only women are called upon to do, the scriptures also name Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus as the persons who actually took Jesus down from the cross and buried Him. This shows us that men are called upon to also be of **service to others**.

While it is true that the events that are recalled during the first several weeks after Pascha actually took place in history (i.e., Christ appearing to the apostles and St. Thomas and the Ointment-Bearers going to the grave), it is important to note that they are not presented by the church in chronological order. The women went to the grave two days after the burial of Jesus while Jesus appeared to the gathering of apostles when Thomas was present, almost seven days later. This fact suggests that the church is highlighting several essential things to us by presenting these events in this sequence. The



first, of course, is obvious. We are exhorted not to DOUBT the fact of the Lord's Resurrection. The second is that we be reminded of THE WAY that we are called to live as followers of the Risen Christ. When we focus on **service to others**, we find that we grow in our ability to love others. Of course we must always remember that we should not expect a positive response from others when we attempt to be of service to them. Jesus and His early followers never expected anything in response to their desire to help others. If we desire to be thanked for our service, then we should not make it a part of our life. Our service must be freely given without any sort of expectation of receiving the gratitude of those helped!

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

The **Pentecostarion** (i.e., also known as the *Flowery Triodion* or *Festal Triodion*) is the service book of the Eastern Church that provides the texts for the moveable portions of the divine services from Pascha through the feast of All Saints (the weekend that follows Pentecost). You will recall that the **Lenten Triodion** is the service book of the Eastern Church that provides the texts for the divine services for the pre-Lenten weeks of preparation, the Great Lent and the Great and Holy Week. In Greek and Slavonic it is simply called the *Triodion* because the canons appointed for Matins (i.e., Morning Prayer) during this period are composed of three odes each. The Pentecostarion includes the following:

- PASCHA - Resurrection Weekend
- ANTI-PASCH - St. Thomas Weekend
- MYRRH-BEARERS Weekend
- THE PARALYTIC MAN Weekend
- THE SAMARITAN WOMAN Weekend
- THE BLIND MAN Weekend
- THE ASCENSION
- THE FATHERS OF THE 1ST
ECUMENICAL COUNCIL Weekend
- PENTECOST Weekend
- ALL SAINTS Weekend

As you will recall, the weeks of the Triodion were originally designed to prepare potential converts for Initiation into the Church. Each week presented a different aspect of the Christian Way of Life - which is the way of METANOIA or change of heart and mind. The weeks of the Pentecostarion were originally designed to continue the religious education of the newly initiated, helping them to truly understand the WAY of living that Jesus revealed. I would like to challenge all my readers to think about



these themed-weekends and attempt to determine what the Church is trying to teach us about the WAY. The Church deliberately chose these Gospel stories to teach us something. Over the next several weeks, I would like to share information about how our worship of these events came into existence.

In worship we encounter the living God. Through Worship God makes Himself present and active in our time, drawing the particles and moments of our life into the realm of redemption. He bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, who makes real the promise of Jesus to be in the midst of those gathered in His name (Mt 18.20). In our church, therefore, we do more than remember past events and recall future promises. We experience the risen Christ, who is clothed with his past and future acts. Thus, all that is past and all that is future are made present in the course of our liturgical celebrations.

Pascha, which commemorates the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is the oldest, most venerable and pre-eminent feast of the Church. It is the great Christian festival, the very center and heart of the liturgical year.

It is important, if we are to truly understand our Church, that we understand more about our worship.

More to follow!

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

The Eucharist, which is made present through the ritual of the Divine Liturgy, is truly the sacrament of the Kingdom. As one author has stated, the Mystery of the Eucharist is the Church's ascent to the "table of the Lord, in his Kingdom." By using ritual actions and words that try to emulate the actions and words that Jesus Himself performed on the night before He died, we are not only brought into His presence but we are joined with Him. In pedestrian terms, "we become what we eat and drink".

What I believe is important, however, is that we see the transformation of the bread and wine within the context of the entire Divine Liturgy. Too frequently the only thing that people do is focus on the changing of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. This, in my humble opinion, depreciates the power of the Divine Liturgy as a ritual action that can bring us into the presence of God.

Think about it. We begin the Divine Liturgy by the celebrant declaring: *Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and ever and forever.* To this all respond AMEN. The word AMEN is a Hebrew word which means "truly" or "it is true." It always expresses acceptance of what has just been said. Jesus Himself is called "the AMEN," the one who is faithful to His word. Its use by Jesus Himself in the Gospels is frequent and has no real parallel elsewhere. It is used to introduce solemn affirmations and adds a note not only of asseveration but also of authority. So, we declare as a group of believing people that we have gathered as a people to make God's Kingdom real and present to us when we celebrate the Divine



Liturgy. It expresses our desire to truly enter into the Kingdom of God.

We are reminded of this by the fact that ICONS always stand between us and the TABLE OF THRONE OF GOD. The Nave or main body of the worship area, is the Kingdom of God in time and space - in the present moment. The icons clearly remind us that in order to truly enter into the full Kingdom of God, that is the Kingdom which also exists within the spiritual dimension, we must go through a *personal transformation process (This is why icons are stylized. We know that the persons they represent are human but they look different. The difference is that they have undergone personal change and transformation).*

What is wonderful about the Divine Liturgy, however, is that it also clearly demonstrates that God has shown us how to undergo this *personal transformation*. It also clearly depicts the fact that if we are open to God's Kingdom in the present moment, He is constantly coming from the spiritual dimension into our world to LEAD US INTO THE KINGDOM. The celebrant, who depicts God's movements, comes from before the Throne, enters into the worship space - Nave - and processes back to the space beyond the icons which represents the spiritual dimension of the Kingdom.

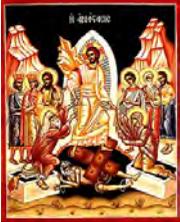


St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Today, Sunday April 30th



You are invited to join with me and Len Mier after we take a short coffee break, to listen to his presentation on the meaning of the Resurrection. He is required to make such a presentation in fulfillment of

his seminary course requirements at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh. Thank you for supporting him.

COMING THIS FALL

Start cleaning out your cupboards and storage spaces for a major fall fund-raiser - our RUMMAGE



SALE. This year we will not be including *clothing* or *shoes* in our sale. Please do not offer items that are not clean or are not in working order. Thank You!



EASTER DINNER

I would thank all those who worked to host our Easter Dinner - Sviachenne - and to all who attended. Gathering to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ is, I think, an important event. It is my sincerest hope that all who attended had a wonderful time and enjoyed the dinner.



CALLED TO HOLINESS

In the very last issue of the Bulletin I challenged my readers to answer the question: What do you understand as the *Good News* that we say God revealed to us? Each of us, if our religion is to be



meaningful, must decide what the *Good News* is all about. The early Christians were decidedly excited about the *Good News* - so very excited about it that they were even willing to die rather than to discount it or deny it. Something about the *Good News* changed them and they courageously professed it openly, even though it meant that they would be persecuted and killed. They witnessed to their belief in the man Jesus in spite of the fact that enemies to their *WAY OF LIVING* did everything to stamp them out.

We must remember that the early Christians were not surrounded by great numbers of people who, after centuries of thoughtful consideration, believed that this Jesus was and is also God Himself incarnate. There was something about what Jesus taught about how to live that so emboldened them that they were willing to die rather than deny their belief in Jesus.

What was there about this *Good News* that so gave them this courage and do we

(Continued on page 6)

Schedule of Services

THIRD PASCHAL WEEK

Sunday April 30 - Weekend of the Ointment Bearers

10:00 AM - Michael Washuta; Mr & Mrs Walid Khalife

Monday May 1 - Jeremiah, Prophet

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday May 2 - Athanasius the Great, Patriarch

Wednesday May 3 - Passing of Theodosius of the Cave

No Service Scheduled

Thursday May 4 - Pelagia, Martyr

No Service Scheduled

Friday May 5 - Irene, Great-Martyr

8:00 AM - Special Intention for Irene Durisin

Saturday May 6 - Job, Venerable

1:00 PM - Initiation of Christian Bluj

FOURTH PASCHAL WEEK

Sunday May 7 - Weekend of Paralytic Man

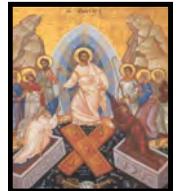
10:00 AM + Olga Natalie Hubchick; Nadia Sebastian

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

feel the same thing about the *Good News* as they did?

The call to holiness is a call to discover the *Good News* that God has revealed to us and to allow that *Good News* to transform, change and transfigure our lives. We see from history that the *Good News* has the power to change human lives. It happened! Thousands upon thousands of people were changed by it.

The critical question that must be answered today is: Has the *Good News* lost it's ability to change human lives or have humans lost their ability to discover the intrinsic value and power of the *Good News*? I suspect that the *Good News* is as powerful today as when it was first revealed to humankind. It is modern people who are lacking in their ability to become excited by the *Good News* and what it reveals. ***Think about this!***



St. Michael the Archangel
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
6340 Chase Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

Rectory: (313) 582-1424
Cell: (313) 580-4412
WRuchgy@gmail.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
*In most instances membership
required for six months*

Funerals
*Membership of an immediate
family member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
313.563.5509

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>
[Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

I have been sharing information about the Gospel of Mark in order to provide my readers with an understanding of the four Gospels in general. Too frequently people expect the Gospels to be pure history, only presenting the events in the life of Jesus as they actually happened. It should be remembered that before the Gospels were actually written down, they were stories about Jesus that were shared by small groups of Christians during their Eucharistic meal. Then these stories were gathered and written down in order to be documents of faith that might lead others to truly believe that Jesus came to teach humans how to live. In fact, the early Christians referred to these teachings as **THE WAY**.

Given Mark's careful choice of words and also patterns, it is surely no accident that he places the scene of Jesus' transfiguration exactly in the middle of his Gospel (9:2). The transfiguration of Jesus is Mark's way of imaging his resurrection. On one side of this scene, Mark shows the ecstatic response of those who see the paralytic rise up from his mat and those who witness a little girl rise up from her deathbed. On the other side, he shows the ecstatic response of the women who have come to realize that Jesus himself has been "raised up." The scene of Jesus' transfiguration overshadows both parts of the Gospel, emphasizing god's creative, transforming, transfiguring power to restore life.

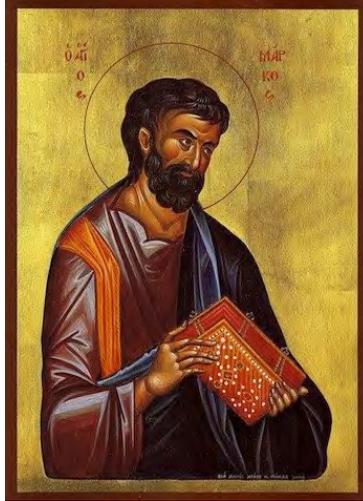
Mark's Gospel is sometimes called

"the Gospel of the Cross," so it is worth noting that the Lord's Transfiguration overshadows the cross. Mark arranges events so that the scene of transfiguration follows right after Jesus speaks to his disciples about taking up the cross, and it completes his meaning. Jesus says: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it." Mark does not show Jesus elevating the cross for its own sake, but rather embracing it as a means to Transfiguration. In Mark, the whole teaching of Jesus is:

*death-and-resurrection,
cross-and-Transfiguration.*

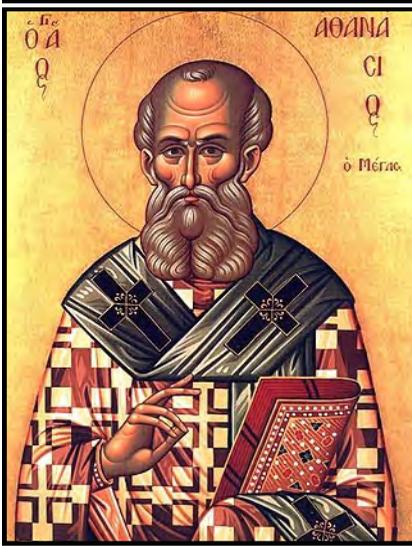
Mark's Gospel is truly rich in Scripture, theological in purpose, and brilliant in design and invites its readers to become followers of Jesus' transfiguring wisdom. In practical terms, Mark clearly understands that Jesus taught His followers how to live and think. When you think of the challenges of life as an opportunity to spiritually grow, then life changes - you become transformed. The way that Jesus thought about life, how He thought about others and how He treated them, when embraced, is transformative.

Mark's Gospel became a model for the two other Synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew and Luke). They are documents that are meant to also present Jesus' transfiguring wisdom - a wisdom that expresses clearly the meaning and purpose of life.



ST MARK THE EVANGELIST

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church



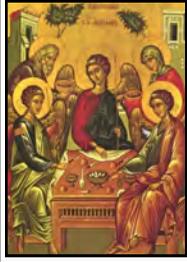
I have been sharing in this article Athanasius' arguments against Arius. Arius was the proponent of the first and one of the greatest heresies. **Arianism**, in Christianity, is a Christological concept that asserts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was begotten by God the Father at a point in time, is distinct from the Father and is therefore subordinate to the Father. Arian teachings were first attributed to Arius, a Christian Priest in Alexandria Egypt. The teachings of Arius and his supporters were opposed to the theological views held by Christians, regarding the nature of the Trinity and the nature of Christ. The Arian concept of Christ is that the Son of God did not always exist but was

begotten by God the Father. Athanasius firmly believed that the errors of Arius and his followers could be laid at the doorstep of theological and spiritual presumption. They are either asking the wrong questions or asking questions that should not be asked at all, questions such as: Why is the Word of God not like our word? How is the Word of God from God? How is he God's radiance? How does God beget? And What is the manner of his begetting? Asking such questions is much like asking: Where is God? How does God exist? And What is the nature of the Father? It is enough merely to write down the kind of things they say, Athanasius scolds, "to show their reckless impiety. They ask such nonsensical questions as, 'Has he free will, or not?' Is he good from choice, of free will, and can he change, if he so will, being by nature capable of change? It is blasphemy even to utter such things.

Such questions cannot be adequately asked or answered because the human mind and its accompanying speech is inadequate for explaining the deep mystery of God. As Athanasius explains, these questions "demand to have explained in words something ineffable and proper to God's nature, known only to him and to the Son."

The Arians have forgotten, Athanasius believed, with whom they were dealing, a theological and spiritual shortness of memory that reflects a serious spiritual malady that Athanasius diagnosed as "a lack of reverence and ignorance of God." When we measure God by ourselves, we will inevitably fall into error. Here the link between theology and worship become immediate and important.

Athanasius argues that Christian worship makes little sense, is indeed blasphemous, if Christ is a creature, however elevated he may be. Yet Christ must be worshiped if the Church is to remain true to the Scripture. "The whole earth," Athanasius states, "sings the praises of the Creator and the truth, and blesses him and trembles before him." Rightly so. But who is this Creator? Does not both Old and New Testaments point to the Word, the Word now incarnate in Christ?



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 63 No 18 WEEKEND OF THE OINTMENT-BEARERS April 29-30, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

As I indicated in the last issue of this article, the goal of Eastern Christian spirituality is none other than living in a state of deification or participation in the divine life. This experience, strikingly expressed as a state of deification, includes first of all two general teachings:

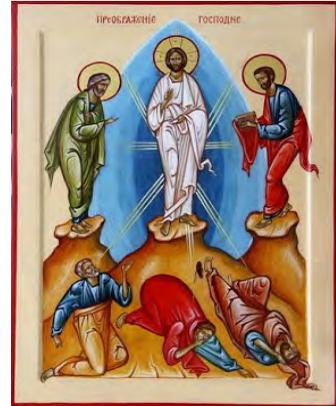
1. It represents the ultimate step of man's perfection; so this supreme phase of the believer's earthly life or the goal of his whole life is also called perfection.
2. Deification is realized through the believer's participation in the divine powers, by flooding him with boundless divine things.

I believe these teachings will become clearer as I continue to share thoughts on Eastern Christian spirituality - that which you and I are called to by our membership in an Eastern Christian Church.

Because this experience represents the highest step of perfection on earth, it means the normalization and supreme realization of human powers: knowledge, love, and spiritual force. Experienced by the believer, the state exceeds the limits of his powers; it is fed by divine power.

The culminating state of the spiritual life is when the believer is raised higher than the level of his own powers, not of his own accord, but by the work of the Holy Spirit. "Our mind goes outside itself and so unites with God; it becomes more than mind," says St. Gregory Palamas.

Although I realize that at first glance this may all seem to be either frightening or impossible, it is possible because of God's actions within the life of a person who truly desires to become united to God. It doesn't happen by osmosis or accident. It happens when we turn our minds and hearts to the effort of becoming, in a real and



true way, the children of God. Nothing is impossible for God. Indeed, true personal transformation is possible with God's help. Of course we have to welcome God into our lives and become serious about spiritual development. God does not and will not force His way into our lives. He enters in wherever He is welcome.

God does continuously offer to become a part of our lives, however. He allows life to deliver a multitude of real opportunities to place our hope and trust in Him. It only requires that we become aware of these opportunities.

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

About that time King Herod laid hands upon some members of the church to harm them. He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (It was [the] feast of Unleavened Bread.) He had him taken into custody and put in prison under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. He intended to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter thus was being kept in prison, but prayer by the church was fervently being made to God on his behalf.

On the very night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter, secured by double chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while outside the door guards kept watch on the prison. Suddenly the angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and awakened him, saying, "Get up quickly." The chains fell from his wrists. The angel

said to him, "Put on your belt and your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Put on your cloak and follow me." So he followed him out, not realizing that what was happening through the angel was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first guard, then the second, and came to the iron gate leading out to the city, which opened for them by itself. They emerged and made their way down an alley, and suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter recovered his senses and said, "Now I know for certain that [the] Lord sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people had been expecting." When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who is called Mark, where there were many people gathered in prayer.

Acts of the Apostles 12: 1-12