



Orthodox Mission of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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<http://EntranceMission.org>

The Church is our Hospital Week of June 19, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Those who are well have no need for a physician, but those who are sick. Matthew 9:12

The best advice for a man who is sick is that he must go to the doctor for treatment. And the best support after he goes to the doctor and submits to that treatment is always to be found by those who have done likewise and have been cured themselves. A man who has gone through chemo therapy, for example, can be a great support to another man who is going through it himself. A woman who has survived a heart attack can similarly be of great help to another woman who faces the same trial. But always, treatment must be dispensed by the doctor himself; the support of those who have been so treated and cured comes later and reinforces the treatment that has been prescribed by the physician.

Our great Physician is the Lord Jesus Christ. And those who have been cured by Him in times past are the saints.

We think of the Church in many ways, but it always surprises me as a priest that we so infrequently think of her as our hospital. Yes, we are in need of correction in our behavior, and we are in need of knowing

the differences between right and wrong. This the Church offers to us through Holy Scripture, the Sacred Canons and the Tradition that has been passed on to us over a long period of many centuries. But primarily, the Church is a hospital, the place where our Great Physician, Jesus Christ, dispenses for us the cure that all of us need desperately to be made better. That cure comes to us through His revelation, through the application of His Medicine in the Holy Sacraments, through the various ways in which the experience of others who themselves have been cured lay so clearly before us: the ascetical ways of prayer, obedience and fasting; the continual seeking to do His will and turn away from our own desires.

I find that so many Orthodox Christians misunderstand the true purpose and goal of our spiritual lives within the Church. We are ashamed to admit that we are ill, that anything is wrong with us. And yet, the truth is the truth. All of us are bound to our selfish behaviors, and the harm that we inflict on our own souls and on the souls of countless others continues to grow and worsen until we come to the Lord for help and healing. And the Saints are those who have been healed by the Great Physician before us and that stand before us as examples of how we too can be healed. The Saints were all sinners like us; but their sanctity begins with their simple and straightforward repentance. The Saints are those who have taken the cure prescribed by the Lord: they have looked honestly and simply at the nature of their own illness and said: *I cannot heal myself, Lord; help me, heal me, make me better, so that I may become what you created me to be. Without You, Lord, I am nothing; without you, Lord, I can do nothing; without you carrying me in my weakness every step of the way through the infinite reaches of eternity, I will fall and suffer and succumb to my own selfishness; teach me, Lord, and help me, Lord, to submit to Your will in all things. Hear the cries of my heart, heal me, for I have sinned against You. May You alone be given the Glory and the Honor for your mercy which is infinite.*

Only one who cries to the Lord from his heart in this way can be healed. The Lord waits only for the simple honesty of our hearts turning to Him in need. He requires nothing else, only the desire – the will – to become better and to trust in Him, the Great Physician, Who alone can make us so.

At the Entrance Mission We now have the presence in their incorrupt relics of many Saints at the Entrance Mission, through the love and generosity of Hieromonk Brendan, who shared with us of his large collection of Holy Relics: St. George, St. Benedict, St. Cecilia, St. Xenia of Petrograd, St. Theodore Tyro, St. Cornelius, St. Lucy and the Elder Theodore, the spiritual son of St. Silouan and the spiritual father to Vladika John. The incorrupt relics of all these saints are now in the altar at the Entrance Mission, alone with the relics of the Holy Innocents, given to us by Vladika at the very beginning. And as the early Christians celebrated the Holy Eucharist over the relics of the saints in the catacombs, so we too do likewise in our little church. Glory to God! But let us think of these saints that the Lord has sent to us rightly: not as “things” to be somehow exploited, but rather as signs of the Presence of Him who healed them and Who stands ready to heal us. We should look to them and to all the Saints as our brothers and sisters who know what to do to get better, and whose lives show what we ourselves should do. And that always begins and continues throughout eternity with our submission to Him Who will heal us if we ask. To Him, Brothers and Sisters, let us turn in all things with the continual cry of a child turning to his father or mother: *Help me, Lord; heal my soul, that I may do Your Will and become a blessing to other. To You Alone, Lord, be the honor and the glory forever! Amen.*

Remember what the LORD has done for you! Give Him thanks and praise! *Glory to His NAME for all things!* Pray for me, His most unworthy of priests.

In Christ our true God,

+Fr. Elias

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