



Orthodox Mission of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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Take heart, it is I; have no fear.

Week of August 14, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Take heart, it is I; have no fear.

The lesson we heard on Sunday from the 14th chapter of Matthew tells the story of our Lord's miracle on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples were huddled together in their fishing boat late at night when a storm came upon them. As the wind and waves violently rocked their boat, they cowered in fear within it. The Gospel tells us that Jesus came to them walking on the water - a sight which Matthew says frightened them all the more. Realizing that they thought He was a ghost, He said to them: *Take heart, it is I have no fear.* Peter reached out for Him, and in faith walked upon the water a short distance himself until he began to sink beneath the waves in fear. The Lord immediately reached out to Him, grasped him by the hand and drew him out of danger, saying to him: *O man of little faith, why did you doubt?*

It is this image of the Lord *immediately* grasping the hand of Peter as he reached out for the Lord that is so very vibrant in this lesson. When we reach out and take hold of the hand of the Lord, we are safe and secure; but, when we let go, we sink beneath the waves. It is a lesson that we can apply at every moment of our lives in this troubled world of insecurity and danger.

There is no security in this life, Brothers and Sisters, apart from Jesus Christ. The events of the past week have been a serious and chilling reminder of how insecure life is in this world that has rejected God: tragedy in the armed forces with so many killed at one time; insecurity in the economic and political arenas that have topped the news stories every day; mobs of violence on the part of godless youths in London and now in the United States. It is what happens when the hand of the Lord Jesus is not taken.

There will be much more for all of us to face as the months and the years go on. We have seen only the tip of the iceberg in the many acts of violence and inhumanity that have been reported in recent days. When individuals and the society they form turn away from the Lord and refuse to grasp His hand, there is no security and peace; without the Lord there is only fear and its fruit anger and the senseless raging violence that results. But we, Brothers and Sisters, must remember the example that we have before in our lesson. As we sink beneath the waves and are battered by the winds of insecurity, we remember that the Lord immediately stands ready to hold our hand in His. Let us grasp His hand as His people; He alone is our security in this life and in the life to come.

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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