



## Orthodox Mission of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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***Now is the Day of Salvation***  
**Week of October 9, 2011**

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**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

**Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!**

*Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation!*

These words of St. Paul have burned their way into our hearts since we heard the epistle lesson from which they were quoted a week and a half ago. They remind me of a book that was popular when I was in seminary about 35 years ago: *The Eternal Now*, it was called. I can't remember who wrote it or what it actually said; but, the title of that book summarizes very well the words of St. Paul from 2 Corinthians that are quoted above. The time of our salvation is **now**; and that **now** of God's presence will be with us eternally!

We have been accustomed to thinking of salvation as something yet to come, or worse yet, of thinking of God's activity in the lives of His people as something that happened only or mostly in the past. We think that we must merely remember and recite and pass on stories about things that happened long ago to other people. At the same time, we have also become accustomed to thinking of salvation as some sort of future reward, as if we had to wait for it until some distant time after we die, as if any of us

could possibly deserve it! But this is not what our Holy Orthodox faith teaches at all, and it is surely not what St. Paul taught either.

**Now**, St. Paul says, *is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation*. The God of Israel, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, lives! He is not merely a myth or a tale told by people long dead. Christ, as we say every week to one another, is truly in our midst. And He chooses to save us, not because we are righteous, but because He is merciful. As we grow in our continual repentance and increase in our continual gratitude and submission to His will, we progress along the path of salvation – **now**. We change **now**! We become ever more like Him – **now**! The mercy and grace and love of God become an ever more real and foundational part of our lives here and **now**.

The great excitement and joy of this progress is that we are set free from our own self-centeredness to care for others. This will gradually become the very focus of our lives together in our little Entrance Mission. How wonderful it was to see everyone in our community come together last Sunday as we went downstairs into our little social ministry center, planning and speaking of ways to turn outward from ourselves and our needs to others and their needs. What needs will we meet? The Lord will show us that path to the extent that we ask Him and listen to His answer. For the Lord, as the Holy Apostle Paul teaches us, is not bound to the past, nor is He merely a hope for the future. He is alive, in our midst, in the present! He hears us **now**, and He will guide and lead us **now**. The eternal **now** of salvation begins at the moment we were baptized, and it never ends.

Brothers and Sisters: let us walk that path together in our ministry to whomever the Lord sends us. For, *behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation!*

**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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