



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

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### *And It Yielded a Hundred-fold* Week of October 30, 2011

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

*... He spoke in a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold."*

The words of our Gospel lesson yesterday recounted a familiar parable of our Lord, the Parable of the Sower. The same lesson also contained our Lord's own explanation of that parable, which the Holy Apostles asked Him to give to them later. I think it is likely that He told the original parable first, as a forthright word of encouragement to them; but, later, after they had already had the experience of actually going out and proclaiming the Gospel to people, He explained to them the nature of the hardships and disappointment they had encountered among those that had turned away and rejected the Gospel. This, He did with them in private.

The word of encouragement was clear and straightforward: Their proclamation of the Gospel, the Good News of Salvation, would be similar to the sowing of seed in a garden or a field. Some of that seed will

grow, and some will not. Some will be taken away by birds and insects; some will wither away from lack of moisture; and, some will be choked by the weeds. But nevertheless the Great Miracle of growth will always happen: the seed will produce fruit, a hundred-fold! The harvest will be astonishing in spite of all obstacles set in the way by birds, insects, rocks and weeds. And so it is with the Word of God: Some people will accept and respond to it; some will not. But nevertheless, fruit will be borne; the harvest will be astonishing; for God Himself promises it!

But people vary in their reception of that Word, and the further explanation of our Lord concerning this parable is surely meant to address the experiences of those same Apostles after their return from their own attempts at proclaiming the Gospel. Some who heard them received the Word joyfully, but then fell away into their old ways; others were pulled away by burdens or cares or by temptations, And still others were overwrought by false teachings or promises of false prophets of one sort or another, who choked their faith, even as the weeds choke the tender shoots of new growth in the field. Nevertheless, the Lord tells them, the seed that they sow will grow and flourish; they may suffer discouragement, but they must never lose hope, for the promise that the Word will prosper comes from God Himself.

Brothers and Sisters: We must pay heed to both parts of this parable! We are a small congregation ready to begin a new ministry, a means of seeking to help those in need around us. We have begun the process with joy and enthusiasm. But it will be tempting to us to look elsewhere, to be distracted from the work that the Lord would have us do together, or to fall away in discouragement because things are moving either too fast or too slow. Our task is to take each moment as an opportunity to move forward, one step in front of the other, slow and steady. Let us neither look to the right nor to the left, but let us keep our eyes and our hearts fixed on Him and the task He would have us do for others in His Name! This will take time and patience. But the assurance that our Lord Himself gives to us is that He will bless the work that we do, and that even if we do not see our progress, the Word that we sow in acts of charity for others will prosper a hundredfold. This is our task together. And above all let us never forget that His is a promise we may trust, for He is ever faithful in His promises to us!

**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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