



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

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### *All Saints* Week of June 10, 2012

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

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

Each year on the Sunday following Pentecost, the Church commemorates the fruit of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the **Sunday of All Saints**. We hear the description of the sacrifices of sanctity by St. Paul in the Book of Hebrews: *They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated – of whom the world was not worthy – wandering over deserts and mountains and in dens and caves of the earth.* And we hear the words of our Lord to His Holy Apostles from Chapter 10 of Matthew, after giving them the “great commission” to go out and heal the sick, to cast out the unclean spirits and to preach the Word: *“Behold I send you out as sheep amidst wolves, so be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves....A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master .... He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.”*

These words only make sense to those who have already given their lives over to the care of the Lord. Otherwise, they seem merely to be harsh and frightening. Who would come to Christ if this were the

first Word? But the first Word, Brothers and Sisters, is that the Lord is trustworthy; He alone is worthy of our entire life's devotion. Those who lived lives of sacrifice and commitment understood this. They came to the Lord, because nothing else would suffice: the world offered only empty promises; the future would come to an end only in death; health would dissipate and hopes would remain unfulfilled. Only in Christ would there be the fulfillment of one's entire heart's desire in the presence of God. Only in Christ would there be life eternal, life abundant. This, they understood, and they left their lives in the care of the Lord – some even leaving their families to follow the Lord, so that the Truth could be shared throughout the world.

This is what we celebrate on All Saints – not the lives of people who are merely exceptional, but the examples of the most spiritually healthy of all people set before us so that we too might participate in the fullness of that Truth: that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that only through Him will we find peace and fulfillment of our heart's desire. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, that you too are called to be saints. This is not an impossibility, but it is the most natural of all states. For you too were created for union with God, and only in that union will you find rest for your souls. Therefore, as St. Paul also said in our lesson from Hebrews, *"... since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."* May each of us do likewise!

**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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