



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

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### *Sight to the Blind* Week of July 22, 2012

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

*And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened.*  
(Matthew 9:27-29)

The Gospel lesson for this Sunday related a story that is familiar to us; it is told in each of the four Gospels. It is the story of one of a number of times that our Lord gave sight to the blind. Those who lived in the first century would have understood clearly that our Lord was fulfilling the ancient prophecy of Isaiah, who told of the coming of the Lord's Servant who would be "a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness."

In the lesson from Matthew our Lord healed the sight of two men. St. Matthew tells us that they sat by the side of the road begging, and when Jesus passed by, they exclaimed, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us." Jesus asked them if they believed that He had the authority to heal them; they answered

clearly and directly, *“Yes, Lord.”* All authority has been given to the Son by the Father, and this lesson was a strong reminder to the early Christian community that whatever we ask for in the Name of Jesus will be granted by the Father. It was also a reminder to them that only the authority of the Son can cure our spiritual blindness, and that this blindness exists not only in the world at large, but in the Church as well. Each of us must be cured repeatedly of the spiritual blindness that afflicts us. And what is spiritual blindness? It is the blindness of trying to live one’s life outside of the presence of God; it is the willful attempt to live with one’s own will guiding one’s actions, with one’s own decisions based on the desires and wants of the moment, with one’s own plans apart from consideration or obedience to the plans and commandments of God. Spiritual blindness is far worse than physical blindness; for, spiritual blindness is the darkness that leads to despair and emptiness.

The fruits of spiritual darkness, Brothers and Sisters, are all around us. Spiritual blindness drives the actions of a man, who follows the unchecked passions of resentment, hatred, anger, lust, envy and selfishness to the point where he kills. Spiritual blindness leads to mistreatment of others on a large and small scale; it causes us to pursue our selfish desires at the expense of others, to hurt others by our selfish behaviors, to acquire things or wealth at the expense of others, particularly our children, our parents and even the beggar in our midst. Spiritual blindness is the true darkness of our time, the pursuit of greed, the unchecked lust of the flesh or the spirit, the desire for self-importance or self-rule. Spiritual blindness is the daily turning away from God and His desire that all people come to the knowledge of His Truth; it is the daily living of each moment in seclusion from Him; it is the denial of the Holy Spirit, the turning away of our destiny to acknowledge the image of God within all human beings and to grow ourselves unto His likeness. This, Brothers and Sisters, is the blindness, the spiritual blindness that our Lord has the authority to cure. And this is what each of us should seek on our knees at any and every moment of time, crying out to Him like the blind men in our lesson, *“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us!”*

It is easy for us to point out the spiritual blindness in others. During the past week we have had ample opportunity to do so. We have all shaken our heads at the actions of a demented soul who entered a crowded movie theater in Colorado and killed a dozen or more people. Spiritual blindness in those actions has been easy to identify. But in truth, the spiritual blindness in our own lives within the Body of Christ has been just as pronounced and potentially much more serious. That’s certainly a striking thing to say, but think about it. Our task as servants of the Servant of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, is to be Christ to those around us. Our task is to live our lives as ***exceptions to the rule*** in this world of selfishness and violence. When people look at us, they should see the exception to the rule of human behavior; they should see people who so rely on the authority of the Lord Jesus that they reflect His peace, His love, His compassion, His desire to do the will of the Father; they should see Christ in each of us, and in so seeing Him, they will be changed. It is why St. Seraphim could say so clearly, *“One man of peace will be responsible for the salvation of a thousand souls.”* How many people around us, I wonder, might have been saved if we had been Christ to them?

I cannot help but wonder also how the behavior of the criminal in Colorado might have turned out differently if he had encountered one man, one woman, of peace. How would his life had been different, I wonder, if we servants of Jesus Christ had truly reflected the Lord in the actions and words of

our lives? It is our own spiritual blindness that affects and intensifies the spiritual blindness of others; and it is our own health in the light of Christ that allows others to see the Light of Truth, Jesus Christ. How can we accomplish this? Only through the help of the Lord Himself, for we too must pray with our whole mind and our whole soul, *“Jesus, son of David, my Lord and my God, have mercy on us! Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me the sinner and help me to do Your will in all things, so that others may see You in me.”*

**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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