



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

306 W. Main Street  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

The Rev. Fr. Elias Yelovich, Pastor

<http://EntranceMission.org>

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### *The Saints Among Us* Week of June 14, 2015

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

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

*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (I Peter 1: 14-16)*

Each Sunday we gather in our little temple, surrounded by a host of icons. Each icon in the temple points to the image of God in the hearts of those depicted, men and women who acknowledged that image and who strove to attain unto His life-giving and merciful likeness. This is the goal of our entire lives: to acknowledge the image within us of the One Who made us, and to strive until our last breath to attain unto His likeness, i.e., to become ever more like Him in love, in mercy, in forbearance, in service, in self-giving, in humility.

Often I am asked by those who are unacquainted with the icons to tell who they are and what they depict. In response to these requests, I will begin to focus on the saints in our icons from time to time on Sundays during the time of the homily. This week, I will take the icon of St. Seraphim of Sarov which hangs on the north wall of our temple and tell some of the story of the way in which he acknowledged God's image within him and strove to become ever more like Him.

Often people who are new to Orthodoxy wonder without asking what in the world the priest or the deacon is doing when he swings the censer at each one of them during the Divine Services. The incense is a sign and acknowledgement of the presence of the One in Whose Name we pray, an acknowledgement of His Lordship. We burn incense as an offering to the One True God, and when the priest or deacon censures the individuals at the Divine Services, it is an acknowledgement of the image of that One Lord and Savior that is within each person. Censing is not so much a blessing as it is an offering to God, the God Who put His image within each of us. So you see the appropriate posture on our parts when the censer is swung our way is to bow our heads in humble acknowledgement of the One Whose image is within us.

The saints are those who lived their lives in an awareness of that image and who strove above all to attain unto His likeness. This Sunday, let us remember this task above all else, for indeed it is so that He calls us – each and every one – to grow into saints ourselves.

Let's take the time to read the story of St. Seraphim of Sarov before coming to Divine Liturgy this week:  
<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/55236.htm>

**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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717-817-0084