



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>

Reconciliation is a Two-Way Street Week of March 13, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matthew 5: 9)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5: 17-21)

Each Sunday we chant the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.* Christian life, the life of the disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is life dedicated to peacemaking, to the process of reconciliation. St. Paul explains that which is self-evident to the Gospel, but he explains it clearly so that we all understand. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Incarnation of God made flesh. His is the ministry of reconciliation. The old ways are gone, the ways of attempting to earn God's favor, the ways of self-righteousness, the ways of selfish concern for one's own salvation, the ways of

resentment against others, the ways of pointing the finger in judgment. These ways are over. For the Lord has come to those who are guilty of transgression of even the most basic commandments, and He has given them – to us, Brothers and Sisters - the grace of forgiveness of our trespasses. The new has come. We have been reconciled to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and as such we too are His ambassadors, His apostles of reconciliation. We too are peacemakers.

Great Lent begins with the ritual of mutual forgiveness. Each of us on Sunday will face one another; we will bow and beg forgiveness for the wrong we have committed against the other. We will come in sincerity of our repentance, in humility, knowing that none of us deserve the forgiveness that we ask to be given. We will ask for forgiveness, and we will give forgiveness. This is the process of peacemaking, of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a two way street. God continually offers His forgiveness to us; but reconciliation depends also upon us seeing the need to receive it and to accept it in gratitude and in humility. The offer stands eternally, first bestowed on us on the day of our Holy Baptism in Christ; renewed in the Sacrament of Confession; manifested and pledged concretely in the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist. He gives; we receive in repentance; and, we are changed forever.

It is not possible to make others around us to be reconciled with us. We cannot make others forgive us. However, we can stand ready to repent of the wrong we have done against them, and we can forgive them for the wrong they have done against us. The first step of reconciliation is for us to offer our love and our forgiveness to them. More often than not, the offer is sufficient to begin the process of reconciliation. The offer of forgiveness and acceptance of the other is the first step toward reconciliation; it is peacemaking in action. In such a way, we indeed become sons and daughters of the Most High God.

Brothers and Sisters, let us repent of our wrongdoing, and let us forgive one another from the heart. It is the time of the Great Fast; it is time to increase our prayer, our almsgiving for others, our self-restraint.

Brothers and Sisters, forgive me the sinner!

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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