



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

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### *The Blind See!* Week of June 5, 2016

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**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

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

*"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" (Matthew 6: 22-23)*

One of the movies which most everyone of my generation has seen is a 1962 film starring Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke called *The Miracle Worker*. If you have not seen it, you must do so. It portrayed the story of Helen Keller and her teacher Anne Sullivan. Helen Keller was born in the year 1880, and when she was very young suffered from a disease (perhaps Scarlet Fever or Meningitis) that left her blind and deaf at a very early age. Unable to see; unable to hear; and, consequently unable to speak, she was plunged into a world of absolute silence, darkness and loneliness; unimaginable and seemingly hopeless.

Helen's parents sent her for whatever help could be given to the famous Perkins School of the Blind in Massachusetts. A former student there, Anne Sullivan, moved in with Helen and her family, and over a period of much time, with much patience and perseverance and a series of strong battles of wills, the teacher-therapist helped Helen come out of her lonely misery. Little by little she worked with Helen, challenging, pushing, waiting and working to help the child know that she was not alone, teaching her to

understand and communicate, and eventually giving her the one priceless quality that seemed impossible to attain – the quality of hope.

Of course the story of Helen Keller is known by most Americans; several states have holidays commemorating her birthday on June 27 (Pennsylvania among them). And at least when I was in school, her story was taught as a lesson in perseverance, patience and the value of teaching.

I think of this story every year on the *Sunday of the Man Born Blind*, told by St. John in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of his Gospel. The hopelessness of the blind man is overturned by the presence of the Incarnate Savior, Jesus Christ, Who heals him with a word. The blind man is brought to faith and gives witness to those around him to the Lordship of the Jesus Christ. He is opposed by the enemies of Jesus, the Pharisees and scribes from the temple, who in their unbelief seek ways to find fault with the One Who gave the gift of sight. St. John describes the miracle clearly: the man who had been born blind, now sees – not only with his physical eyes, but with the “eyes of his heart,” he sees the truth – that Jesus Christ is Lord. Those who oppose Jesus, however, born with their physical sight intact, are the ones who are truly blind; the “eyes of their heart” are clouded, dark, closed to the Light of Truth. They have closed the eyelids of their souls to God. The man born physically blind has been given hope, while they, the leaders, temple priests and scribes, they are without hope, for they have cast themselves into the darkness of unbelief willfully.

Brothers and Sisters, each of us is like the man born blind. The eyes of our hearts have been darkened through sin and can be enlightened only through the action and grace of God Himself. Each of us lives in the loneliness of our own blindness, deafness and dumbness like Helen Keller, until we are brought into communion with the Lord and through Him with one another. Only through the Lord Jesus Christ can each of us be given hope, for He alone is the fulfillment of our inmost needs and pure desires. And the role that each of us has in the Life of Hope given to us, the life of Christian discipleship, is to be like Anne Sullivan to the countless young “Helen Kellers” around us. Sometimes this means we must be patient; other times it means we must oppose the will of the other if it is directed to actions and words that hurt. Always it means we must persevere and teach – not with words, but with actions. We teach others how to love only by loving others in our actions, by loving them. This is what the “miracle worker,” Anne Sullivan did with Helen Keller; and this, Brothers and Sisters, is what we must do with those around us who are spiritually blind, deaf and dumb.

Like every Sunday in the Paschal Season, the Sunday of the man born blind is a sign of the life-giving grace bestowed upon us through the Resurrection of the Savior from the dead. He Who overcame the last enemy, death, offers and truly bestows on all who will receive, the grace of Life Eternal and the hope which that brings. It is the only hope we will know in this world of lost souls and otherwise hopeless dead ends.

***Christ is Risen!*** Death has been overthrown! The blind see, the deaf hear and those in despair have Good News preached to them. The “eyes of our hearts” have been enlightened with the self-giving uncreated grace of the Lord. Let us receive Him with joy and bring Him to so many around us who are in such desperate need!

**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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