



Orthodox Mission of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

306 W. Main Street
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

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<http://EntranceMission.org>

On the Insufficiency of Human Strength Week of July 2, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

The holy Fathers say with one voice: The first thing to keep in mind is never in any respect to rely on yourself. The warfare that now lies before you is extraordinarily hard, and your own human powers are altogether insufficient to carry it on. If you rely on them you will immediately be felled to the ground and have no desire to continue the battle. Only God can give you the victory you wish.

Colliander, Tito. *The Way of the Ascetics*. Chapter 2: "On the Insufficiency of Human Strength."

Last Sunday we began to consider the content of Tito Colliander's *Way of the Ascetics*, a small book written for those of us who will follow the Orthodox way as we live our lives in the world. Mr. Colliander began with the observation that we must "rise and renew our faith." The first step, in other words, is for us to rededicate ourselves to the goal of following Christ in all things and of striving to draw ever closer to Him.

It is easy, however, for us to make decisions, but much more difficult for us to carry them forward. We all have made commitments in our lives that we have broken: eating less, for example, or getting more exercise, or in true sincerity, vowing to be kind to those in our lives who are mean or grouchy to us. We all know that even though we may be sincere in our commitments, it is usually a very difficult thing to follow them!

That's why the second chapter of Colliander's little book immediately focusses on the need for us to rely in our commitment to follow Christ on the help that only the Lord God can give. If we want to grow and progress in our spiritual lives we must call upon the Lord to help us, and we must realize that we cannot progress without the help of God. It is the Spirit Who teaches us how to pray and what to pray for; and, it is the Spirit that will draw us ever closer to the Lord Jesus Christ in our desire to be more like Him in all things. We must put aside the vain notion that our human strength is sufficient, and we must acknowledge our weakness and call upon Him for the strength we need to succeed in our commitment.

Brothers and Sisters: Let each of us acknowledge the "insufficiency of our human strength," and call upon the Name of the Lord for help in our spiritual pilgrimage; only in that way can we ever hope to succeed. On Sunday we will consider this topic of Chapter 2: "On the Insufficiency of Human Strength."

In Christ our true God,

+Fr. Elias

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