



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 Silent and Invisible Warfare Week of July 16, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Now that we know where the battle we have just begun is to be fought, and what and where our goal is, we also understand why our warfare ought to be called the invisible warfare. It all takes place in the heart, and in silence, deep within us....

The silence is necessary because all chatter about one's own concerns nourishes self-preoccupation and self-trust. And these must be stifled first of all....

You should see yourself as a child who is setting out to learn the first sounds of letters and who is taking his first tottering steps. All worldly wisdom and all the skills you may have are totally worthless in the warfare that awaits you, and equally without value are your social standing and your possessions....

You must thus abandon all your knowledge and become a dunce in order to be wise; you must become a pauper in order to be rich, and a weakling if you wish to be strong.

(Colliander, Tito. *The Way of the Ascetics*. Chapter 4: "On the Silent and Invisible Warfare.")

We live in a time in which silence is the rarest of commodities. Even when we are away from home without access to television or stereos, we have our portable devices plugged into our ears. The continual din with which we surround ourselves has led us to listen without hearing. And when we engage others in discussion or conversation, we have to really work to hear what others are saying. We are quick to impose our opinions and our thoughts on them, but we have to literally make ourselves hear what others are saying to us, to consider different points of view from our own, different perspectives; we listen without hearing.

We approach God the same way. We listen, but we do not hear. We want Him to hear us: *I want this, or need that; I think You should do this, or that; I ask that Your Will be done, but here's what I think your Will should be. I want You to hear ME!*

The Holy Fathers tell us that when we approach God we should approach Him in silence. Let the words cease; let go of our wants and desires; seek only to submit in humility to the Will of the One Who creates, redeems and sanctifies. Be silent before Him. Then and only then can we hear Him; we must empty ourselves for the Spirit to enter in.

I will not pretend that this is easy or self-evident. The time in which we live has trained all of us to do the exact otherwise. But I will tell you that this teaching of the Holy Fathers is worth heeding. Chapter 4 of the *Way of the Ascetics* expresses it well: "You must thus abandon all your knowledge and become a dunce in order to be wise; you must become a pauper in order to be rich, and a weakling if you wish to be strong." Only in this way, Brothers and Sisters, can we hope to hear the One Who ever waits to reveal His Will to us and Who is ever ready to dwell within us!

In Christ our true God,

+Fr. Elias

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