



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>

Ask, and it Will Be Given You! **Week of July 1, 2018**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

7 "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! 12 So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7)

The words of our Lord and God and Savior are clear. Whatsoever we ask in His name shall be given according to the Will of our Father in Heaven. Every prayer said from the heart is heard; every need understood; every request met according to His Will. And it is the Father's good Will to give whatsoever is beneficial for our salvation.

We misunderstand so easily. Even we Orthodox. We treat God as if He were the dispenser of our wants and desires. When He does not give us what we ask, we turn away. But the Holy Scriptures are clear. He gives to us in love, knowing what is for our good in light of His will to save. Some

things we ask are not given as we would like; others are given immediately. In all things, we are to come in humility and in faith; we make our requests know to Him in the Name of Christ our Lord, and He gives according to the benefit of our salvation.

If we treat God wrongly in our requests, we do the same when we approach His saints. On Sunday, we will commemorate our father among the saints, John Maximovitch. His prayers for the salvation of the world and for those who honor the Lord are well known. The stories of his love and prayers for all mankind have been told by many. But we dishonor the saints when we treat them like genies or magical dispensers of our wants. We pray, “*St. So and So, give me that or this; make this or that to happen; do this or that for me.*” This is not why the Lord has given us the saints, Brothers and Sisters. The saints are given to stand with us, to be our examples, to show us how we too, like them, may draw ever closer to the Lord in our pilgrimage along the path of salvation. Their prayers on our behalf ascend to the throne of Grace, to God the Father in Heaven. It is He that heals and that gives to us grace, mercy, life, salvation and every good thing.

Yes, in great need, by all means ask for the prayers of the saints, even as you would ask for the prayers of any believer whom you love. But remember that it is not the saints who dispense mercy and forgiveness. It is not the saints in whose names we pray. We are told quite clearly by our Lord in the words of His Sermon on the Mount from which I quoted above that anything we ask in His Name, the Name of Jesus, will be heard and honored by our Father in Heaven according to His will for us. The saints are not our magical genies; they are our heroes and our examples. And when we focus on them and read about them and see how they have opened their hearts to the grace of the All-Holy Spirit, then we see how we may be ourselves if we follow their examples and heed their teachings.

Our father among the saints John Maximovitch has given us an example that is clear. Like him, let us turn from the gratification of our own flesh and its desires, and let us turn to the One Who is the fulfillment of every need, every hope, every aspiration, every pure motive. Let us turn to the Lord. By all means ask the saints to pray for us and to pray with us. But remember that we honor them not by *using* them but by *emulating* their examples and striving to open our hearts to the Grace of the Holy Spirit as they did.

Christ our God, through the prayers of the Theotokos and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us!

In Christ our true God,

Fr. Elias

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717-817-0084