



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

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<http://EntranceMission.org>

## *The Holy Forefathers* December 27, 2020

**Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

**Christ is in our midst! He is and every shall be!**

*Through faith Thou hast justified the Forefathers, betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles ... (From the Troparion for the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers)*

It is in the book of Genesis where we find both the stories of our Fall and the beginning of our reclamation. In the first chapter of the first book of the Bible we read how God created us in His image and likeness, His divine image in each of us with the potential to grow evermore like Him. We read in the second chapter of how the first man and woman turned from that high vocation and chose the way of their own desires rather than following the will of the Creator. It is in the world fallen from that high calling that we all now live, a world filled with the bitterness of suffering, death and the violence of self-will. But later in the same book, chapter 15, we also read how God reached out to one man, Abraham, how He promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great people, a people by whom all the peoples of the world would be blessed. When Abraham responded with the affirmation of trust, verse 6 of that chapter says that, “[Abraham] believed the LORD and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

So begins the history of our salvation, the reclamation of fallen mankind. This is the focus of this coming Sunday, two Sundays before our own celebration of the Great Mystery of the Incarnation of God the Word, born of a Virgin and laid in a manger, the nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers announces to us that God did not leave His rebellious creation to dissolve in sickness, death and violence; He came in ancient times, announced Himself and His saving grace to Abraham and Sarah, and Abraham's faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." Righteousness to us who are not righteous; salvation to us who have rebelled; forgiveness of sin to us who deserve condemnation but who are justified by means of our relationship with Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom to know is to know the Father Himself.

This is the great message of this coming Sunday. We come together in the midst of the western world's celebration of Christmas, preparing for our own celebration, in the midst of a terrible pandemic. Above all we must hold tight to the promises of our God, that He revealed Himself to Abraham and to the entire people of Israel with the intent to save; and, that He took the flesh of the Virgin Mary upon Himself and was born to be "God with us, Immanuel." As the western world celebrates this great feast let it be a reminder to us as well of what we prepare for in our own celebration on January 7 (Dec. 25): the birth of the Savior, Whose good will it is to call each of us to be one with Him. Let us embrace this message, Brothers and Sisters! Let us draw near to Him in humility, in repentance and in love: for the Savior, Christ the Lord is born!

Fr. Elias

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