



**Orthodox Church of the  
Entrance of the Theotokos  
into the Temple**

**306 W. Main Street  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727**

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<http://EntranceMission.org>

***Carrying a Man to Christ*  
July 16, 2023**

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

**Brothers and Sisters in Christ:**

In today's gospel lesson, a paralyzed man was brought to Jesus on a bed carried by the man's friends. If we read this story in the Gospel of Mark, we know that Jesus was preaching in a house, and that there was a great crowd so that the paralyzed man's friends could not bring him to Jesus. They therefore uncovered a portion of the roof over where Jesus was, and let down the bed that the man was laying in. In the gospel of Matthew which we read today as well as in the gospel of Mark, we read that Jesus saw the faith of the man's friends, and said to the paralyzed man, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." It was after seeing *their* faith, not the paralyzed man's faith, but the faith of his friends, that Jesus forgave the man of his sins and healed him.

As monastics, your intercessory prayers for others are akin to the men bringing their paralyzed friend to Jesus. Would Jesus had taken notice of the paralyzed man had it not been for the friends who brought him? God is omniscient, all-powerful, all-wise, and

doesn't need our prayers to save others. However, he chooses to work through us to bring salvation to others. This reminds me of what St. James says in his epistle: "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

This can be a description of the monastic life: to become righteous before God, and to pray for others. We become righteous by repenting, lessening our ego and will in humility, removing the worldly cares and concerns we have, allowing God to penetrate our hearts so that we naturally are molded into Him. And by becoming one with God, we humbly participate in the salvation of others through our prayers. People often underestimate the importance of prayer, but today's gospel lesson reveals just how important our prayers are. This is a great task, one that is ideal for a monastic whose life revolves around prayer. I know you already pray for others but let today's gospel lesson be a reminder of the importance of what you do.

Fr. Anthony

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