



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

306 W. Main Street Emmitsburg,
MD 21727

<http://EntranceMission.org>

717-817-0084

The V. Rev. Elias Yelovich,
Rector

The Rev. Anthony Duvall,
Assistant

***What are You Waiting For?
February 18, 2024***

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

(Gospel text: Luke 2:22-33 for the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord)

What are you waiting for?

Sometimes when I get home on a Sunday afternoon I put on the news, or something that requires no attention and take a nap. I am inevitably awakened by this or that commercial that asks the same rhetorical question: “What are you waiting for?” Sometimes it is asked by a young woman attired in the kind of glittering outfit that you might see in a casino; she excitedly tries to lure those watching to download this or that app, FanDuel, MGM, or whatever and begin placing bets. Oh, how exciting she tries to make it sound: glamorous, fun, fabulous. “What are you waiting for?” she asks. Sometimes the same question is asked by other salespeople selling cars or vacation spots or this or that item on sale. “What are you waiting for? Act now before it’s too late, or you’ll miss out!”

Our entire culture is built on getting and having and consuming more and more. We are challenged, encouraged to buy now, pay later, act now before we miss out on whatever marvel or item or thing or promise of glittering joy we could have before it's too late. What are you waiting for? The marketeers say to us, and so many of us comply. Credit card debt piles up, we look for something, for joy or comfort or whatever before we miss out. What are we waiting for? We don't always know, but we want it, and we want it now.

The beautiful passage we heard in our Gospel lesson today from St. Luke brings us into the presence of two remarkable people, St. Simeon and St. Anna the Prophetess, who knew exactly what they were waiting for. And when they encountered it, that is, when they encountered Him, they were perhaps for the very first time in their lives entirely fulfilled, entirely at peace.

Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the Temple in fulfillment of the ancient on the 40th day after birth, to present Him, their first-born, to the Lord, and offer the appropriate sacrifice as specified for the purification of the mother following childbirth. It is the ancient counterpart to what we do in the Orthodox Church in our rite of Churching on the 40th day after childbirth. It was a normal temple rite, and both Simeon and Anna would both have seen it many times. But this time was different. This time they recognized in the child born of Mary the fulfillment of that for which that had been waiting their entire lives. Simeon, filled with the Spirit, prayed the great prayer which we call "Nunc Dimittis," and that we pray at Vespers, "Lord Now Lettest Thou Thy Servant depart in peace – for truly all for which I have waited has been fulfilled." Anna gave thanks to God and spread the Word among the people. They knew what they were waiting for, and they recognized it in the infant Christ.

We live in a time in which people are confused about what they are looking for, about what they are waiting for. They think that this or that politician, or this or that amount of money will make them happy, or perhaps what they really want is a new Lexis or a BMW, or a nicer home, or a place on the beach, or a chance to win a bit of money like the commercials say. But they will never find any joy or happiness or fulfillment in those things. There is joy, fulfillment, hope, security, purpose – all that matters, as Simeon and Anna knew, only in the coming of the Lord. This is what they saw, much to their surprise, in the Child held by a mother who came to present her First-Born son to the Lord and to make the requisite sacrifice according to the Law. Truly, He was indeed to be a light to enlighten the Gentiles and Glory of the people Israel!

To Him alone be all honor and glory forever! Amen.

Fr. Elias

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