



**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

***The Saturday of Souls***  
**February 22, 2025**

**Brothers and Sisters in Christ:**

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

I spent some time this week reading an old classic. Alexander Kalomiros wrote a wonderful short book entitled *The River of Fire*. In it he goes back to the Holy Fathers and reiterates one of our most significant Orthodox Dogmas: That God, in the words of St. John the Evangelist, did not come into the world to condemn it, but rather to save it. God condemns no one, He punishes no one, and He stands with us and in us during the worst times of our lives. *THE* worst time is when we face the death of those whom we love. It is then, Mr. Kalomiros writes, that God comes closest to us who will receive Him, for it is wrong as some people say that God inflicts death upon us as punishment for our disobedience; God did not create death, and He does not cause death. Here is a wonderful quote from his book:

*Death was not inflicted upon us by God<sup>13</sup> We fell into it by our revolt. God is Life and Life is God. We revolted against God, we closed our gates to His life-giving grace.<sup>14</sup> "For as much as he departed from life", wrote Saint Basil, "by so much did he draw nearer to death. For God is Life, deprivation of life is death".<sup>15</sup> "God did not create death",*

*continues Saint Basil, "but we brought it upon ourselves". "Not at all, however, did He hinder the dissolution... so that He would not make the infirmity immortal in us".<sup>16</sup> As Saint Irenaeus puts it: "Separation from God is death, separation from light is darkness... and it is not the light which brings upon them the punishment of blindness".<sup>17</sup>*

It is a wonderful custom among Orthodox Christians throughout the world to come together on this day, the day before the Sunday of the Last Judgment, the day we call "Soul Saturday," to remember our beloved dead in the world. All human beings die; indeed, all of creation is subject to the tragedy of death, because we, the crown of creation, led all of creation away from union with God. Our reclamation, our hope, our redemption is in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only One Whom death could not conquer. He destroyed death, and bestowed his compassion on all who die with the promise to raise them from the dead to live with Him in His Kingdom that will have no end.

Our friends and our relatives whom we remember today by name are therefore at rest in Jesus Christ; St. Paul says, asleep in the Lord, waiting with us for the sound of the last trumpet to sound, when the dead will be raised to new life, when the corruptible will be made eternally incorruptible in Christ. We pray with sadness today to be sure. How each of us wishes that those whom we name were with us still in this life. But they rest in that peace that Christ alone can give, as we will say, in a place of brightness, a place of verdure, a place of repose, where there is neither sickness nor sighing, but Life Everlasting. |

Together, we pray once again to commemorate our loved ones to the eternal loving care of the Lord Jesus Christ!

To Him be all honor and glory forever! AMEN!

Fr. Elias

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