



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

**306 W. Main Street
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But That the Works of God Should Be Revealed in Him.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (John 9:1:5)

But that the works of God should be revealed in him.

These words of our Lord were spoken to His disciples to address their misunderstanding about His healing of the man born blind. The disciples ask the Lord why the man was born blind from birth? Was it because of the sin of someone for which he was being punished? The sin of his parents? Or some sin for which the man himself had impossibly been responsible? The question is like similar questions that we ourselves ask about such situations. Why do certain people suffer in spite of their apparent innocence? Why do diseases like cancer or polio or covid strike

people who are apparently innocent of any grievous wrongdoing? Why does the Lord not heal them, as He healed the man born blind or so many others when He walked the earth, God Incarnate, with healing power in His touch or Word?

Jesus tells His disciples the only answer that He knows must be given. The man born blind is the means by which the works of God will be revealed. The man born blind is the instrument of God's intent to heal all mankind from the grievous wounds of our collective sin; he is a sign of the healing of the world.

It is perhaps not always clear to us what God's plan is. We often cannot see the forest for the trees, as we say, because we are so very wrapped up in the tragic details of our own lives. We see the innocent suffer, children being hurt, people suffering from terrible diseases, violence carried out upon those who are innocent of provocation. And we wonder: What does it all mean? Does God not care? Why is He apparently distant or silent from such appalling suffering?

The truth of the matter is that God cares deeply. It is because He cares so very deeply that He became man, born of the Virgin, taking from her the flesh of our humanity, to walk among the very people He created and called to be a "light to the nations." His very life was one of healing and self-giving for the Life of the World. His earthly healings were signs of the great healing that He brought for the wounds of the entire world, wounds that are the result of our separation from the One Who made us and Who cares so deeply for us that He gave His own life as a sacrifice to destroy the power of sin that is the cause of our separation and to overturn the power of its wages, death. Thus, every healing He performed, is a healing of compassion and love and care, not just for the individuals He healed during His earthly life, but for all of us as well, for every man, woman and child He created and redeems. Each and every healing in the Gospels is a sign of the healing He bestows on every one of us. The big picture we must never forget is the healing, the reclamation, of the entire world, of each individual who exists, who has existed and who will exist, the restoration of that ancient and ongoing separation that joins us to the One Who is our only hope, our only health, our only life.

It is notable that in the story of our Lord's healing of the man born blind, He does not heal directly by touch or simple declaration. Instead, after anointing the man's eyes with the very clay from which He created him to begin with, he tells him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which, St. John explains, means "sent." The first disciples would have immediately recognized the Baptismal symbolism in this command. Just as the man born blind had been healed by washing, so too are we healed by our washing in Holy Baptism, the healing waters of Him Who was sent for our salvation. It is in the waters of Baptism that the healing of our separation from God is inaugurated. Holy Baptism is the miracle of the beginning of our own reclamation, the restoration of our own ancient ill.

God is concerned for each and every creature, for each and every being He has made. His healings in the Gospels are signs of that concern, and more than that, they are the signs of the healing He bestows on each and every one of us. We of course live our lives in a world grievously wounded by the sin of our separation from the One Who is the very essence of

health and salvation. But the wounds we and all mankind experience are only temporary. For those who are joined to Him in that Oneness we call faith, all will be made new. This truth is demonstrated by our Lord's healing of the man born blind, a reminder of our own "illumination" by Him Who is indeed the "Light of the World!"

Fr. Elias

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