



Orthodox Mission of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

306 W. Main Street Emmitsburg, MD
21727

The Rev. Fr. Elias Yelovich, Pastor

<http://EntranceMission.org>

Our Mission July 25, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:35-40)

When you get to be my age you think back over the things in life that matter. Although it is true that I often cannot remember what I had for breakfast once it is over, I can remember vividly the things that truly mattered in my life, the words and actions of people that broke through my exterior and nestled a blessing in my heart. One of those memories is this passage from Matthew's Gospel which my pastor in 7th grade catechesis made us memorize. It was one of the first things he taught us, and I never forgot it. He cared enough about us kids to make us learn what was truly essential, and I honestly love him for it. "You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind... And ..., you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

In the years I have been serving as a priest, first at St. Mary's in Fayetteville, St. James in Westminster, and our beloved little parish, Entrance Mission in Emmitsburg, I have never forgotten that lesson which I learned back in 1963. Catechesis led to participation in many ministries of the Church, to college,

seminary and a variety of parish assignments as a deacon and priest. It is the essence of what I care about, the motivation that drives every sermon, every prayer, every action and every decision in priestly service. At our little Entrance Mission, we are about one thing: gathering as His Body to receive His love, to love Him in return, in *eucharisteo*, thanksgiving, thankfulness for what He is and what He gives us so very freely, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. This is who we are, and what we are about. This is our mission.

I am saddened when the door of the church does not open regularly with inquirers. And it hurts when people pick up and leave because they want something more than we have to offer. Is not Christ sufficient, I wonder? Do we not worship, praise, give thanks and bow before Him in humble receptivity, the pure receptivity of faith, at each and every Divine Liturgy? Do we not struggle to reach out and serve our neighbor in need? It is tempting to give in to discouragement, but then I see the faces of the dozen souls waiting for me at Hillside when I drive up for prayer or Bible Study each week, my discouragement gives way to thanksgiving! I am truly thankful to God for their honest appreciation for what very little we give them and their true desire to be with us in worship. For the past two weeks we have been uplifted by their presence again among us once again. It has been a gift from God! Not everyone knows what it is to follow Christ. Some who follow Him in name only want something different than Him. But we are about gathering around Him like sheep around their shepherd. We receive what He give to us, love incarnate; we love Him in true thankfulness, and we are strengthened and motivated by His love to love our neighbor in return.

But there are those who hate both Him and His disciples. Recently our website was hacked by those who are strangers or enemies of Christ. The hacking was most likely carried out by bots that crawl the web in search of unsecured church sites, set loose for those who want to do mischief to the people of God. I spent the past day creating a new website that is now secure and cannot be easily hacked. Please look at it when you are able to do so; it is designed to be especially friendly for mobile platforms: <https://EntranceMission.org> . The “s” after “http” indicates “secure sockets layer” security so that we will no longer be subject to mischief on the part of those who do not know Christ. More will be added to our new website as time goes on, more images and pictures, etc. But the basics are there now, up and running.

Brothers and Sisters: Remember what we are about. We are the Body of Christ in Emmitsburg, MD. We are those people who accept the Lord Jesus Christ and strive above all else to fulfill the Great Commandment to Love God with all of our hearts, our minds, our souls, our strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are those who strive to honor and to keep the Great Commandment in thought, word and deed. That’s who we are, and that is what we are about.

Fr. Elias

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