



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

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

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***They Have Moses and the Prophets. Let Them Hear Them!***  
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**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

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

“They have Moses and the Prophets. Let them hear them!” (Luke 16:29)

The third beatitude of our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount (“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!”) is dynamically illustrated in His *Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus* that we will hear in our Gospel lesson on Sunday. The meek beggar Lazarus accepts the crumbs, the droppings of the rich man’s table without making any demands for himself, while the rich man feasts sumptuously every day, never once inviting the poor, meek beggar in to share his wealth. Both of them come to the end of their lives and die. Lazarus the beggar goes to the place of the righteous, the “bosom of Abraham,” while the unnamed rich man goes to a place of torment, tormented, as the Holy Fathers suggest, by his own guilty conscience at the way he never once helped his neighbor in need. In his torment, he asks the Lord to be relieved by the ministrations of the beggar. But the Lord says that is not possible, for there is a great chasm separating the righteous from those in torment. But then he asks the Lord to send Lazarus to his brothers to warn them. The Lord replies, “They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them!”

The directness of the Lord’s answer to the requests of the rich man should give each of us pause to hear the warning clearly. Those who live only for themselves, who disregard the plight of their neighbor in need, who spend their lives in acquisition of personal status, wealth or comfort – they will be the ones in torment in the age to come. That torment may be their own burning conscience, but it will be a terrible torment indeed. And perhaps the most distressing part of this parable comes when the Lord tells the

rich man that he had his chance; like his brothers still living, he and they had sufficient warning. They had Moses and the prophets. They had the commandments and the preaching of prophets like Amos and Hosea who called the people to live lives of justice and compassion for others. These revelations of God are more than sufficient; even if one were to rise from the dead, the Lord says, it will not affect them, for God's revelation in the law and the prophets are more than sufficient.

Above all else, God is merciful. His justice is always the justice of mercy and compassion. He calls all to a life in union with Him, so that each of us may grow in that union of faith active in love. But He forces no one. All are called, but "few," said Jesus, "are chosen," because so very few heed that call in a life of compassion and mercy. The *Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus* is a strong call to each of us to take heed. Those who look to their own needs at the expense of the meek among us, will only know the torment of their own accusing conscience at the end. The time for us to heed that call is now, not later. For someday each of us will find ourselves in the same predicament as that of the rich man if we do not repent.

Brothers and Sisters: Let us heed this call as we approach the season of consumption and buying. Let us turn away from our own selfishness and seek out our neighbor in need. There are many opportunities all around us; the beggar is at our gate! For we too have Moses and the Prophets, and much more yet indeed! We have the very One Who rose from the dead; we truly have no excuse!

Fr. Elias

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