



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

**306 W. Main Street
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Miracles of Restoration
November 21, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Jesus ... answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well." And when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping." (Luke 8: 50-52)

We have had series of lessons from St. Luke's Gospel over the past week that have demonstrated the wondrous power of God in Jesus Christ quite spectacularly. Last week, the chilling story was read of Jesus casting out a fearsome demon which identified itself as "Legion." Those of you who have read the story or seen the equally chilling movie put out by Stephen King called the "Storm of the Century," know how terrifying the demon who identified itself as "Legion" is. Yet, God had authority over the demon, cast it out, and in mercy which seems almost inexplicable, drove it into a herd of swine rather than prematurely casting it into the bottomless chasm that awaits the evil one. There is apparently still time for even the demons to repent.

The Gospel lesson for this Sunday continues to demonstrate God's power over evil, the evil of death and hopelessness and separation of His creation from the Body of the Redeemed. If there

is one theme that unites the two miracles in our lesson it is the theme of restoration. The first miracle is accomplished by Jesus on behalf of a Jewish leader of a synagogue named Jairus. Rather than rejecting the Lord, Jairus comes to Jesus asking Him to heal his little girl, who is dying. As they set out to go to Jairus' house, a woman makes her way into the midst of the crowd, desperate for healing. St. Luke tells us that she has suffered from a hemorrhage of blood for over twelve years, having spent all her money on doctors who were unable to heal her. Her condition was not only medically desperate, but spiritually desperate as well, for someone in her condition would have been denied access to the Temple, to the synagogue and to any relationship with the people of God. She would have been considered "unclean" because of her condition. Nevertheless, her great faith propels her forward and she creeps up to Jesus on her knees and touches the fringe of His garment. Jesus immediately perceives the power going forth from Him; her hemorrhage stops and she is healed. But not only healed, restored to oneness with the people of God, cleansed of her uncleanness and brought back as such into full communion with the Body of the Redeemed. St. Luke says that they then arrived at the home of Jairus, only to be told that his little girl had died. Jesus counters the news with the retort, "She is not dead, but sleeping!" Those present try to correct Him, but He bids the little girl to get up; she does so and is given over to her mother to be fed.

These two miracles, as I said above, are united by a common theme, the theme of restoration. A little girl is restored to life by God Incarnate. A woman is restored to health and thereby to communion with the people of God, the House of Israel. The primary work of God is indeed restoration – restoration to our original innocence, restoration to health and wholeness, restoration to life. The powerful stories should strengthen each of us in our journey of faith. The work of God, Brothers and Sisters, is not magic. It is restoration! It is Life! Life in the midst of death, health in the midst of sickness, reconciliation in the midst of discord. But above all, this lesson is the great reminder to us who believe, who trust in the Lord of Love, the Lord of Life, the Lord of restoration – the reminder that for those of us who trust in the Lord, even death cannot overcome us, for as the Lord said to Jairus and those in his household, "not dead, but sleeping," sleeping to await the resurrection, the restoration that He promises to each of us! This is how each of us should see the death of our loved ones. Because of the great goodness and mercy of our God, "not dead, but sleeping!" To Him be all honor and glory forever!

Fr. Elias

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