



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

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

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Rector**

<http://EntranceMission.org>

The Mirror Does Not Lie
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Every morning we rise from sleep, take care of our immediate needs, shower, shave (at least some of us), and get dressed. In the course of our morning routine, we inevitably face that moment when we stand before the mirror above our sink and take a good look. Do we like what we see? The reflection that stares back at us is not always agreeable. In fact, the older we get, the more disagreeable it gets!

The ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ begins with the presentation of a mirror, a mirror held before the faces, the lives, of those who were fortunate enough to encounter it. That mirror, St. Mark tells us, was that of the great Prophet and Forerunner, John. Jesus spoke of the Holy Forerunner as the last and greatest of the Prophets of the Old Covenant:

This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.' Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11: 7-11).

In our Gospel lesson this Sunday we will hear the opening words of the Gospel of Mark, words which reflect the importance of having a spiritual mirror held before us. Before Jesus even begins to gather His Holy Apostles, the Spirit came upon John and led him into the wilderness where he preached and summoned the people to take a good look at themselves. He stood before them like a mirror and called

them to pay attention to what they saw, what they were really like. In the same Spirit of the prophets of old, John preached about the Will of God and about the importance of seeking to follow it. He reminded the people of the Law, the Torah, which had been given through Moses and which was a summary of how God had called His Holy People to live. He spoke without fear like the prophets of old, calling the people to return to lives of compassion for the well-being of others, bravely condemning the adultery of Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, as a crass violation of God's Will. Most importantly, he prepared the way for Jesus to begin His ministry by calling the people to repentance. If they did not like the reflection that came back at them when they looked within and saw how they really looked in light of God's freely revealed Will, then they needed to do something about it. And that something was to repent, to step out in a new direction, to seek a new start, beginning with the baptism of repentance that he carried out with the people who came to him.

Each day we look in the mirrors above the sinks in our bathrooms at home. If we do not like what we see, we make changes. We vow to exercise, to eat healthier foods, to change our lifestyle to benefit our health and well-being. The same thing must be done in our spiritual lives as well. Take a look at the mirror God provides for you: the commandments, the beatitudes, the life and preaching of our Lord, the lives of the saints. Compare your life with what you see in those mirrors held before you. And as the Holy Forerunner preached, repent. Bring your deficiencies and your sins to the Sacrament of Penance. It's time to do so once again, now that the bustle of the secular observances of the holidays is thankfully over. Take a look into those spiritual mirrors that God has provided for you, and with the countless generations of believers who have come before you, do as they have done: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

Fr. Elias

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