



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

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

**The V. Rev. Elias Yelovich,
Rector**

<http://EntranceMission.org>

New Creations
May 29, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

For the love of Christ constrains us because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore, all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5: 14-18)

The final Sunday of Pascha before the Apodosis on Wednesday of next week presents us with a Gospel lesson from John (9:1-38) that is perhaps the most powerful and unforgettable of all the lessons of this powerful and unforgettable Season! Christ encounters a man who is blind, and not just blind, but born blind. In a miracle unlike any other He heals the man by creating for him a new set of eyes. Just as He had taken the red clay of the earth and created Adam from it at the beginning of human history, so now he takes the earth once again, spits upon it and fashions from it in the same way new eyes for the man born blind. The miracle of the healing of the man born blind is an act of creation, so unforgettable and powerful, that there ensues a series of dialogues between the man who had been healed and the Pharisees who could not accept what they had seen with their own eyes. The texts of the Church in the Aposticha of Matins point out the irony: The man born blind could see Who Jesus is with his spiritual

eyes, while the Pharisees who could see with their physical eyes were spiritually blind to the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Once again, an important part of the action of this great miracle involves water: The Lord sends the man for whom He had created new eyes to wash in water, specifically, the pool of Siloam, which in ancient times had been used for the rites of purification at the Great Feast of Tabernacles. St. John the Evangelist points out that the word "Siloam" means "sent," thus emphasizing the importance of our union with Him Who had been sent from the Father to save us, Jesus Christ, God Incarnate. For those newly baptized first Christians on this fifth Sunday of Pascha, the great miracle and Sign from the Gospel of John would have been a powerful reminder of the Grace they had received in their own purification, their own death and resurrection in Holy Baptism. They too, like the man born blind, had been united with the One Who had been sent, the Lord Jesus Christ! They too, had been recreated, made new in the waters of Baptism!

The words with which I began this email meditation have long been among my most favorite of all passages in Holy Scripture. St. Paul summarizes precisely what the miracle of the healing of the man born blind proclaims. United to Christ in our own Baptisms, we, like the man born blind, have been made by the Creator and Redeemer of all, New Creations. As such, it is the love of Christ that "constrains," or "controls" us. We do not deal with others or with any aspect of life in this world according to the old principles of "might makes right," or "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," or with "regard for the rich and powerful and purposeful ignorance of those who are poor and weak." As New Creations, all we do is driven by the Love of Christ. His love for us and the world He made is now our love. We are New Creations, constrained and controlled and driven by His love. This is not the way of the fallen world, and God knows, of most any of the people we meet, live with, work with or know in our everyday lives. It is, however, our way, the way of the Lord Jesus, Who died and rose again for Life, Life in union with Him, Life that will continue to mature and develop as we go, as St. Paul and the early Fathers said so eloquently, "from Glory unto Glory!"

As we approach the end of our Great and Holy Season of Pascha, let us remember these things! Let us remember, that is, in the Biblical sense, by making present that which we remember: May the love of Christ indeed constrain, control, guide, inspire, lead each of us who have become New Creations ourselves!

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Fr. Elias

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717-817-0084