



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

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

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<http://EntranceMission.org>

***A Still, Small Voice*
June 12, 2022**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

... but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. (I Kings 19:10-12)

We have come to the fulfillment of the entire Season of Pascha with the arrival of the Feast of Pentecost. St. Luke records the events of the first Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles. The Holy Apostles had gathered together in the Upper Room where they prayed and received the Precious Body and Blood of the Savior who had ascended bodily to the place of supreme authority at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. It was a day of transition unlike any other transition before or since. The fulfillment of the promise that Jesus had made to them on the day of His Ascension took place in their midst: *Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high* (Luke 24:49). As they gathered together in prayer that promise was fulfilled. The “Power from on high” came upon them like tongues of fire; they were enabled by the Grace of the Holy Spirit to witness, to become “martyrs” (which means “witnesses”) and to preach in words that were understandable to people of many different cultures and languages. And what was the content of that message? You can read it in Acts 2: 14:40: The Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies; He rose from the dead and broke the bonds of death for all mankind; repent, be baptized and believe in the Gospel!”

The drama of the first Pentecost is undeniable. It was the transition from the time of the Incarnation of God in human flesh to the time of the Church. Now, we who come to the Church and hold tight to the Sacred Tradition passed on to us through the Holy Apostles – *WE* are now His Body in the world. The Spirit is given, and it is given within the Church – through the preaching of the Word and the reception of the Holy Mysteries ordained by God. The Spirit is given really and truly, but we must discern His self-giving with hearts that are meek and willing to receive Him.

I find myself returning to the experience of my namesake, the holy prophet Elias, on this feast. We think that the time of the outpouring of the Spirit is somehow over because we do not experience Him in the way that is described in the Acts of the Apostles. Shame on us if we think that! The Spirit is alive and poured out upon us whenever and wherever we gather as the Church to hear His Word and to receive the outpouring of His Divine Grace in the Holy Mysteries. There is no need for us to travel here or there throughout the world to receive the Spirit. The fulness of the Divine Presence and the “Power from on High” is given to us every time – every single time – we come to receive Him in Holy Communion. This is what is described explicitly in the Holy Scriptures, and if we are not aware of it, then *WE* are at fault, not He!

The story of the Holy Prophet Elias, who appeared with Moses on the Mount of the Transfiguration, reminds us that God does not come to us as dramatically as He came on the first Pentecost. He is not in the rumbling terror of an earthquake, in the destructive force of the wind, in the consuming flame of fire or a flash of lightening. He comes silently, a “still, quiet, small voice.” Only the meek will discern the great gift of His Divine Presence, only those who wait and see in silence.

This truth, Brothers and Sisters, has been preserved in our Holy Orthodox Tradition particularly in the witness of monastics, who spend so very much of their time in the discernment of His Divine Self-Giving in prayer and introspection, allowing their minds to descend into their hearts, hearts that have practiced the virtue of meekness and are the receptacles of the presence of God within them.

Do you discern the Grace of the Holy Spirit in the “still, small voice” that is given to you each and every Sunday? If not, you will not discern Him any more really or strongly in any other church, sacred space, pilgrimage site or temple anywhere else in the world. He gives Himself to you each and every Sunday just as fully and really as He gave Himself to the Holy Apostles on the first Pentecost! Remember the Third Beatitude: “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth!” Quiet the raging within you; still the endless desires; strive to silence the passions. Then, and only then, will you discern what is freely and really given to you each time we come together to receive that which is freely given: the Grace of God Himself, the All-Holy Spirit, in the Body and Blood of the master in the Divine Liturgy so faithfully celebrated each and every week in our own little congregation!

Fr. Elias

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