



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

306 W. Main Street Emmitsburg,
MD 21727

<http://EntranceMission.org>

717-817-0084

The V. Rev. Elias Yelovich,
Rector

The Rev. Anthony Duvall,
Assistant

And He Had Compassion on Her
October 22, 2023

Sunday, October 22, 2023. Pentecost 20. Entrance Church.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

... and He had compassion on her and said, "Do not weep." (Luke 7:13)

Today we heard the story of one of our Lord's greatest miracles, the raising of the son of the widow of Nain from the dead. There are only three times in the Gospels when Jesus raises the dead to life: The daughter of the leader of the Temple, Jairus; the raising of his friend Lazarus immediately before He enters Jerusalem before His passion, and this time, the raising of the only son of the widow. Each time it is clear that our Lord enters into the suffering of those who lost a loved one. Each time He has compassion and overcomes their suffering with a word or a touch. St. John even records that when He goes to the tomb of his friend Lazarus, the compassion of the Incarnate God of gods and Lord of lords overflows with tears. The shortest verse in the Bible bears witness: "Jesus wept."

Compassion is different from empathy. We seek to empathize with those who suffer, because we share common humanity with them. Empathy is knowing what people experience. When we see people

suffering as we see now in Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestinian Gaza – we seek to understand what they are going through. We empathize.

But compassion is different. Compassion is to “suffer with,” to enter into their suffering; it is to be one with them and to seek with our hearts to make it better; to assuage their suffering. Compassion goes beyond empathy. Empathy is to know and understand; one can empathize and still not care. The devil knows what we go through, but it does not care. But God not only knows, He cares. In His Incarnate Humanity, He suffers with. He understands, and empathizes, of course. But more than that, He becomes one with us in our suffering. He cares and has mercy. He has compassion.

I looked up the word compassion in my concordance and was overwhelmed with how often that word comes up in the Scriptures. The Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospels and the Epistles. Pointing to the Lord’s compassion for the people, St. Paul urges us to be compassionate in all of our actions and relationships.

And we see the example of the Lord clearly, don’t we? In all of His actions, He refuses to look on the ugliness of a person’s action, but reaches out repeatedly, again and again, to make that which is ugly into something beautiful for God. He takes the weakness of others and turns it into strength; the suffering of others and turns it into joy. He takes death and turns it into life. His heart is the kind of heart St. Isaac of Nineveh described in his own ascetical homilies: a heart that suffers with and seeks the redemption of all who have fallen, a heart that weeps for those held captive by sin, disease, death – and seeks their renewal. A heart that not only understands but suffers with and seeks mercy upon those who suffer.

This miracle of our Lord that we hear every year in this lesson from the Gospel of Luke reminds us that our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ seeks our redemption and will not rest or stop or give up on anyone in pain, in need, in the bondage to sin or in the thralls of death. The fulfillment of His mercy in its fullness will be revealed on the Great and Glorious Last Day when He raises the dead and ends the power of evil for good. But until that time, Brothers and Sisters, we live in hope – hope that will not be shaken, hope in the Lord Who will raise us from the dead as well and grant us the mercy of Life Everlasting with Him. This is the message of the day!

To Jesus Christ be all honor and glory forever! Amen!

Fr. Elias

Orthodox Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple
306 West Main Street
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
<https://EntranceMission.org>