



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

306 W. Main Street Emmitsburg,
MD 21727

<http://EntranceMission.org>

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The V. Rev. Elias Yelovich,
Rector

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Humility and Submission
January 14, 2024 n.s.

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Today in the Church we commemorate the Circumcision of Our Lord.

The rite of circumcision was given by God to Abraham when He established Abraham and his descendants as His people. As an outward sign of this covenant, God commanded Abraham to be circumcised, and for every male offspring to be circumcised on their eighth day of birth (hence why we celebrate this feast eight days after the birth of Christ). To emphasize, circumcision was not the covenant, but rather an outward sign of the covenant.

Christ dutifully fulfilled the Law that every faithful Jew of His time was supposed to keep such as circumcision, but He went further. He filled these once empty signs with His divinity. In the case of circumcision, He has given us a new circumcision: holy baptism. Circumcision was a cutting off of the physical flesh; baptism is the cutting off the sinful flesh. Circumcision was a sign of being one of God's people; baptism is the means by

which God unites us to Him! We are not just God's people; we are united to God Himself! In Baptism, we cut off the old flesh, the sinful attachments we have to the world, are washed clean and given new life in union with God.

Last week, we celebrated the Lord's Nativity, and later this week, we'll celebrate Theophany, where Christ was baptized by John the Forerunner in the River Jordan. But today's a day of some importance as well. It shows that God, the creator of the cosmos, cared so much for us that He took on our humanity, willingly perfected the Law that He had given in the Old Testament, all for the sake of our salvation. God's greatness can be found in His humility, and His willingness to submit. He, the one who gave the Law in the Old Testament, did not need to submit to the Law when He was born in the flesh; but He did nonetheless for our salvation.

In modern western society, humility and submission for the sake of others is not prized. Rather, pride and success for the enrichment of the individual is prized. Some of this seemingly cannot be helped. In other parts of the world, you may be raised and taught in a village, and learn a trade to serve your community. But in the West, you leave your family at an early age to attend a school with other individuals to grow in knowledge, so that one day you can be successful and have enough money to live a comfortable life on your own. No matter what you may try to do to escape this, if you live in the West, this is what our society is.

The Fathers largely emphasize Christ's circumcision as showing that he was fully Man like us (in response to some heretics who say otherwise), and that He fulfilled the Law (in response to Pharisaical accusers who try to say He didn't keep the Law). But if we look further into the meaning of His circumcision, we see His willingness to humble and submit Himself for the salvation of others. Let us therefore escape modern western society not by deserting it, but rather remaining in it while humbling and submitting ourselves for the salvation of those around us.

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