



## Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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**Behold, I Make All Things New: Photini**  
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**Christ is risen! Indeed, He is Risen!**

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." .... Revelation 21: 1-7)*

Photini. The one who sees in spite of her sin. The one who waits for the Lord to make all things new again. The one who recognizes the only hope for her, her people and those estranged from God! Like the paralytic last week, there was no hope for her. She was stuck in a life of misery and sin. As a Samaritan, a member of a culture that was considered lost and separated from the people of God. But she saw what others did not. She embraced. She moved forward after her repentance and became a preacher who was baptized by the Holy Apostles and converted many to belief in Christ. According to tradition, she was martyred by being thrown down a dry well, ironically symbolizing that she brought the water of Life to that which was dry and hopeless.

The theme of each Sunday after Pascha is the newness brought about by the Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Last week a paralytic who could not get into the miraculous healing water; this week a woman stuck in a life of sin and misery. Next week a man born blind. No hope, no future, nothing to look forward to.

Life can and often is like that! At my age, people around me keep getting sick and dying. The government seems hell-bent on destroying the residual programs that my father's generation struggled to enact to help the poor and the disenfranchised. I see no hope for a renewal in our land. The neighborhoods have been taken over by a younger generation that is consumed by consumption of goods and the enjoyment of lives of self-service. No respect; no courtesy. No regard for others. No time or desire for God.

Sometimes I feel like a curmudgeon. But I think not. I simply see and take notice of how the culture has changed. How much more selfish and self-serving the people around me have become. Even those in the churches. They so often fail to see the inconsistencies between what they want and what God has revealed His will to be. We seem to be caught in a spiral of self-serving personal desire. No longer do we seek to help, to support the poor, to create programs for those caught in some sort of need; no longer are we willing to suffer a little sacrifice, higher taxes or government sponsored programs to aid those who are sick, suffering, in prison, bound by this or that mental illness or personal tragedy. We have become an ugly, narcissistic people. And this has happened for one reason alone, because we have turned away from God and His Revelation through Jesus Christ.

Jesus lived as the man entirely for others! He taught us to offer the other cheek, to repay evil with good; to bless our enemies and pray for their well-being, to reach out to those who are in some sense alienated; to tend to the needs of the sick and suffering. He brought health and healing, comfort to those who faced the terrible tragedy of death. He calls all who follow Him to do likewise in their lives, to be as selfless and caring as He is. He calls us to remember that He will not only make all things new in the future, when He comes again, but to live as if that future is present now, to be the voice that defends the defenseless, the hands that free and comfort those like Photini, who was caught in a life of sin and misery.

Ours is a simple faith. Turn to the Lord Jesus Christ! Seek to follow His will! Seek to be Christ to everyone with whom you come into contact.

Behold, He says, I make all things new! Until He comes again to do that in all of its wondrous entirety, we must do it in our lives in service to everyone we meet and know. We must be Christ to our neighbor in need!

Fr. Elias

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