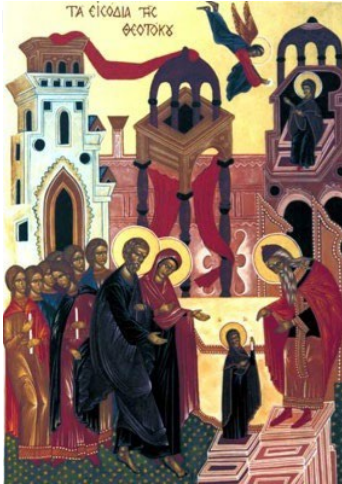


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Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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The Nature of Evil
November 9, 2025

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

The nature of evil.

- Stephen King wrote a novel that was turned into a TV series called “The Storm of the Century.”
 - Takes place in Maine on a barren island off the coast.
 - The people are cut off and terrible things happen
 - Eventually, it is revealed that the unfortunate community has been visited by the demons in today’s Gospel lesson.
 - The thing that makes his writing so terrifying, is that he takes the reality of evil and evil beings seriously and describes their horrific activity with objectivity
- People in our time play with these truths.
- Go out and see the terrible displays:
 - It’s one thing to have pumpkins; to dress up like a superhero or a princess
 - It quite another to have the cult of death spread out on your lawn with bigger than life-size skeletons, skulls, fake headstones and so on
 - People do these things for some sort of thrill, based on a lie:
 - These realities are not really real; and I am young and healthy

- Any truth about death and dying is far off, so I can experience a bit of titillation without danger now
- A fair number of liberal protestants simply change the stories in the scripture
 - They say that demons are metaphors for mental or physiological illness that causes people to behave abnormally
 - Schizophrenia, or epilepsy or genetic issues at birth
- In the Orthodox Church, however, we know better.
- So, this is what I would say about the lesson today and the nature of evil
 - First, evil is a reality and can be defined as bent wills, bent actions, rebellious thoughts, words and deeds that purposely oppose God's revealed will
 - People are not born evil. They are born with God's image within them with infinite potential to grow eternally like God in His unlimited love and self-giving for the benefit of others
 - However, when people turn away, then as Dostoevsky said, anything, anything, in other words, any imaginable evil, can and will happen.
 - Although no human being, no creature created by God, is evil in and of itself, we are born into a world that is infected with evil, with people and actions that are opposed to God's will
 - We have made a science of selfish behavior.
 - It infects everything; our economy with is based on consumption and the lie of corporate marketing
 - Even if we ourselves hear Moses and the Prophets and seek to follow Christ, we have all been so infected that the only appropriate way to draw close to him is to repent of our sins.
 - Repentance would not be necessary if we were righteous, but we are not; so, repentance is the cornerstone of our OrthoPraxis.
 - What about the incorporeal essences, the angels?
 - Angels are creatures. No material to be sure, but creatures nevertheless.
 - Angels which in the history of reality who have rebelled against God are called demons, and they are real.
 - Before every Baptism, the priest performs no less than four prayers of Exorcisms, casting out the demons that might be lurking about.
 - Their role is to pull people over to their rebellion against God

- Their greatest power is to convince us that they are not real.
- This I tell you truly: I have encountered them in my role as priest. For us in the priesthood, casting out demons is normal work, because we do not cast them out, only Christ can do so. Every priest knows this to be so.
 - However, as creatures, demons and the head demon, Satan, have no power over God. They were created by God, but turned against Him in rebellion.
 - Those protected by the Grace of Holy Baptism cannot be “possessed” by demons against their will. So if you hear otherwise, it is either Hollywood or a lie, which is the same thing anyway.
- Christ cast the demons out in mercy and frees the man possessed from their burden.
- He allows them to enter the herd of swine, which then rushes over the cliff.
- Following that which is evil is always, always self-destructive –
 - In actions that are small as well as great.
- So, these things come to us today with a series of reminders:
 - To be free from evil, repent, receive forgiveness in the sacrament of penance and be faithful in receiving the Holy Sacraments
 - Follow the teachings of our Lord and seek to be like Him in every thought, word and deed
 - And teach your children, grandchildren, siblings, parents, friends and relatives to do likewise.
 - And pray for all: not only those who are nice, but those whose lives have been bent by evil actions. Pray for their salvation.

Fr. Elias

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