



Orthodox Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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Returning to our Father Who Waits: Notes on the Prodigal Son February 16, 2025

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

- Sometimes we need to let our children or grandchildren learn the hard way
- I remember my parents saying this as they observed their own relatives making choices that they knew would end badly
- I think it is the best way to understand the reaction of the Father in today's parable when his younger son requests his inheritance
- We musn't think that this was an ignorant giving in to the demands of the son out of frustration or misdirected kindness
- Surely he knew where it would lead, and it must have made him sad to the core
- He allowed his younger son to have his way, because he knew it would be the only way his foolish boy would learn
- And indeed, learn he does

- He goes into a “foreign country”, runs through the money in only a few years and finds himself in a wretched condition indeed
- Finally, he comes to himself and you know the rest of the story
- He goes crawling back to the father in ignominy, ready to accept a position of servitude; even in servitude he would be better off at his father’s house than he was, sitting in a pig sty, throwing husks of corn at the swine
- The Father waits, because He knows where it will all lead
- Sometimes people ask me, “How could God let things go without intervening? How could He turn a blind eye to the suffering of the innocent, to all that is wrong in our world? How could He keep people in misery in a world of injustice, avarice, violence, selfishness, suffering?”
- He never turns a blind eye, but He does wait. The suffering of this present time, St. Paul observed, is nothing compared to the glory of the Kingdom
- He waits for us to seek, to ponder, to return to Him. This is the big picture that we must always keep in mind when we question the Wisdom of God.
- His goal is the reclamation of the universe, and sometimes the only way it could even be a possibility is when we take the wrong path as did the Prodigal Son
- Then, in the realization of our sin, our error, He waits and bestows upon us His forgiveness which meets our repentance and allows full reconciliation.
- That is why the Sacrament of Confession is often called the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The goal is for us to be in His presence, and to have Him dwelling not only outside of our existence, but within – within our hearts
- The Holy Fathers have us ponder these realities as we approach the Season of Repentance.
- He truly loves the righteous, but waits with eager longing for the sinner to return
- And then, He places a royal ring upon our fingers, the cloak of righteousness upon our backs and the shoes of freedom upon our feet. What a glorious message this parable is!
- Let each of us hear it and in the realization of our lostness, let us too return to our Waiting Father in Heaven!

Fr. Elias

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