



## Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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## Sanctity is Not Supposed to be Exceptional! June 22, 2025

### Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

- Sundays after All Saints are devoted to local saints of various categories
  - Mount Athos
  - Old country examples: Russia, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Ukraine, etc.
  - American: Sts. Alexis Toth, St. Herman of Alaska, St. John Maximovitch
- What is normal.
  - We are all brought up with expectations laid on us by our culture
  - Normal for us:
    - Having enough. Getting a job that pays sufficient for our needs and our wants
    - For me, education was held up as a normal goal; marriage, children
    - A house, a car. Entertainment that is affordable. Sports or fun or streaming.
- These are all cultural norms.
- They carry over to us in the church. We think, saints are exceptional. Like a football star who can make a 100 yard pass, or a baseball player who knocks the ball consistently out of the park. We may not be able to do that, but they can. Exceptional.
- But last week we heard Jesus say to His disciples that it is a matter of confessing Him before others.
- Today, we hear what it means to confess Him with the simple words, "Follow me!"
- Follow me. Do as I do. Be as I am. Follow my example and be me, be Christ, to your neighbor.
- Simple, right?
- Yes, it is. But still we are bound by cultural expectations over and above the call of Christ.
- Christ looked out for the needs of others. He brought in those who were estranged. He healed and comforted. He spoke mercy to those who wanted justice. You have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you!

- I say unto you, do not curse, but bless those who hurt you. Pray for them.
- We continue to act as if these expectations were exceptional, don't we? We say we follow Him, but we still grumble about taxes that could be used to help those in need. So many people are without medical care. So many are being unjustly deported. So many who claim to follow Him refuse to allow simple checks on gun ownership, even though children in our schools are regularly targeted.
- This is not the way of Christ. We are to be those whose hearts bleed for those who suffer or who are in any need.
- To be a saint, you see, is to follow Christ. The Church of course recognizes those who stand out, but the truth of the matter is that all of us are called to be saints.
- Sanctity, becoming saints, is not exceptional, it is normal.
- Years ago I had a confessor who said to me after every confession, Remember that you are to be a saint!
- So when you think of the saints, of course give thanks to God for the Great Ones, like the sports heroes who can do what seems impossible to us.
- Of course ask for their prayers even as you pray for them! Even as you pray for others.
- But above all remember that you are to be a saint, a saint who heeds the call of our Lord to confess Him before others by following Him, but emulating Him, by doing for those in your life as He did for those who followed Him in His earthly ministry, as He did for those with whom He came into contact.
- Sanctity is not exceptional. It is the one norm of our faith, and when we confess Him as we follow, we will not be part of the cultural crowd around us.

Fr. Elias

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