



Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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Actions Speak Louder than Words December 21, 2025

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

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And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? (Luke 17: 14-18)

I'm sure that you've heard the expression, "Do as I say, not as I do!" I daresay there is not a Bishop, Priest, Minister, Deacon in the Church that does not secretly pray this every Sunday before he preaches the Word of God! And I also daresay, there is not a parent among us who has prayed and ardently wished their children to follow it on the basis of what they tell their children. "Do as I say, not as I do!"

It is undoubtedly the case that all of our words can basically fall on deaf ears if those to whom we speak them do not see them in action. "To love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself" are divine words, great words, the basic commandment for all of us to follow. But they are virtually useless if we do not see them in action by the people we look to for guidance. It is the case that each of us here this morning have experienced not only the words being said to us, but more importantly, examples of actions that place God as the central priority of life along with those actions that flow from Him through the heart in actions of compassion for others. Thus, the writer of the Epistle of James

clearly states, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers [and one might add speakers] of it only." It is only when we actually see the faith of those around us, our parents, our spiritual leaders, or other trusted individuals, that we ourselves are drawn into such faith ourselves. And only by seeing how it is that others whom we love and trust act that we ourselves are inspired to act accordingly.

Over that past several weeks we have heard two lessons that illustrate this point clearly. Who was it that showed how to be a neighbor to others in need? It was a Samaritan. Who was it that returned to Christ to give thanks for having been healed of leprosy and readmitted to the community of the Temple? It was again, a Samaritan. We all know who Samaritans were. But we may not realize how much they were disliked by members of the Jewish Temple community in Jerusalem. To point out any positive quality about a Samaritan would have similar to the reaction we might have if someone pointed out a positive action worthy of emulation on the part of a criminal or a traitor. We can imagine how surprised and upset the audience who heard this story would have been.

And yet, it illustrates a vital point, doesn't it? A person's race, nationality, even his religious adherence (important as that is) are not what sets them apart. It is not even what determines their salvation. God's love is poured out freely, everywhere, at all times, through the Grace of the Holy Spirit. He is accessible to all at every time. We cannot control the Spirit. We can only open our hearts to Him, or not. But if we do, then our relationship with Him, which we call faith, will lead us to bear and to share the fruit of that relationship. Faith, true faith, always bears the fruit of love. Faith is always active in love. And such love cannot be commanded by words alone; it must be shone by actions. What we do matters immeasurably more than what we say!

Thus, even a Samaritan, one who was distrusted and perhaps even despised, could and was closer to the Kingdom than were the Priest, the Levite, and the nine other cured Lepers. Who we are, where we come from, our racial, ethnic, national identities, even our religious affiliation, do not matter in the long run. It is only our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ that matters; and it is that relationship which will alone lead us to act in ways that will inspire others to do the same and to show love and kindness and compassion to those in need. Indeed, it is only our actions of kindness and love, not merely our words, that will speak to others in ways that they too can and will follow! This is what the Lord Himself teaches, and it is a teaching repeated over and over again by the Holy Apostles, the Saints and Theologians of, the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which we in our little congregation, are very much a part!

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