



Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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The Parable of the Vineyard September 7, 2025

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

- It is in the 5th chapter of First Isaiah that he prophecies God's anger over the way in which the custodians, the stewards, of the sacred Temple and its care were mishandled by the priests and people of God:
 - *What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to: I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up ... and I will lay it to waste.... For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel ... He looked for justice but beheld oppression; for righteousness but beheld a cry. (Isaiah 5:4-7)*
- Anyone hearing our Lord's parable of the Steward who sought to use the Vineyard for his own purposes against the will of the master would have understood what Jesus was saying.
- The vineyard, the Temple, the sacred purpose of the Chosen People to be a light of righteousness, the Church, is not ours, but His. If we use what the Lord has given us for the salvation of the world for our own purposes, we are like the wicked steward who attempted to violently grab the vineyard for himself. We betray the trust of the Lord. We use the gift He has given us as a means of salvation for ourselves and incur the just wrath of the Master.
- But it's not only the Church that He has given us. Orthodox Christians above all others understand that everything we have is a gift, a trust, that God has given for us to use for the purpose of salvation.
 - Every breath; every moment we are alive in the world; every morsel of food and drink comes from God's gracious hand.

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- The world and all that is in it is our vineyard, not to plunder, not to selfishly enjoy without regard for the owner of the vineyard or for others who live and work in it, but to use as a means of blessing and salvation for others.
 - We sometimes think that the Church is our means of salvation. And so it is, but it is not only the means of our salvation, but the means of the salvation of others.
 - No disciple of Jesus Christ could be at peace being saved if there are others who are not saved. Our task, our stewardship, is to live and this world for the blessing of all
 - No disciple of Jesus Christ could be at peace if we have our way at the expense of others
 - We are stewards of this world which the Lord has given us. To use it without regard for the future and well-being of others is untenable, unimaginable
 - Global warming caused by our selfish use of fossil fuels is something we strive to undo, because it affect the well-being of future generations
 - Individual freedoms must be curtailed if they infringe upon the well-being of others
 - No Christian could ever live with unchecked use of weapons. What would any disciple of Jesus Christ want with guns or their unrestricted access
 - No Christian could ever be at peace when someone, anyone else, in the world goes hungry while we feast on the plenty in our little corner of the world.
 - So, you see, the Vineyard is wherever and whatever and whenever we receive what God gives us. The Church, this bountiful corner of the world, the entire planet and place where we live.
 - We ultimately own nothing. It all belongs to the Lord and Master whose good Will it is to save us. To use it or any part of it for our own selfish purposes with unchecked freedom without regard for the well-being of others is to be as wicked as the steward in the Lord's parable.

Fr. Elias

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