



Daily Reflections

SIMEON AND ANNA WELCOME THE MESSIAH

By Sr. Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

Today's Gospel

*When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.... Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was **Simeon**. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel."*

The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted—and you yourself a sword will pierce—so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

*There was also a prophetess, **Anna**, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.*

LUKE 2:22-40

Reflection

Following the Mosaic Law, the parents of Jesus brought their precious Child to the temple to present him, to dedicate him to God. At the same time, the Holy Spirit guided two holy elders, Simeon and Anna, to be present as they welcomed the Messiah, the Glory of Israel and the Light to the Gentiles. This was a mystical moment – they recognized the presence of God in this child. Simeon held Jesus in his arms as he said his blessing prayer to God: "Now you may let your servant go in peace ... for my eyes have seen your salvation...." God had promised Simeon that he would see the Savior of Israel before he died. This prayer, called the *Nunc Dimittis*, is still prayed by Christians at Evening Prayer, a prayer of praise and gratefulness, a prayer of letting go into God's hands because we have seen the long-awaited Savior of the world.

On this Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, God's beloved Son entered into the temple, the dwelling place of God, in human form, and was embraced by Simeon and Anna, who embodied the longing of Israel for the Messiah. Let us pause for a moment as we contemplate this embrace of the Desired of the Nations in the temple of our own hearts.



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For Prayer

The Prayer of Simeon

Lord,

let your servant now die in peace for you kept your promise.

*With my own eyes I see the salvation you prepared for all peoples:
a light of revelation for the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel.*

TRANSLATION: BENEDICTINE DAILY PRAYER: A SHORT BREVIARY

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