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Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg, CSJ, from the Abbey St. Hildegard in Eibingen, Germany

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

By Sister Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

Thus says the Lord God: Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me; and suddenly there will come to the temple the Lord whom you seek, and the messenger of the covenant whom you desire.

MALACHI 3:1

Lift up, O gates, your lintels; reach up, you ancient portals, that the king of glory may come in!

Who is this king of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle.

Lift up, O gates, your lintels; reach up, you ancient portals, that the king of glory may come in!

Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts; he is the king of glory.

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.... 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."

LUKE 2:22-32

Reflection

When I first read today's readings, I was stymied and I set aside this reflection until I received some insight. It took a while, though finally I found a few connections that led me down a path of thinking about what it means to me when I hear the words "King of glory." As I pondered the first reading, responsorial psalm, and the gospel, the question that bubbled up was: "How prepared am I to take in the splendor and glory of God?"

In the first reading from Malachi, the words "there will come to the temple of the Lord whom you seek" and I wondered, am I continuing to seek the Lord in my life? Do I desire God in my life? I stayed with these questions for a bit because they are at the heart of today's message for us ... the GIFT we have in God sending us Jesus, our savior. Am I prepared to find God in my daily comings and goings?

When I shifted my attention to the responsorial psalm, I thought what a beautiful, heartfelt response to the God who loves us. That first stanza "reach up, you ancient portals, that the king of glory may come in" immediately brought me to a response of lifting my heart to God and praying for an openness to the Spirit's movement in my life.

In Luke's gospel passage the presentation of the Lord reminds us of Simeon's deep devotion and faith. He recognized that this baby, Jesus, was what he had been waiting for his entire life. At the words "he took him (baby Jesus) into his arms and blessed God by saying ... 'you may let your servant go in peace for his

eyes have seen your salvation,” I paused and placed myself into this scripture, taking the baby Jesus into my embrace and thanking God for the gift of salvation. It was such a personal and experiential way to demonstrate my own heartfelt response to God. This is what the Word gives to us, the ability to allow God’s inbreaking presence to touch and move us. It is the gift of enabling God into the here and now of our inmost being.



Maria Stein (Ohio) Shrine

For Pondering

- How prepared are you to take in the splendor and glory of God?
 - Do you desire God in your life?
 - Pause and picture yourself taking the baby Jesus into your embrace. What shifts within you?
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For Prayer

*On this Feast of the Presentation of the Lord,
may we live with generous and grateful hearts
for the gift we have received in Jesus.*

*May our interactions be tender
and our openness to the unexpected be welcomed.
Amen.*

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