

Luke 2:22-40

Gospel Reflection

While we celebrate the Presentation of Our Lord this Sunday, the theme for this Gospel is the saving purpose of the incarnation and the destiny of the Christ child. Luke points out the importance being given to the Law of Moses and the obligation felt by Joseph and Mary. A firstborn son was to be dedicated to the Lord. Following the Birth of a son, a woman had to wait 40 days before going to the temple, so this event took place several weeks after he was circumcised and christened Jesus. The expected sacrifice for the presentation of a Son was a lamb and a dove. If the parents could not afford a lamb and a dove, two pigeons were a sufficient sacrifice.

The Gospel points out that the Holy Spirit was upon Simeon. He would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. He was given special insight so he would recognize the "Christ", Simeon provided two prophecies, one for Jesus the other for Mary. The first prophecy blesses God for the coming of the Christ and the second predicts the future role of Jesus and his fate in Israel.

As I read this passage I couldn't help but think of Compline where the Song of Simeon closes out that service. One important message from that song is that Salvation is offered to all people, including the Gentiles

Simeon's prophecy points out that the child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel. Christ raises up those who believe, but is a stumbling block for those who disbelieve. Simeon also prophesies the pain that Mary will experience at the crucifixion.

The reading introduces a second prophet, Anna. She praised God for the child Jesus just as Hannah had praised God for the child Samuel. Anna probably spent her waking hours attending and worshipping at the temple.

Finally this reading ends with the return to Nazareth, It is interesting to note that there is no mention of the Magi, the danger from Herod, or the escape to Egypt.

I return to verse 34 and the prophecy to Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed" As our inner thoughts are revealed, as the way we live in this world is revealed, will we chose to be raised up with Christ, or will we chose his incarnation be a stumbling block to us.

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