

December 31st 2023 Feast of The Holy Family – Year B – Luke 2:22 – 40

^{2:22}When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord’), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.’

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.’

³³And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’ ³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Read and re-read – out loud and slowly the Gospel. ➤ Meditate - on reading as being spoken to you, an experience in your life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pray - Thanksgiving – Repentance – Petition ➤ Action – Attitude (Call to change / to act /to do
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In this week's Gospel we see Mary and Joseph bringing Jesus to the temple for purification as it was the law of Moses that every first born male must be consecrated to the lord and also to offer in sacrifice a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Also in the temple was a very good devout man called Simeon who was told by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he set eyes on Christ the Lord. He was led by the Spirit to the temple and when the parents arrived with the baby he took Jesus in his arms and blessed God. Many good things happened in the temple at that time, a time when priests were absent. Simeon and Anna are symbols of God's faithful people with no official status, free enough to recognise a great moment of grace.

As children of the family of God are we open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to bring the Good News and hope of the Child Jesus to all or are we so full of our own importance that we miss our special moments of grace?

Prayer:

We thank you Lord for the times you sent devout people like Simeon into our lives, who welcomes us with enthusiasm and encourages us to continue on our journey bringing about hope and new life to the family of God.

Forgive us Lord for the times we get tired of trying to be positive knowing that you are ever present in our efforts which sometimes seem pointless and like Mary we can feel a sword of sorrow piercing our hearts because our words or actions may shake the deep seated prejudices of some people.

Help us Lord to be like Simeon to be an example to others to become people of hope and new life in the future and bring the Light of Jesus to the world by our humility and trust in you.

