

Gospel Reflection

Luke tells us today that Simeon awaited the consolation of Jerusalem. This places him in line with his prophetic ancestor Isaiah, for the scripture uses the very same word for Simeon's consoling that Isaiah used several weeks ago when he prayed, "Comfort, give comfort to my people" (Isaiah 40:1). Like Isaiah, Simeon was acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Luke emphasizes this by stating it three times. While Isaiah was looking for the geographic return of Israel from its Babylonian exile to Jerusalem, Simeon was looking for the Christ (the anointed one, the Messiah of God) to end forever the exile, the estrangement, between God and humanity. And it is this exile he sees ended when he stands in the outer Temple courts with the Holy Family (Mary, a woman, would not have been permitted in the Temple proper) and sings his song of Israel's consolation, the song of his own departure now at hand with Israel's glory.

Those who work with the elderly know that many people reach a point at which life and death become somewhat interchangeable. Each is as desirable and beautiful as the other. This is part of the wisdom of the elderly. Their experience and understanding of the blessings and the harshness of life permeate Simeon's prayer and his rather dire predictions to Mary today. The canticle Simeon offers is an expression of his standing at the gate of his dismissal from this life to another. This is a reality he has reached because the anointed one of God has been shown to him. We, too, and all those who truly know the promise held in Christ, can confidently come to the same place. Through the grace of the Incarnation, our life on earth, with all its trouble, heartaches, and sorrows, is blessed and beautiful; through the power of the Passion, death, and Resurrection our next life is our most longed-for hope. Only in Christ is this possible.

KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

Luke 2:22-40

D R Z M E K P H F T M P Y
 D E S S E L B T A J U R F
 N H E E O N K F M R A O V
 S R E V E L A T I O N P A
 A V N O P T N F L A N H Y
 L M P D H W I N Y V A E V
 V W R E Z C P G X L Y T A
 A E R L A W O F M O S E S
 T C Z T E M P L E I L S V
 I P I R A A O T M J Q S F
 O O L U J J R E H T O M C
 N O I T A L O S N O C Z O
 Y F K H W N K F I C A I J

Find these words from the Gospel passage.

| | | |
|--------|------------|--------------|
| ANNA | BLESSED | CONSOLATION |
| FAMILY | FATHER | LAW OF MOSES |
| ISRAEL | MOTHER | PROPHETESS |
| TEMPLE | REVELATION | PURIFICATION |
| SIMEON | SALVATION | TURTLEDOVES |

Disciple's Reflection & Questions of the Week

*Feast of the Holy Family
12/28/2008*

*Luke 2:22-40
Faith-Sharing
Questions of the Week*



Our Lady of the Assumption

435 Berkeley Ave.
Claremont, CA
www.olaclaremont.org

Call to Prayer

We begin by calling upon God:

**In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

*We then pause for a moment to listen with
our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...*

The Word of God: *Luke 2:22-40*

The Gospel according to Luke

When the days were completed for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as 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, in accordance with the dictate of 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 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 worshipped God 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.

The Gospel of the Lord

Gospel Glossary

every male: This passage quotes the book of *Exodus*.

a pair of turtledoves: According to Jewish law, a woman had to make a sacrifice 7 days after giving birth to a son.

the consolation of Israel: the redemption of Israel by the promised Messiah.

Faith Sharing

Questions of the Week

- When in my life have I grown in holiness? What increases my desire to grow in holiness?
- How in my life do I help others to grow in holiness? How have others helped me?

Closing Prayer

Father in heaven, Creator of all,
You ordered the earth to bring forth life and crowned its goodness by creating the human family. Teach us the sanctity of human love, show us the value of human life, and help us to live in peace with our fellow human beings that we may share in your life for ever.

We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Feast of the Holy Family