



The Holy Family (year B)

Luke 2:22-40

22 When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord - **23** observing what stands written in the law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord - **24** and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

25 Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. **26** It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. **27** Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, **28** he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said: **29** 'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised; **30** because my eyes have seen the salvation **31** which you have prepared for all the nations to see, **32** a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel.'

33 As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, **34** Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected - **35** and a sword will pierce your own soul too - so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.'

Other readings: Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6,12-14 Psalm 127 (128) Colossians 3:12-21

What is given above is a shortened version of the gospel reading. You are invited to read the remaining verses (36-40) in your own Bibles.

The Presentation in the Temple has a profound significance. Jesus, the Son of God, obeys the Law of God as he is presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph. His parents are faithful Jews, who abide by the religious laws of the time. This first entry of the Son of God into the house of God speaks of his willingness to do the will of the Father.

The old man Simeon is inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak about the child, and about his mother. Simeon points to Jesus as the fulfilment of the hopes and longings of his own people, and of all peoples. He is to be the 'glory of Israel', but also a 'light for the nations'. Simeon tells Mary that the child is to be 'a sign of contradiction'. We can accept or reject him. Mary, who said her generous 'Yes' to God, will be drawn into the suffering of her Son.

What does this gospel tell us about the coming of Jesus?

What does this gospel tell us about the role of parents?

Let us pray for all parents, that they will lead their children in goodness and truth.

Let us ask for understanding of the place of suffering in Christian life.