

SUNDAY PLUS



Hopes fulfilled

A Year of the Word

All will be well

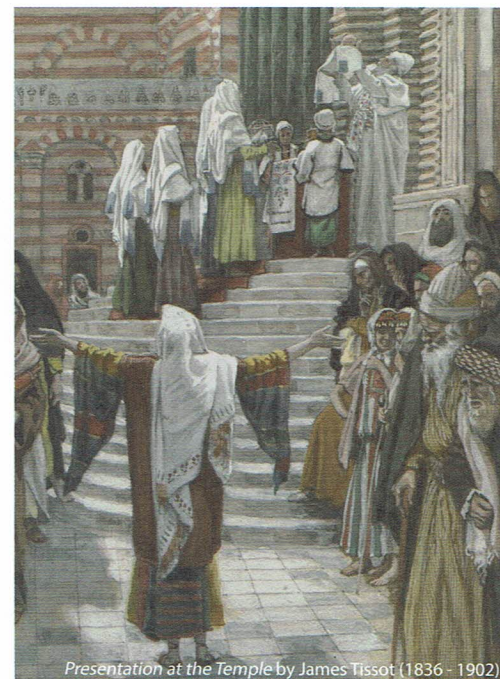
by Paul Higginson

In today's Gospel we hear about Jesus' presentation in the Temple. Mary and Joseph came to present Jesus and consecrate him to God according to "the law of the Lord". But lying behind this ritual was hope: a hope that this tiny baby might achieve something beyond their wildest dreams; might change the world for ever.

The Spirit had revealed to Simeon that one day he would see the Christ, the anointed one, and he had lived his days in the hope that one day that promise would be fulfilled. As they met together in the Temple, guided by the Spirit, the hope of the Father was expressed in the Son, the Saviour and Redeemer who would one day bring salvation to the world.

Yet hope is often so difficult to experience in today's world. Many of us feel sad, lonely, dispirited or angry. For some, the future can seem bleak and fearful. Mary will have experienced that pain too, when Simeon prophesied that one day a sword would pierce her soul. And yet, we too can gather around that baby in the Temple, lay our fears at the feet of Jesus, and commit ourselves to a life of hope. We can trust that by living with him, all will be well. A future lived in the knowledge that Jesus is always with us, is to live a life of hope, so that we too can say with Simeon, "My eyes have seen your salvation which you prepared."

Paul Higginson is the Assistant Principal at the Catholic Sixth Form College in Harrow and has been a parish catechist for more than thirty years.



Presentation at the Temple by James Tissot (1836 - 1902)

Simeon the teacher

by Natasha Pritchard

Simeon is one of those characters who appears only once in the Gospel, but has so much to teach us.

Simeon teaches us patience. He waits his whole life for just a few moments with Jesus. Sometimes we think we should have our prayers answered right now, forgetting that everything happens in God's time.

Simeon teaches us trust. The Holy Spirit spoke to him and he listened, believed and trusted in his words. How often do we forget to trust that God is with us through all our times of uncertainty?

Simeon teaches us acceptance. He didn't know when the promised moment would come, but he accepted that it would happen without question. Often in life things are out of our control and we

must learn to let go and let God have control.

You could blink and you'd miss Simeon, but don't underestimate his importance. He is an inspiration for all of us who are waiting for God to fulfil our hopes and prayers.

Natasha Pritchard works in Catholic youth ministry and hospital chaplaincy.

Dearest Lord, you granted Simeon's prayers when he held you in his arms. You know the longings that are deepest in my heart, the dreams which I have never shared. Lord, please make some of them come true. Amen.

"May we never look at the screen of our cellphone more than the eyes of our brothers or sisters, or focus more on our software than on the Lord. For whenever we put our own projects, methods and organisation at the centre, consecrated life stops being attractive; it no longer speaks to others; it no longer flourishes because it forgets its very foundations, its very roots."

Pope Francis

Simeon the dreamer

by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

"If you don't have a dream, you'll never have a dream come true." So Simeon dreamed and prayed and did some more dreaming and praying. He must have been pretty vocal and insistent because God told him that he wouldn't die without seeing the Messiah for whom he so longed – and his dream came true. Was he surprised to be presented with a tiny baby? We are not told. We do know that, when they presented Jesus

in the Temple, Simeon's words had consequences for Mary and Joseph.

In the midst of his own joy, Simeon needed courage to tell Mary and Joseph truths that would shatter their day's happiness and bring them pain. How did he feel as he watched them walk away, holding the baby who would bring joy and sorrow into their lives; who would transform the world into which he had been born? Simeon, holding the long-awaited Messiah, could not have remained silent: prophets are uncomfortable companions on our journey.

Sr Janet Fearn is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

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Lent Extra is a seasonal must-have for your journey to Easter and beyond.

Today: Malachi 3:1-4 Hebrews 2:14-18 Luke 2:22-40

Monday: 2 Samuel 15:13-14, 30; 16:5-13 Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday: 2 Samuel 18:9-10, 14, 24-25, 30 - 19:3 Mark 5:21-43

Wednesday: 2 Samuel 24:2, 9-17 Mark 6:1-6

Thursday: 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12 Mark 6:7-13

Friday: Ecclesiasticus 47:2-13 Mark 6:14-29

Saturday: 1 Kings 3:4-13 Mark 6:30-34

Next Sunday: Isaiah 58:7-10 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 Matthew 5:13-16