

Reflection for Epiphany 4. The Presentation of Christ in the Temple otherwise known as Candlemas. Luke 2: 22-40

The earthly family of Jesus are following custom and bringing Jesus to the Temple. They are following the Law of Moses that every first-born male shall be designated as holy to the Lord. The first-born male is redeemed by the offering of two turtle doves. The Temple of Jerusalem was a huge rambling affair, as well as the priests and officials, there were a number of devout people who had made their home there. As they make their way through the Temple to do what is required, the family meet with one of these, an elderly man named Simeon. Simeon is waiting for the 'consolation of Israel.' The baby he takes in his arms is a symbol of Israel's salvation. This is the moment that Simeon has been waiting for, the time that he has been promised he will see. Now he is ready to die, to depart. Simeon is not looking backward, nor is he 'raging against the dying of the day.' Simeon is looking forward to the time when the Kingdom of God is revealed on earth. The time of peace and prosperity that Simeon is looking forward to has yet to come, but it will come. The troubles of Israel have yet to be resolved, the ways of man have not brought peace upon this troubled land and its people. The words of Simeon to Mary, 'a sword will pierce your own heart' have a greater significance than she or anyone else can ever have imagined.

Simeon and Anna both look forward to God's reign upon earth, of a world where people are open to the ways of God, a world where rockets, bombs and fighter jets are not used to gain understanding and dominance. The world is slow to learn, and deaf to the teachings of Jesus. Simeon and Anna have waited faithfully and patiently for this point where they can see the glory of the Lord in this tiny child. They waited with patience and persistence to see the glory of the Lord. We too pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' we wait for the time when God takes control away from us human beings and exerts His power and control. Until then God does not insist on His own way. We have the choice we can follow God's way or man's way. As we look around, we can see that man is not doing too good a job at present. We pray: 'Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done'.

*Christ, who brought light to the world; shine your light in the areas of darkness.
Christ, you knew poverty on earth and understand the pain and suffering that it brings.
Christ, you saw on earth how in need of salvation humanity were, and still is, and you wept.
We thank you Father God, for the light and the salvation brought through Christ,
Lead us to where we have never been before*

Amen