

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Saint Simeon held the Infant King in his arms. As he held the Christ Child, he spoke by the Holy Spirit of the life and work of the Son of God he saw and touched. The Lord had, according to Prophecy, come suddenly into His Temple. But Prophecy did not end with the coming of the Messiah, although He is the fulfillment of all prophecy. Simeon, by the power of the Holy Spirit, spoke of the Christ Child he held. First, he foretold that Mary's Son was destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel.

Many Israelites would believe in Him. Many more would not. Yesterday we commemorated the Holy Innocents, those tiny Israelites who were slain, who fell on account of the Christ Child. But more, those who reject Christ, be they Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, are those who will fall. They will fall into the death that afflicts all men born of human father. And they will fall into the abyss at the last, as they are cast there with the deceiver who tricked them into rejecting Christ.

Those who believe that the Son of Mary is the Divine Son of God, those who believe that the Christ Child Simeon held would die for the sins of the world, those who believe that He would overcome death, all those who believe in Him will rise. They rise in this life as they are born again in holy baptism. And they will rise to vindication and eternal life in heaven on the Day of Judgment. For it is the Lord Simeon held that comes as Judge.

But Simeon's prophetic burden did not end there. The Child he held would be a sign which would be spoken against. He was spoken against as He was reviled and rejected, even as an Infant. He was spoken against as those who hated Him plotted His arrest. He was spoken against as He was falsely accused. He was spoken against as He was sentenced to die. He was spoken against as He hung on the cross. He was spoken against even as He lay dead in the tomb, as guards were placed to prevent deception by the Truth Incarnate.

He has been spoken against over the millennia as false doctrine and heresy plagued His Church. He is spoken against by sects and anti-Christian religions deceive the masses. He is spoken against each time His Name is used in vain, each time He is rejected by secularists and all those who will not believe that He is Who He proved Himself to be: the Divine, Incarnate Son of God.

But the fallen world's hatred of the Christ would not stop there. In our day popular movies and secular media mock Christ and those who believe in Him. More personally, every sin you have committed is a rejection of Him, for every sin is a violation of the First Commandment. And around you, fallen culture ridicules Him and all that follow Him. And that hatred, that ridicule, the God Bearer would feel, just as Simeon prophesied. For a sword would pierce her own soul also, as she stood by and watched her Son be pierced.

But by that piercing, by the testimony of the Blood and Water that issued forth, your soul is saved. For the piercing proved His death, but the empty tomb proved His life. He rose, that He be the source of the rising of many, that He be the source of your rising. So you, you who were born in sin, you who have transgressed the Commands of God, you for whom Christ died and rose, you, dear Christian, you can rejoice with aged, faithful Anna. You too can give thanks to

the Lord, and you too can speak of Him to all who look for redemption. For redemption is found only in Christ the Lord.

Mary and Joseph marveled at those things being spoken of their Son. Mary was blessed to have borne God's Son, and to be chosen by God to serve as His mother, in whom He took on Flesh. Joseph was charged by God to be unafraid to take Mary as his wife, and to serve as earthly stepfather to God's Son. And today Scripture places before us Joseph and Mary and Jesus together, one family, standing in the Temple sands in the keeping of the Law, and in fulfillment of Moses and the Prophets.

For in the Child they brought, in the Child Simeon held, in the Child of which Anna spoke, in the Christ Child was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled. Seven centuries before Isaiah spoke of the Loving-kindness of the Lord, the Great Goodness that took on Flesh in the womb of the virgin. It is that Child that God has bestowed upon us, for your redemption, for the forgiveness of your sins, according to His mercies, according to the multitude of His loving-kindnesses.

In perfectly clear prophetic vision, Isaiah says of the coming Christ "...He became their Savior." The God who delivered Israel out of bondage is the God that humbled Himself to be born of a virgin, to deliver the world out of the bondage of death and sin. In His love and in His pity, He redeemed you, just as the Prophet promised. He became your Savior.

In Christ, Isaiah's prophetic prayer is made your prayer, a prayer that you can pray this day, and every day: Lord, "Look down from heaven, and see from Your habitation, holy and glorious... Doubtless you are our Father... You, O Lord, are our Father; our Redeemer from Everlasting is Your Name."

For when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem you who were under the Law, that you might receive the adoption of sons. So He who was born Son of God and Heavenly Heir makes you both a child of God and an heir. You are heirs because of His Testament, the Testament in His Blood. It is that Blood which you drink this day, in the Memorial Meal He instituted, as His Body comes to you in Bread and His Blood comes to you in wine, for you to eat and drink, placing you in Communion with Christ.

Covered by His Blood, vested in His righteousness, you are a child of God, a member of the Holy Family of the catholic and Apostolic Church. For in the virgin's womb God became Flesh to be Christ, your Brother. And so you join Mary and Joseph, Simeon, Anna and all the saints in the One Holy Communion that unites you to God.

Simeon prophesied that by the Christ the thoughts of many hearts would be revealed. This day you have heard the Word of God. You have sought His mercy and grace. You have come to receive Christ. As the thoughts of your heart are revealed, saving faith is revealed, faith in the Christ that Simeon held, faith in the Christ that Mary bore and that Joseph protected, faith in the Babe born in Bethlehem, the Babe swaddled and laid in a manger, as your Savior and your Lord.

A blessed Christmas!

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