The Fifth Day in the Octave of Christmas

Gospel text (*Lk* 2:22-35): When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to 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 (...). he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: “Lord, now let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation (...). 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) (...)."

Jesus Christ, "Mystery of Redemption"

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(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, the Gospel portrays Mary in the act of an unconditional offering of her Son to the Temple. There, Simeon comes out as a bearer of an ancient hope, and the Spirit of the Lord spoke to his heart. This is why he could contemplate the One whom numerous prophets and kings had desired to see: Christ, Light of revelation for all Nations.

Simeon recognizes that Child as the Savior, but he foresaw —thanks to the Spirit— that the destinies of humanity would be played out around Him, and that He would have to suffer deeply from those who rejected Him; he proclaimed the identity and mission of the Messiah with words that form one of the hymns of the newborn Church: the "Nunc dimittis" ("Now, Lord, you can let your servant go in peace"). Having "touched" the salvation, the enthusiasm was so great that for Simeon to live and to die were one and the same.

—The first person to be associated with Christ on the path of proven faith and shared suffering was His Mother, Mary.