The Sixth Day in the Octave of Christmas

Gospel text (*Lk* 2:36-40): There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem (...).

The Presentation of the Lord at the Temple. The prophetess Anna

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(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, Mary and Joseph, in accordance with Mosaic law, took the tiny Jesus to the Temple of Jerusalem to offer him to the Lord. Simeon and Anna, inspired by God, recognized that Child as the long-awaited Messiah and prophesied about him.

Anna is a "prophetess", a wise and pious woman who interpreted the deep meaning of historical events and of God's message concealed within them. Consequently, she could give thanks to God and speak of the Child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. Her long widowhood devoted to worship in the Temple, fidelity to weekly fasting and participation in the expectation of those who yearned for the redemption of Israel culminated in her meeting with the Child Jesus.

—Bringing her Son to Jerusalem, the Virgin Mother offered him to God as a true Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. She held him out to Simeon and Anna as the proclamation of redemption; she presented him to all as a light for a safe journey on the path of truth and love.