February 2nd: Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Gospel text (*Lk* 2:22-40): When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of 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 to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel."

The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and 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 so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." 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.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the

favor of God was upon him.

"Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace"

Fr. Lluís RAVENTÓS i Artés
(Tarragona, Spain)

Today, we see how Simeon, ignoring the winter's cold, is awaiting the arrival of the Messiah. Five hundred years before, when the Temple was starting to be built there was such poverty in the country that its builders were highly discouraged. It was then when Haggai, the prophet, said: "Greater will be the glory of this house the latter more than the former —says the LORD of hosts; And in this place I will give you peace— oracle of the LORD of hosts." (Hag 2:9); and added "I will shake all the nations, so that the treasures of all the nations will come in. And I will fill this house with glory" (Hag 2:7). Words that accept different meanings; some will say 'the dearest one', while Saint Jerome will say 'the desired of all nations'.

The Holy Spirit had assured Simeon "that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord" (Lk 2:26), and today, led by the Holy Spirit, he has gone into the Temple. He is not a levite, nor a scribe, nor a doctor of the law, he is just a "righteous and devout man, awaiting the consolation of Israel" (Lk 2:25). But the Holy Spirit blows where it wills (cf. Jn 3:8).

Now, he realizes with surprise that no preparation has been made, no flags, garlands, damasks or shields can be seen anywhere, just Joseph and Mary, crossing the esplanade, and bringing the Child Jesus in their arms. "Lift up your heads, O gates; be lifted, you ancient portals, that the king of glory may enter." (Ps 24:), claims the psalmist.

Stretching out his arms Simeon takes the Infant from his Mother and blessed God while saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel" (Lk 2:29-32). Then, he tells Mary: "A sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Lk 2:35).

Mother, when the moment to go to the Father's house arrives, please take me in your arms as you did with Jesus, for I'm your son and a child too.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “That true light has already arrived which, coming to this world, illuminates every man. Brothers, let this light penetrate us and transform us. None of us block this light. Let us imitate the joy of Simeon and, like him, let us sing a hymn of thanksgiving.” (St. Sophronius)

- “Simeon's announcement seems like a second announcement to Mary, since it indicates to him the concrete historical dimension in which the Son will fulfill his mission, that is, in misunderstanding and in pain.” (St. John Paul II)

- “With Simeon and Anna, all Israel awaits its encounter with the Savior. Jesus is recognized as the long-expected Messiah, the ‘light to the nations’ and the ‘glory of Israel’, but also ‘a sign that is spoken against’. The sword of sorrow predicted for Mary announces Christ's perfect and unique oblation on the cross that will impart the salvation God had ‘prepared in the presence of all peoples’.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 529)