



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”

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SUNDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2020

**THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR
IN THE TEMPLE**

EPISTLE: The Reading is from St Paul’s letter to the Hebrews [7:7-17] Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a

fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

GOSPEL: The Reading is from the Gospel of St Luke [2:22-40]

Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived

with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

TODAY'S FEAST: On the 2nd of February, our Holy Church celebrates the Feast of the Presentation of Christ to the Temple. The Church also refers to this Feast as the Synaxis (or meeting) of our Lord in the temple. In accordance with the Mosaic law, 40 days after the birth of a male child the mother is required to present the child in the tabernacle and offer as a sacrifice either a lamb or a pair of doves or pigeons for her purification. The presentation of a first-born son also signified redemption or buying back, for all first-born creatures (both humans and animals) were considered to belong to God.

Mary and Joseph obeyed this precept of the law. They brought Jesus to the Temple where he was met and blessed by a very old Holy man. On that day in the Temple, both Simeon and a woman by the name of Anna, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recognised the infant Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour of the world. Simeon had been promised by God that he would live to witness the coming of the Messiah to the world. These events are the subject of today's Gospel reading. (Luke 2:22-40)

Imagine this blessed scene, of an old man – barely able to hold himself upright due to his advanced years – fully attired in the Traditional clothing of the High Priest of the Temple, cradling the infant Jesus in his arms.

It is the meeting of the Old Testament Priesthood in the Temple with the New Testament Priesthood in Christ. And hence the naming of this Feast day as the “Synaxis” or Meeting of our Lord in the Temple.

The Church today calls each one of us to make our Soul a Temple of God, where the Holy Virgin can bring her Divine Child. And each one of us should, like Simeon, take the Child in our arms and say to the Father:

“My eyes have seen your salvation, now let your servant depart in peace”.

This Prayer of Simeon is used every day in the Vespers services of the Orthodox Church. But this prayer should be more to us than a description of someone who has been allowed to see and hold the Christ child requesting a peaceful departure. It should also mean for us, in particular, that having seen and touched the Saviour, we are released from the hold that sin has on us, and in peace, we can leave the realm of evil.

(Reference: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia)