Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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“This child is destined for the rise and fall of many” (Luke 2:28).

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Mal 3:1-4; Heb 2:14-18; Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22-32

The Feast of the Presentation is rich in many themes. Jesus is born among us, one of us, and he is subject to the law of Moses. Though he was God, he was ritually presented to God in the Temple according to the law. Years later, Jesus will be baptized in the Jordan, though he was without sin. Mary, his mother, holy beyond ritual or protocol, also submits to the rite of purification 40 days after the birth of her son.

While in the Temple, two elderly mystics who had been there most of their lives in expectation of the Messiah are alerted by the Holy Spirit to the presence of the child Jesus. Simeon takes the boy in his arms and prays in thanksgiving that he has lived to see the salvation God had promised.

Anna also blesses the child and tells everyone about him. This encounter gives continuity to the long history of salvation going all the way back to Abraham. Jesus is the One they have been waiting for. It also echoes the importance and prayers of all senior believers who gather at daily Mass each morning around the world, the elders of the church and its source of wisdom.

Jesus' ministry will not be easy or without cost. Simeon proclaims that the child will be the cause of the rise and fall of many in Israel. Jesus will occasion the decisive challenge of faith for everyone. He is God's offer, and we will either receive or reject him. Everything depends on this discernment and choice.

Mary leads us in saying, "Yes, be it done unto me according to your Word." She is the model for every disciple, and she will endure great suffering as she witnesses the rejection and passion of Jesus. Her passion, like his, will be the passage every disciple must make to complete their baptisms. We must die with Christ in order to rise with him.

Let us take the occasion of this feast to present ourselves to the Lord: "Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will." This prayer is all we need to position our lives to experience the full mystery of Jesus in the world with us. This is the joy of the Gospel.