Presentation of the Lord 2020

MDP of God

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple

There is so much that we could reflect on, both from this feast itself and from these readings

This is, of course, the 4th joyful mystery of the Rosary -The Presentation of the Lord

We can reflect on the faithfulness of Mary and Joseph in fulfilling the requirements of the Law of Moses - by presenting Jesus in the Temple as the Mosaic Law required

Joseph and Mary faithfully obeyed all the laws of the Lord

*There is the theme of light* - this is often called Candlemas day - *when Jesus- the light of the world -* is brought to the Temple to bring light to God’s people – [why we bless candles today]

We could certainly reflect on how Jesus is the fulfillment of scripture - in today’s first reading the prophet Malachi had said how **God would come to the Temple** - and it’s Jesus, God made man, going to the Temple for the first time - that we celebrate

*But what I would like to focus on today* is the faith of two ordinary people, who recognized the extra-ordinary things God was doing in the world.

I’m speaking, of course, about Simeon and Anna who recognized Jesus-as the “Anointed of God”,-- “the Savior of the world”, --the long awaited one who would deliver God’s people,-- “the revealing light to the Gentiles, the glory of Israel”

And my friends, I ask you to think about that for a minute - think of all the people in the Temple that day - all the people in Jerusalem - who may have seen Joseph, Mary, and Jesus *and never gave them a second thought.*

Think of all the priests, all the scribes, all the Pharisees - all the people who didn’t recognize the Light of the world - God made man - the Savior of the world in their midst

*What made Simeon and Anna different?* Why didn’t they just see another couple - just another baby.

The answer seems to me - to be prayer and a single-minded devotion to the Lord.

 Simeon was attuned to the Holy Spirit - **that’s a gift from God**, *but sensitivity to the Spirit also requires a prayerful disposition on our part*.

 Anna, we’re told, was constantly in the Temple worshipping God - and as a result **she too** recognized the extra-ordinary things God was doing in her time.

My friends, the fact is - **God is constantly at work in our world**

 And it’s only when we are prayerfully attuned to our God - that we are going to recognize His presence and His actions around us.

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Most of the priests, most of the scribes, most of the Pharisees, most of the people in today’s gospel; *didn’t recognize what God was doing in their midst.*

**And it’s the same today**

 We are, in a few minutes time going to have the privilege of receiving Jesus - Body, blood, soul and divinity - He will give Himself to us completely

 *Does the world recognize what Jesus is doing?*

 2/3’s **of Catholics** don’t come - in addition to the rest of the nation (75%) who don’t believe in the “Real Presence” of Jesus in the Eucharist.

On Saturday afternoons- in most Catholic Churches - confessions are heard *and sins are forgiven*

 Does the world recognize Jesus coming to His people and forgiving their sins? - Judging by the attitude of many Catholics, let alone others - it doesn’t appear that a whole lot of people recognize how they can encounter their God in that holy sacrament

And so - things are the same today as they were when Mary and Joseph brought their child - *who happened to be God made man* - to the Temple

 God continues to do extra-ordinary things **in what appears to be** ordinary actions

 And a large percentage of people still fail to recognize God’s extra- ordinary actions occurring all around them

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And so my friends, I think we need to learn from Simeon and Anna

 They recognized God in a little baby, *because they had allowed God to be at the center of their lives*

They were attuned to the movement of the Holy Spirit; because they had taken the time - day in and day out - to prayerfully discern the movement of the Spirit in their lives

 And they could **rejoice in God’s great works**, *because they recognized His great works when others didn’t*

 Again, think of the other people of the Temple that day.

 For them, *it was just another day* - it was just another couple - just another baby as they went about the daily grind of everyday life

But for Simeon and Anna - it was a day of great rejoicing [so much so, Simeon could say “let your servant go in peace, I’ve seen the salvation of the world”

 And so, being attuned to the extra-ordinary things God is doing around us - will bring us joy

I want to point out what things were like in Jerusalem at that time

 They were a conquered people—the Romans brutally oppressed them

The local ruler—the one who had the authority of mighty Rome behind him—was King Herod—history calls him “Herod the Great”—he was a great builder, *but as a person he was slime*

He was a brutal man who killed his father-in-law-- several of his ten wives-- two of his own sons. He ignored the laws of God to suit himself and to seek his own glory.

Herod's heavy taxes to pay for lavish projects forced an incredible burden on the Jewish citizens

*There was little reason to be joyful in Jerusalem at the time*—but being attuned to God—recognizing God’s actions in their lives and in their world—brought Simeon and Anna great joy

My friends—a living faith- a vibrant faith—a strong relationship with Jesus will bring us joy as well

Despite the problems in our culture—despite the disappointments of life—despite our heartaches—when we recognize the great things God is doing—*we too will have great joy*

But if we are to experience the joy of the Lord, then we must, like Simeon and Anna, be prayerfully attuned to God

 That comes by prayer and fasting

 ^^^ By reflection on and study of - scripture

 ^^^ By receiving the grace of the sacraments

One last point I want to make: Simeon says, “for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples:..”

My friends—what did Simeon see? *He saw a little baby in His Mother’s arms*

How much more can we pray, “for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples:…”

Because the fact of the matter is—whenever we come to Mass *we do see God’s saving work*

As Catholics we believe that the saving work of Jesus transcends time and space—because Jesus is God His saving work can’t be limited to one time and place

So our faith tells us—every time we come to Mass we’re at the Last Supper---we’re at the foot of the cross on Calvary with Jesus and Mary---we’re at the empty tomb---/// we participate in His saving work every time we come to Mass---so how much more can you and I say, “for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples:…”- and yet my friends—*so often we take this great privilege for granted*

And so as we gather together today, let’s follow the example of Simeon and Anna *- two ordinary people* who were able to recognize the extra-ordinary things that God was doing in the world.

Let us like them take the time to be attuned to our God so that we can recognize the light of the world

 So that we can recognize the extra-ordinary actions of our God, in what appears to be the very ordinary things of everyday life

So that we can recognize God’s saving work being presented before us, giving us the opportunity to participate in His saving work

 Amen? Amen