



Scripture Speaks: Presentation of the Lord

GAYLE SOMERS

About a month after Jesus was born, His parents took Him to the Temple in Jerusalem to fulfill the law of Moses concerning firstborns (see Ex 13:1-3). What was that law? During the time of Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt, God gave to His people, through Moses, an ordinance requiring that every firstborn child born to Hebrew parents must be "dedicated" to the Lord. This requirement would constantly remind the Israelites of how all their firstborn children were spared from death by the blood of the Passover lambs on their doorposts. They owed their existence as a nation to God's supernatural protection of them. The firstborn could be dedicated to God to serve as a priest or could be bought back with a modest redemption offering.

When Joseph and Mary arrived at the Temple, they were "amazed" at what greeted them there. Simeon and Anna, a man and a woman who represented all the "righteous and devout" people of Israel were there actively, faithfully "awaiting the consolation of Israel." They recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of all their Messianic hope. The Holy Spirit revealed to both of them that this ordinary-looking infant was anything but ordinary. Simeon swept Jesus into his arms and spoke directly to God: "Now, Master, You may let Your servant go in peace, according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation."

God had promised this faithful man "that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord." With the prompting of the Spirit, Simeon knew God had kept His promise in this Child. He went on to prophetically describe the Child's future. Jesus would be both "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for [God's] people, Israel." Then, speaking directly to Mary, Simeon describes a shadow that would accompany this Child's life: "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted." The Child's mission would stir up trouble and call for decisions that would create division and opposition. What mother wants to hear that? There was more, of course: "You yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

How difficult this must have been for a new mother, in her first public maternal action, to learn! Suffering for both her Son and herself lay ahead. In fact, Simeon was bringing together many Messianic prophecies in this amazing benediction over Jesus and His mother. God's long-promised salvation for the whole world was right here, lying as an infant in his arms, and Simeon says He will grow up to become the Suffering Servant of Isaiah's majestic prophecies in the Old Testament. God had said even at the dawn of time in Eden, after the Fall, that a "woman" and her "seed" would take up the definitive battle against His primordial enemy, the devil (see Gn 3:15). Simeon knew, in fulfillment of all that God had earlier revealed, that great pain and great glory lay ahead.

The prophetess, Anna, whom St. Luke identifies as "of the tribe of Asher," is also prompted by the Spirit, after a faithful life of prayer and fasting, to recognize the Child as the One for whom "all who were waiting the redemption of Jerusalem" sought. The tribe of Asher had been one of the ten northern tribes that were "lost" when the Assyrians conquered them in God's just judgment against their covenant unfaithfulness. She represents God's intention to recover all that was lost to Him through sin. Both Simeon and Anna saw in a tiny, newborn baby the hope of the whole world.

It is fitting that these prophetic announcements about Jesus were made in the Temple. This was the place intended by God for the most intimate contact between Himself and His people. It was the holiest place on earth, because it was where God visited His people on the Day of Atonement every year, in the liturgical work of the high priest. Long before His earthly life unfolded, Jesus' work as both priest and victim were foreshadowed in this Temple visit. Jesus would return to the Temple, of course, at the beginning of His manhood and during the course of His public ministry. Eventually, He would prophesy its utter destruction. Why would that happen? He was born to become the New and living Temple where, for all eternity, God and man would meet.

So many signs, so many wonders were present in this simple action by devout parents to obey God's law for family life. This gives us much to ponder, doesn't it?

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ESTABLISHED 1923

MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm
(Anticipated Mass)
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm
Monday – Wednesday 8am
Thursday Mass/Novena:
8am & 7pm
Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am
(Fridays in July & August: 8am)
Reconciliation
Saturday: 4-4:45pm
Adoration
Saturday 9:30-10am
Library Hours
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

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Pastor

Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.

Associate Pastor

Joseph Horo, C.Ss.R.

Office Manager

Virginia Fong

Pastoral Coordinator

Bertilla Watanabe

Bookkeeper

Corinna Siy

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 olphchurchvancouver



OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

January 29, 2017

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Preparing our families for Mission

Dear Parishioners,

It is quite typical with most parishes to start planning for Lent and Easter as soon as we have settled into the new year. Ash Wednesday falls on March 1 this year. As we have done in the past, to prepare our families for a fuller and deeper celebration of the death and resurrection of our Lord, we will be holding a parish mission.

Missions are a very important aspect of Redemptorist parishes. The missions can take very different forms and themes depending on the needs of the parish. Some missions are charismatic, others focus on healing or broken marriages. Missions can take place in parish churches, in the streets and in homes. They may last five days, two weeks, or longer. In some countries they last as long as a full year! Don't worry... ours won't be that long. It will begin on Sunday April 2 and end on Wed April 5. No matter the form the mission takes, the message is consistent everywhere: in Christ there is plentiful redemption for all.

The mission will be led by Bob Williston. Bob grew up in Vancouver, B.C. and began working for the Archdiocese of Vancouver on a youth retreat team. As a teenager, Bob wrote Christian music, and used this music in his ministry to youth. Bob made his living as an entertainer/musician, and taught in a Catholic elementary school in Chilliwack. He and his wife, Joan began working full time on the Redemptorist mission team in 1978.

Bob completed a bachelor of arts with a major in philosophy in Winnipeg, and graduated from Newman Theological College (Edmonton) with his master of divinity degree in 1985. He was ordained to the permanent diaconate in September 1999. He has composed and recorded numerous tapes and CD's and will be sharing much of this music with us.

Bringing lapsed Catholics back to the faith is a very important aspect of a Redemptorist mission. It is something I will ask all of you to do. Call up a friend or send them an invitation to come and join us for the Mission. Next week we will start saying the Mission prayer to get everyone praying for the successful outcome of this mission.

What do I mean by a successful outcome? A successful outcome would be to have record numbers of people attending the mission. It is an event for the whole family. It is a time for the whole family to come together. You don't have to be Catholic to attend the mission so invite a friend or a neighbor to join you. We have had many people come back to the faith just because one person took the trouble to give someone a call.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R

NEWS & NOTICES

Confirmation Meeting: Mandatory Grade 7 Parents & Students Confirmation Meeting on Sat Feb 4 from 9:30am-11:00am Parish Hall.

Children's Mass Offering: The next Children's Mass is on Sun Feb 5 at 9am. To encourage our children to become good Christian stewards in their own way, we will put out children's Mass envelopes which young people can pick up at the church entrance when they attend this Mass. Please remind your children to bring a few nickels or dimes to put into the envelope to offer up at the Collection. No offering is too small! Money from this collection will go to a charitable organization.

CWL Membership Drive: The Catholic Women's League of Canada (CWL) is a national organization rooted in gospel values calling its members to holiness through service to the people of God. A membership in the CWL adds your voice in support of local and national work for many social justice issues. We invite every woman in this parish to join! Members will be available at the back of the church after masses this weekend to tell you about the CWL, its goals and objectives, or feel free to call: Lynn Macdonald 604 420 9275.

2017 Donation Boxes: Please pick up your Sunday Offering Envelopes boxes for 2017 from the church foyer. Please do not use 2016 envelopes or envelopes from previous years. If you do not find an envelope box in your name, please call the office or put your name on the sheet on the clipboard. Thank you!

K of C Charity Appeal: Thank you for your support!

Volunteers needed at City of Vancouver Warming Centre: The City of Vancouver has been extending operating hours of select community centres to operate overnight warming centres, from 9 p.m. until 7a.m. Catholic Charities encourages the faithful to consider volunteering at a warming centre, where volunteers distribute coffee, hot chocolate, and water to members of the public taking refuge at one of the following community centres:

- The Creekside Community Centre at Olympic Village
- The Britannia Community Centre on Commercial Drive
- West End Community Centre
- Sunset Community Centres

If you are interested in volunteering, please email vc.wfm@vancouver.ca and specify the preferred community centre location and a site coordinator will contact you to confirm a shift. All volunteers must be over 19 years old and willing to undergo a criminal record check.

Pro-life Mass & Vigil: Join us on Saturday, Feb. 4, at 9 a.m. for a peaceful, prayerful vigil for unborn children and their parents. Mass will be at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Vancouver, followed by the Rosary at Burnaby Hospital. For more info., visit rcav.org/pro-life-mass-and-prayer-vigil.

Share Lent Workshop - At the Heart of Change: Join us for Development and Peace's annual Share Lent Workshop entitled: *At the Heart of Change*. Learn about the challenges faced by women globally, and their contributions to the well-being of their families and communities. Participants will learn about the social mission of the Church, explore stories from various countries, engage in active reflection, and will be offered practical tools, resources and opportunities for engagement. Workshop is Saturday, Feb. 4 at St. Jude's Parish, Vancouver, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. To RSVP, please contact Pinky Pascual at pinky.devpeace@gmail.com or by phone at 604-612-9677.

History of Colonization in Canada: On Feb 11 the First Nations Office of the Archdiocese of Vancouver will host a workshop on the History and Legacy of Colonization in Canada. This workshop will offer insights into the experiences of Aboriginal People in Canada and the trauma caused by colonization and Residential Schools. Join us on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the John Paul II Pastoral Centre, 2885 Saint John Paul II Way in the Karol Wojtyla Hall. Event is free and includes lunch. To register, visit rcav.org/event/history-of-colonization or for more info., contact Deacon Rennie Nahanee at rnahanee@rcav.org.

Stewardship Reflection

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

This one confuses people. Replace the word "humble" for "poor" and it makes more sense. People that are humble recognize their dependence on God and trust that He will provide all that they need. Unfortunately, for many of us, pride and ego enters our lives and we think we can live without God. Remember – God first in all circumstances.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

Snow Tubing at Mt. Seymour

All teens and young adults are invited to join the OLPH Youth Ministry for snow tubing on Sat Feb 18 at 1pm. Please email Theresa at olphyouthmin@gmail.com if you are joining us!

Door Is Open



If you would like to help with preparing and serving a hot lunch for the homeless and poor of Eastside Vancouver, please sign up for the coming Door Is Open outreach effort on Tuesday Feb 7. Sign-up sheets are at the front of the church. You can also sign-up online at olphchurch.ca.

Healing Mass & Potluck Supper



A Healing Mass and the Anointing of the Sick will be held on Wednesday Feb 8 at 4pm. This will be followed by a potluck supper. To help those who are organizing this supper, please indicate on the sign-up sheet at the front of the church what sort of food item you will be bringing that day.

Pope Francis on Family Prayer

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The most frequent complaint of Christians is actually with regard to time: "I should pray more...; I would like to but often I have no time". We hear it all the time. The regret is sincere, certainly, because the human heart always desires prayer, even without realizing it; and if it doesn't find it, it is not at peace. But in order to find it, we need to cultivate in our hearts an "ardent" love for God, an affectionate love.

Let us ask a very simple question. It's good to believe in God with all our heart, it's good to hope that he will help us in difficulty, it's good to feel obliged to give him thanks. All this is just; but do we love the Lord, even a little? Does the thought of God move us, amaze us, soften us?

Let us think of the wording of that great Commandment, which is the basis of all others: "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Dt 6:5; cf. Mt 22:37). The formula uses the intense language of love, addressing it to God. See, the spirit of prayer dwells here above all. And if it dwells here, it dwells all the time and never leaves. Are we able to think of God as the caress that keeps us alive, before which there is nothing? A caress from which nothing, not even death, can separate us? Or do we think of him only as the great Being, the Almighty who made all things, the Judge who monitors every action? All true, of course; but only when God is the affection above all our affections, does the meaning of these words find their fullness. Then we feel happy, even if a little confused, because he thinks of us and above all he loves us!

"The spirit of prayer gives time back to God... and discovers the joy of unexpected gifts."

Isn't that impressive? Isn't it impressive that God caresses us with the love of a father? It is so beautiful! He could have simply revealed himself as the Supreme Being, given his commandments and waited for the results. Instead, God did and does infinitely more than this. He accompanies us on life's journey, he protects us, he loves us. If love for God does not light the fire, the spirit of prayer will not warm time. We may also multiply our words, "as the pagans do", says Jesus; or even perform our rituals, "as the Pharisees do" (cf. Mt 6:5,7). A heart which is home to affection for God makes a prayer of an unspoken thought, or an invocation before a holy image, or a kiss blown to the Church. It's beautiful when mothers teach their little children to blow kisses to Jesus or to Our Lady. What tenderness there is in this! In that moment the child's heart is transformed into a place of prayer. And it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Let us never forget to ask for this gift for each one of us!

Because the Spirit of God has that special way of saying in our heart "Abba" — "Father". It teaches us to say "Father" just as Jesus said it, a way that we can never find on our own (cf. Gal 4:6). It is in the

CATECHESIS: FAMILY



family that one learns to ask for and appreciate this gift of the Spirit. If one learns to say it with the same spontaneity with which one learns "father" and "mother," one has learnt it forever. When this happens, the time of the whole of family life is enveloped in the womb of God's love, and seeks spontaneously the time of prayer.

We know well that family time is a complicated and crowded time, busy and preoccupied. There is always little, there is never enough, there are so many things to do. One who has a family soon learns to solve an equation that not even the great mathematicians know how to solve: within 24 hours they make twice that many! There are mothers and fathers who could win the Nobel Prize for this. Out of 24 hours they make 48: I don't know how they do it but they get on and do it! There is so much work in a family!

The spirit of prayer gives time back to God, it steps away from the obsession of a life that is always lacking time, it rediscovers the peace of necessary things, and discovers the joy of unexpected gifts. Two good guides for this are the sisters Martha and Mary, spoken of in the Gospel we have just heard; they learned from God the harmony of family rhythms: the beauty of celebration, the serenity of work, the spirit of prayer (cf. Lk 10:38-42).

The visit of Jesus, whom they loved, was their celebration. However, one day Martha learned that the work of hospitality, though important, is not everything, but that listening to the Lord, as Mary did, was the really essential thing, the "best kind" of time. Prayer flows from listening to Jesus, from reading the Gospel. Do not forget to read a passage of the Gospel every day. Prayer flows from closeness with the Word of God. Is there this closeness in our family? Do we have the Gospel at home? Do we open it sometimes to read it together? Do we meditate on it while reciting the Rosary?

The Gospel read and meditated on as a family is like good bread that nourishes everyone's heart. In the morning and in the evening, and when we sit at the table, we learn to say together a prayer with great simplicity: it is Jesus who comes among us, as he was with the family of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. There is something that is very close to my heart; because I have seen it in the city: there are children who have not learned to make the Sign of the Cross! But you, mother, father, teach your child to pray, to make the Sign of the Cross: this is a lovely task for mothers and fathers! In the prayer of the family, in its intense moments and in its difficult seasons, we are entrusted to one another, so that each one of us in the family may be protected by the love of God.