

Feast of the Holy Family

By: Fr. Demetrius R. Dumm O.S.B

Gospel Summary

Today's gospel reading about the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple is most suitable for the feast of the Holy Family because it deals very gently with the difficult question of the relationship of young and old in families and in society generally.

The parents of Jesus are very careful to observe the Jewish laws about offering the first-fruits of flock and field to God, thus acknowledging that all blessings come ultimately for a loving creator. This affirms the importance of the Hebrew tradition for the future followers of Jesus. The aged Simeon and Anna are there to represent the people of Israel, who have for so long been yearning and praying for the arrival of the Messiah. They have been living for centuries with scarcely any tangible sign of God's concern for them, but they have no lost hope.

We can well imagine Simeon's joy as God revealed to him that this infant is in fact the long awaited Messiah. For he immediately resigned himself joyfully and trustingly to a future filled with the goodness of God's promises. Anna too saw her patient piety rewarded by this sign of God's response to her persistent prayers.

Life Implications

There are so many of us older people alive today that we need to reflect carefully upon the example offered to us by Simeon and Anna. We do not see in them any sign of resentment as they recognize that their places are being taken by energetic and

often impatient younger men and women. They are able to welcome this new and younger world because their prayerful attention to the Lord has established the utter trustworthiness of God's promises of a future life beyond our present mortal condition.

There are few more remarkable signs of hope than that of older people whose eyes are still bright with the promise of better days in the ultimate future. In fact, the very act of taking an infant into one's arms, as Simeon did, is a profound affirmation of one's sure knowledge that God has given the victory to life.

The effect of this trust in life and in the future is to create an ideal environment for the nurturing of new life. In fact, today's gospel tells us that Joseph and Mary were completely open to the new world about to be inaugurated by their divine child. Under their guidance and loving care, "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him" (v. 40). All children have the right to be nurtured, day in and day out, with loving attention and trust, so that they too may acquire the freedom and wisdom needed for responsible living.

We must reflect with great sadness on the tragedy of neglected children in our world. They receive so little psychological or spiritual support to enable them to "grow and become strong, filled with wisdom." And we need to be deeply grateful for those parents whose love and care prepare their children for a future that can be both serious and joyful.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Genesis 15:1-6:21-1-3 Hebrews 11:8-19 Luke 2:22-40

December 28, 2014

靈 修 生 活

聖 家 節

張 春 申 神 父

在禮儀年中，開始了為期三週的聖誕期。聖誕期內，教會紀念的不只是耶穌的誕生，而且包括瑪竇和路加福音所記載的耶穌童年奧跡。我們必須知道，福音作者書寫那些奧跡時，耶穌早已復活升天，教會信仰祂是天主子，正在地中海四岸傳播有關基督的事跡。所以福音中的童年奧跡，在表達上處處顯出對於耶穌的信仰，也不斷在教導我們，這位新生的嬰兒由於祂未來的宣講天國，尤其由於祂的死亡與復活，賞給人類天主的救恩。所以在童年耶穌的事跡中，福音引導讀者看出基督是救主。

比如每年聖誕節子時彌撒中誦讀的路加福音，它給我們傳報了嬰兒耶穌在羅馬皇帝凱撒奧古斯時代誕生；牧童的朝拜，天使的歌聲。這已經啟示了耶穌是和平的君王，是祂賞賜人類真正的和平。為什麼呢？因為奧古斯都做羅馬皇帝時正值天下太平，全民共慶。不過為基督信友而論，這種世上的和平是暫時的，只有耶穌基督給的和平是永久的。所以天使在嬰兒耶穌誕生後，讚頌天主說：天主在天受光榮，主愛的人在世享平安。這個永久的平安是天主籍著耶穌基督要賞賜人類的。舊約依撒意亞所預言的「和平的君王」現在已經誕生了，可見福音不只是把耶穌誕生作為一件歷史事跡書寫記錄下來，更是在信仰中，把耶穌誕生作為一個極好的消息，傳報給所有的人。在小耶穌的誕生記錄中路加願意人相信祂才是和平的君王。事實上新約中多次稱耶穌是萬君之君，萬王之王。路加在童年福音中，根據教會的信仰編寫了耶穌的誕生，至於其他的童年事跡，他也都是按照同樣的精神編寫的。今天教會慶祝聖家節，福音讓我們瞻仰的是耶穌、瑪利亞、若瑟組織成的家庭。是否透過聖家，路加願意給一切家庭，尤其公教家庭一個模範呢？

當然我們應當承認，聖家不是普通的家庭，好多因素幾乎不是任何時代的家庭可以模仿的。比如耶穌是童貞瑪利亞的獨生子，若瑟與瑪利亞的終身貞潔生活等等，這幾乎完全超過的普通的家庭。不過聖家可以，而且應該為一切公教家庭作為標準。大家應該效法聖家以耶穌基督內的天主聖父作為中心。聖母與聖若瑟在家庭中，一切的思念，一切的行動，甚至生命的一切，只有一個目標，便是為了耶穌基督；耶穌基督是天主聖父遣派到人間，遣派到聖家中的天主聖言。聖母與聖若瑟一切為了耶穌基督，這便是以天主聖父為中心。至於耶穌自己在聖家中，當然如同祂後來常說的：我的食糧是承行派遣我來的聖父的旨意。祂在聖家中服從若瑟與瑪利亞，還不是承行聖父的旨意嗎？因為聖家中每一個人，都以天主聖父為中心，所以成了一個家--聖家。這個家是公教家庭的表率，那麼所有公教家庭在三聖的光照下，必須知道在耶穌基督內以天主聖父為中心。

所謂在耶穌基督內以聖父為中心，實在不是別的，只是如同基督一般，承行聖父的旨意；或者根據福音精神，如同天父一樣成全；更加簡單地說，這是實踐基督徒的生活。這當然包括得很多，不過最後實在只是一個愛字，因為天主是愛，那存留在愛內的，就存留在天主內，天主也存留在他內。一個公教家庭的每一份子：父母--子女；兄弟--姊妹都在基督內而經驗天主父的愛；他們之間怎樣不相親相愛呢？那麼他們的家庭自然反映出聖家的面貌來了。在這聖誕期，我們瞻仰了聖家之後，按照路加的靈感，建立一個在基督內以天父為中心的家吧！

摘自「妙音送長風」

本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 四 年 十 二 月 二 十 八 日

創 15:1-6; 21:1-3; 希 11:8-19; 路 2:22-40