

The Faith of Our Fathers

This Gospel opens on a happy note as aged, pious, God-fearing Simeon joyously expressed the wish that he might die. He is filled with a keenly perceptive spirit as he holds the Child in his arms and acknowledges Him not only as His own personal Savior, but also as the Savior of the entire world and a light to the Gentiles. This recognition fills Simeon with such joy that he says, “Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace.” In other words, Lord, I am now happy to die. For this man, death is now dearer than life. He considers his death and departure from this world a journey into peace and blessed days. Such a spirit is not of human origin, but the work of the Holy Spirit. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

Not only angels, prophets, shepherds and parents testify of the Christ Child, but also elders and the just. In Anna, an elderly widow confesses the Lord; and in Simeon, a just man awaits Him. And Simeon is truly a just man. For he sought not his own but the consolation of his people. For himself he desired only that he be free from the bonds of earthly infirmity. He waited to look upon the One that was promised. For old St. Simeon knew that blessed are the eyes that would see Him. (St. Ambrose) ❧❧❧

If Joseph and Mary had judged accordingly to outward appearances, they would have thought that Christ was nothing more than a poor child. But they disregarded the outward appearance and cling to the words of Simeon with a firm new faith, and so they marvel at what he says. Simeon delivered a warm-hearted, beautiful, sermon, preaching the pure Gospel and the Word of God. For the Gospel is nothing but a sermon whose theme is Christ, declaring him to be the Savior, light and glory of all the world. Such preaching fills the heart with joy and wonder at this great race and comfort, if it is received in faith. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

For the *Sunday after Christmas*. These excerpts are intended as meditative pieces for the Day's pericopes. They have been edited and abridged for style, sense and space.

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