

Today we celebrate the Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple reading the Gospel of Luke 2:22-40. We hear of Saint Joseph and the Theotokos coming to the temple to present Christ Jesus as a 40 day old baby. Awaiting his arrival was Saint Symeon who upon seeing Him proclaimed that he may finally depart in peace from this world for he saw God's salvation. Along with him was a widow—Saint Anna, who devoted her life in worshiping with fasting and prayer. She too thanked God for the coming of Christ, and “spoke of Him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

Dearest ones, the Presentation of Christ also known as the welcoming is one of the most important feasts of our Church. It is full of meaning and symbolism. According to Mosaic law, if the first child a woman bore were a boy, it was to be considered to be dedicated to the Lord and the parents would offer a sacrifice if the child was so. This dedication was derived from the time in Egypt when the firstborn male children were saved by God in the Book of Exodus.

Following this example, we too bring our children to the Church for the 40 day blessing. Each one of us was brought by our parents to be welcomed into the Church. After the welcoming, what is our role? What shall we do? As the parents of Jesus Christ brought Him to the temple and thereafter taught Him not only about the faith, but how to live this faith, we too must do the same. As parents of children and as individuals dedicated to God on the 40th day this is a huge responsibility which is ongoing throughout our lives. This is picking up our crosses and following Him!

Let us like Saint Symeon and Saint Anna no longer fear death, for Christ Jesus came, destroyed death, and granted eternal life to us all! Let us rejoice in this, continually renewing our lives to Him in the Highest to whom all glory, worship and honor is due; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever, amen.