



THE GOSPEL.

Luke 2:22-40

He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: “Now Master, you may let your servant go in peace. ... ”

The
Spirit called.
Simeon and Anna came forth.

Call us too, O Spirit.

Let us recognize Christ, our brother,
the one object of our longing,
and find him in all people,
in all of creation,
in our midst
here and
now.

Teach us
above all else, how to love
as you and the Father and the Son love.

Make each and every one part of your Holy Family.

THE FIRST READING. Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

As the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.

Good things
happen when we love our parents:
when we pray, we
are heard.

God
of joy,
is this the
way your love
works?

Touching a person
here,

passing on to another
there,

landing here, landing there, healing,
making miracles everywhere,
then returning to
you?

Oh God,
let us be ready every time
to catch your love
and pass it
on.

THE SECOND READING. Colossians 3:12-21

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Christ,
come to us in our Nazareths.
Plant kindly all your words in our hearts.
Give us patience and compassion. Make us kind and humble.
Make us love you: doing everything in your name,
so that all things work together,
under you, for good.. (Anne Osdieck)

God's Abiding Fidelity: The Family of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus 2020

2 Samuel 7:1-16; Psalm 89; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

In a year in which our extended families may not have been able to come together for major events and holidays, we've had to collectively examine the family around us and we've had to rely upon one another, and be there for one another. The readings highlight fidelity to God, which implies fidelity to our family of faith. Abram trusts God even though he is old and childless and he follows the command to God to look up at the sky to count the stars and to trust in God's blessings. Through his fidelity, Abram becomes Abraham and soon discovers that his wife Sarah has become pregnant. He is to become the father of many descendants because of his trust. Likewise, we have been gifted with the Christmas star this year, and thus we have an invitation to lift up our faces and to be filled with hope in God's promises to us.

Joseph and Mary likewise trust in the law of Moses when they bring the boy to the Temple for his ritual Presentation. They meet the righteous Simeon, who prayed for many people during his long life, and the widowed Ana, the prophet, who found solace in being close to the Lord in the Temple. These people of prayer were instrumental for the development of the family of Jesus, especially when Joseph and Mary took him to Galilee to grow in wisdom and strength. Ana and Simeon's prayers helped the faith move from its former phase to a new mode of being. As we transition from this year of unbalance, we need people of prayer to help guide us to something new and imaginative.

As we celebrate the family of Joseph and Mary, our families of origin, and our families of faith, let's receive the prayers that people entrust to us. Our prayer for each other is essential, as we have discovered this year. Sometimes, it is all we can have and all we can offer. Let's offer them to the Lord at Eucharist; let's lift them up for the Lord to hear. While these stories today appear to be about the fidelity of Abram, Simeon, Anna, and Joseph and Mary, they are about God's fidelity to us, so that when we look up at the sky and see those stars, or the clouds, or the Christmas Star, we will know the God is blessing us today and promises to do so for our future. So, let's celebrate with joy that we have one another and that our prayers and compassion will make life easier for another person, and let's remember that God's heart is still filled with gladness that the Christ has been born for us once again. (*John Predmore*)

