

Way back at the end of November on the First Sunday of Advent my homily was on Anticipation. The theme was “What do we anticipate from a life of faith in Jesus Christ?”

Anticipation is kind of back in play again on this feast day of the Presentation of the Lord; in a slightly different manner.

Imagine we are Simeon or Ana who await for a promise to be fulfilled. We are told that Ana was old, and widowed early on in her life, who then spent the remainder of her life in Temple, praying, waiting for her messiah. Simeon we are not given his age, but it is implied he is an elderly man awaiting the Messiah as well, and awaiting his death.

Our thoughts may go to Abram and Sarah who awaited the promise of their child in their elder years.

Simeon and Ana also reflect the people of Israel who often were called to wait and hope; to trust that God will fulfill promises. Malachi spoke to these people coming out of exile in Babylon, waiting on God’s promises to be fulfilled too.

Such patience, trust, hope....

Nowadays if we don’t get a fast resolution, or if a tiktok video goes over 40 secs, we have lost our patience. And in these days in which we think we control so much, we often are confronted by matters out of our control.

There is also an implied waiting at the end of this Gospel. Mary and Joseph take the infant Jesus home; and it will not be for another 3 decades that he comes into ministry. 30 years of waiting, which means although Ana and Simeon met the messiah, they never directly experienced what Jesus would do.

God’s promise to us, through Jesus, is a full life; a holy life. God’s promise in Jesus is that God remains with us always.

We may think how long do I have to wait for that? We look at this world and can think when Lord?

Remember though, God's promises are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, so in reality we do not need to wait. Rather, what we need to do is take action.

When we come to our temple, the church, we hear of God's love for us; that this love is unconditional, and our only response is to love God in return, and as Jesus says, to love in our love for others.

This is our way to live life in the full. This is our way of living with God now.

It is through the hard work of forgiving, of showing mercy, of being generous, compassionate, kind, and the very hard work of being willing to give of ourselves for the good of others.

In other words, we live the life of Jesus Christ. God's promise is fulfilled in him who reveals the divine life of God.

I find it odd that people resist this. They would rather take cold showers to prove their love of God.

They would rather recite rosary after rosary, attend and do all kinds of devotions; kneel in prayer...

Yet, be kind, merciful, compassionate to other people...they don't have the time.

Now don't get me wrong. Those devotions are not bad...they are a means to open our hearts to love. They are not the end, but a means to love.

If we find ourselves performing these devotions or these acts of so called mortification and they do not bring us to deeper love of God or others...then they need to be stopped.

We signify in the Eucharist each week what it means to belong and follow Jesus; to trust in his ways. We remember and make real in our lives the giving of self of Jesus Christ, who comes to us in the bread and wine; so that we can go forth from here and rejoice and live.

And we strive to remain a people of Hope, of faith, of Joy too. Because we too are the Body of Christ, we are God's living sign of presence in this world for all people; called to be a light to all the nations, a sign of hope.