

The Presentation

“Lord now lettest thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples...”

Wherefore, my dearly beloved, (as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but much more now in my absence,) with fear and trembling work out your salvation. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will. And do ye all things without murmurings and hesitations - Luke - 2:29-31, Philippians 2:12-14

Simeon was faithful to his calling, faithful to his vocation. He did not call off work on the day of the Presentation. He did not call his boss and give him some lame excuse. Sure, God had promised him that he would see the Messiah, but Simeon couldn't just sit around and wait. He had to do something. Simeon was faithful to his work and God rewarded him, but God rewarded him toward the end of his life.

Often I imagine God's revelation, that he would see the Messiah, coming to Simeon when he is an old man. However, I must consider that this revelation could have come to Simeon when he was a very young man.

Am I faithful to my vocation even when I don't feel like it? How long will I wait to hear from God? A week? A year? My entire life? I can be faithful to God by fulfilling my duties patiently and by waiting on God until the appointed time.

The Finding in the Temple

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions...and he went down with them and was obedient to them...

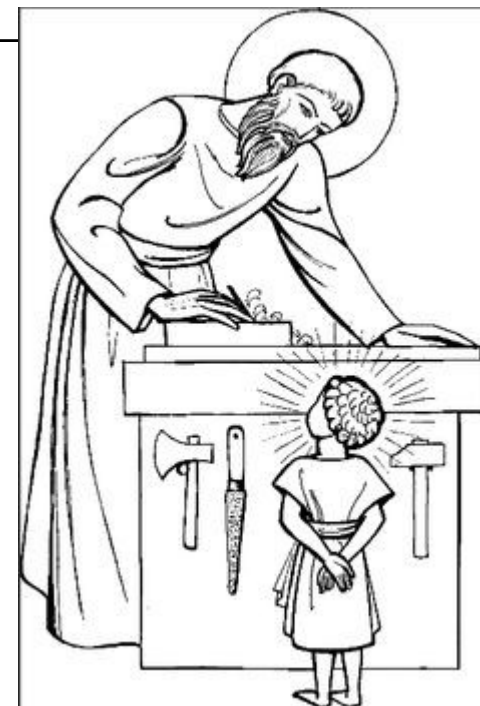
All things have their season, and in their times all things pass under heaven. A time to rend, and a time to sew. A time to keep silence, and a time to speak. - Luke 2:46, 51, Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7

I would be remiss if I did not mention the man the Church calls, “the worker.” Joseph says not one word in scripture. He neither exclaims nor complains. In *silentio et in spe erit fortitudo vestra* (in silence and trust shall be your strength).

Joseph endures all things quietly and patiently. When Joseph and Mary find the boy Jesus in the Temple after three days, “the worker” says nothing. However, if I read further, I find that Jesus was obedient to this man.

Do I complain about my job or vocation? Do I endure all things patiently as St. Paul says those who have love do? Can I take time to imitate a man who endured all things in silence and trust, and loved so much as to have the Child Jesus be obedient to him? In silence and in trust was “the worker's” strength; it can be mine as well.

The Joyful Mysteries of Work



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The Annunciation

...the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: and then will he render to every man according to his works. - Luke 1:26-27, Matthew 16:26-27

Mary was not sitting idle when the angel appeared. Traditional artwork shows Mary reading scripture, meditating on the word of God. The fact is Mary was serving God by working through the scriptures. Whether I work in an office, on a construction site or at home my work can bring me closer to God. Mary wasn't sitting idle waiting for a sign from God that she was to be the Mother of the Messiah. She was fulfilling her daily duties when God's message came. What will my state of mind be and what will I be doing when God's messenger comes? What if it is not a messenger but God Himself? Will I be humbly attending to the work set before me or will I be complaining against the task? "Be it done unto me."

The Visitation

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. - Luke 1:39-40, Matthew 5:15-16

"Faith without works is dead", says St. James. Mary's joy in being chosen as the Mother of God manifests itself in works of charity. She did not visit Elizabeth to flaunt her position or seek praise. She came to serve and to work. Imagine the Mother of the Creator doing menial household tasks. If Christ is truly in me, I will fulfill all my duties with joy. Even the most meaningless task at my daily job has meaning when I, like Mary, have Christ within me.

Lord, help me to imitate Mary as she imitates you in seeking to serve and not to be served.

The Nativity

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them "Be not afraid.."

I know thy works, and thy faith, and thy charity, and thy ministry, and thy patience, and thy last works which are more than the former. - Luke 2:8-10, Revelation 2:19

Here again are men doing what they are called to do when God reveals Himself. The shepherds were tending their flocks when the angels appeared, bringing the good news. They were in the midst of their work when God chose to speak to them. I too can hear God speaking to me as I go about my work. God has always intended man to work, even before the fall, "God took man, and put him in the paradise of pleasure, to dress it and to keep it." My work can be my prayer, my communication with God. Paul tells me to, "Pray without ceasing." This is possible when I offer my every working moment to God as a prayer.