



Wednesday Prayer

Christmas Week – Anna the Prophet declares the Good News

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. Luke 2:36-38

In last week's devotion, Meg Blaine Corrigan very articulately wrote about Mary's immediate, unquestioning response to God's call to be the bearer of the Christ child despite the awkward, painful, and even life-threatening situations that would result for her, a young girl in first century Israel. This week's gospel message provides us with two more examples of faithfulness to God's call, Simeon and Anna, two people far beyond the years of young Mary. For many years, both had lived day in and day out trusting in and telling others of God's promise of sending a savior. Both instantly knew God had fulfilled that promise when they saw the baby Jesus in the temple that day.

Anna, in particular, lived "outside the box" for the culture in which she lived. She was female, in a world that taught that only men learn the Torah and teach in the temple. She was widowed in a culture that taught a woman only had as much value as the man she was married to. But she didn't let these social conventions stop her. She *couldn't* let social convention stop her because her faith moved her to "praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."

What does your faith compel you to do in response to seeing the Christ child in the manger? How is your faith and joy in the birth of the Savior playing out in your everyday life? St. Francis of Assisi is credited with saying "Preach the gospel always. When necessary, use words." The gospel, or "good news" is preached every time you pray for children in your congregation and community, every time you teach young people about healthy relationships or dangerous online interactions, every time you advocate for laws to keep young people safe from sex traffickers. Don't let your age or gender, or societal conventions prevent you from responding in joy and faithfulness to the miraculous birth of the Christ child. Those who are in despair, or who are suffering injustice, are waiting to hear the good news!

God of love and mercy, just as you sent your Son to live among us and save us from sin, send us out in joy and with intention to share this good news in all that we say and do so that all can live in health and safety, trusting in your saving grace. Amen

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