

In the beginning was the Word...

An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Revelation

Friday 29th December 2023



Simeon's Song of Praise by Rembrandt van Rijn (1631, Oil on Panel), Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague

Scripture: Luke 2:22-35

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen

the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'
³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

To reflect.

The Gospel for today is Mary and Joseph taking the infant Jesus to the Temple. Here they encounter Simeon who recognises who Jesus is and will be, responding with the Song of Simeon, also known as the Nunc Dimittis. The text, is used at Evensong and Compline and sometimes at funerals – 'Now let thy servant depart in peace'. However, this text is Simeon expressing their realisation, their revelation from God. How do you describe the love of God revealed to you in the birth of Jesus? Today you're invited to dwell on your Song of Simeon – your Revelation Song.

To Pray:

Almighty God,
author of my life,
help me learn to read what you have written on my heart.
Give me discerning eyes
and an untiring spirit
to look within me
in order to understand how to reach outside of me.
And once I have begun to read you aright,
give me the generosity to help others to read you,
to sound you out one letter,
one word of radical giving at a time.
Amen.

To listen

There are many settings of the Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis), two versions are by Gustav Holst (<https://open.spotify.com/track/5vkqlgMt6SW3xaKLJtqTL6?si=5a28dec1d0e94d18>) and Pawel Łukaszewski (<https://open.spotify.com/track/06e0vbqPZjAc7toLuoDwL6?si=0833ec2df38c4557>)

Another song about God revealed to them is *Revelation Song* by Kari Jobe (<https://open.spotify.com/track/3pZVH0mPC6fxtmjOT0i9t5?si=b815632524984ef2>)

...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.