**“The Messiah”**

All our readings today point us to the coming and the arrival of the promised Messiah. The Messiah whom the Jews had been waiting for, for centuries has come as a great light. The Child that came was introduced to the Jews by a prophet and a prophetess after probably being seen only by the Shepherds, close family members, relatives, and friends for forty days.

In our first reading, God through Prophet Malachi gave a prophecy that He would send a forerunner as messenger ahead of Himself before He comes to visit His people. God told the people that He Himself would come to the people who seek Him. God had put in their hearts the desire to seek Him and to long for Him. It is only when they see Him that their restless heart would be calmed.

God did not only tell them they would see Him, He told them they would see Him in the flesh as a messenger of the New Covenant. In His humanity, it is only by having flesh, could He be a messenger. In His Divinity, as God, He could not be a messenger. He also warned them that His coming would not be easy for them because He would bring a sword and not peace on earth.

His sword would be His teaching that would be so radical from what they were used to that fathers would turn against sons, mothers would turn against daughters, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and vice versa in all cases. The discord even amongst family members would be because, one person would accept and believe in His teachings, while the other person would reject His teachings. Only those who belief in His teachings to the end, would endure His coming.

God through the Prophet, also said, He would purify the old priesthood of the Levi who were sacrificing animals. The new purification and refining would enable them to sacrifice the true Lamb of God that would be perpetually acceptable to God similar to the sacrifice of Able that was acceptable to God.

In our second reading, in the letters to the Hebrews, we are reminded that the One whom we seek, as foretold by Malachi came as one of us in the flesh and blood. As the Son of God, He is Spirit and could never die. However, to free us from death, He had to suffer death and be resurrected. He had to die so we can live. He was resurrected, so we can be resurrected to eternal life. By His death, He destroyed death and freed us from fear and slavery to death.

At the creation of the world, we were created not to die. Since sin came into the world, and we know we will die one day, the fear of dying is in conflict with what had been put into our soul and DNA by God from the beginning of our creation that we would not die. It is embedded in this saying, ***“everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.”***

It is that fear in us that Jesus came to destroy so we could be free from the device of the devil who wanted to enslave us and have us in hell with him. However, because of our redemption, we should not be afraid of death anymore. Our bodies would be resurrected to life at the end of time and we would live forever as God had designed it in the beginning.

It is through Jesus taking up our flesh and blood, that He could experience every temptation, trial, and suffering we go through in life. However, He never sinned. Through His experience, He became a merciful and faithful high Priest who intercedes for us before God, so our sins would be forgiven.

In our Gospel reading, we are introduced to our Redeemer through the eyes of Prophet Samuel and Prophetess Anna who were righteous and devout followers of God. In Jesus taking up our flesh and blood, as God, He also fulfilled every righteousness He requires of us. He is our God who walks the talk! His presentation to God after 40 days in the temple was to fulfill the law of God in the Book of Exodus chapter 13.

Simeon and Anna represented every one of us at the presentation. Simeon in praying is prayer or canticle and telling God he was ready to die after seeing his savior, showed that he was not afraid to die anymore. He was ready to leave this earth, because he knew his savior would save him from the pangs of death. We too should not be afraid to die if we have lived a life of righteousness and devotion by obeying God’s commandments.

Anna, is an example for us of how to be devoted to God. Luke told us that she was in the temple, fasting, praying and worshiping God night and day. Yes, most of us cannot do that because of our day to day obligation. That is left to the Monks in Monasteries and to cloister Nuns to imitate her worship of God.

However, the Church ask us to spend at least one hour a week in worshiping God as a community. Like Anna, we are to be totally focused on God during that period and not on ourselves or others. Our focus on God, others, and ourselves, should be, when we go outside the house of worship. Anna is our role model in how to worship God in holiness.

As we come with utmost reverence to receive our Messiah in the Eucharist, let us totally open our hearts to God who came to redeem and save us from sin.