

GOD KEEPS A PROMISE

According to the law of Moses, all Hebrew parents were required to bring their first-born son to the Temple on the 40th day after his birth. This was done in remembrance of the Hebrew exodus from Egypt and their freedom from slavery - when their first-born sons were protected from the “angel of death,” - who slew the young male children of the Egyptians. It was customary to bring a sacrifice to the Temple that day in thanksgiving to God.

Obedient to the precepts of their people, Joseph and Mary brought the infant Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem 40 days after His birth. As their sacrifice, they brought two young doves with them. While there, they encountered the Righteous Simeon - - a pious man who was advanced in years. God promised him that he would not die until he saw the coming of the Messiah. When Simeon came upon Christ and His parents, he knew that this was the One for whom he would have waited: the Light Who would enlighten the Gentiles. Indeed, Simeon knew that he could now “depart in peace.” Simeon blessed them and proclaimed that: “this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel.” (Luke 2:34)

Before returning home, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus also met Anna, a prophetess who had lived in the Temple some 84 years as a widow. She, too, recognized the true identity and mission of the young Child.

This event is celebrated as the FEAST OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD by our Holy Orthodox Church in February each year. To further emphasize the coming of the “light” into a darkened world, candles are blessed on this holy day.