

Reflections for 31st January 2021

'Candlemas'

Waiting

How do you feel when you have to wait for something? Most of us find it hard to wait at times. This week, on the Sunday nearest to the 'Presentation of Christ in the Temple', traditionally known as Candlemas, which is on February 2nd, we are reminded of a story about waiting.

There was a man called Simeon who believed that God had promised him that he would not die before he saw the Lord's anointed one, the Messiah. One day, the Spirit prompted him to go to the temple courts, where he saw Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus. He took the child in his arms, and praised God because that promise had at last been fulfilled. When I hear the story I always wonder how long he had waited for that day, and that moment. How long had he had to wait for God's time, God's moment, while it may have seemed to him that nothing was happening at all.

Sometimes our experience of waiting can feel good and positive, but sometimes it is hard to wait, or to be with someone else and support them in their waiting.

When we find it hard to wait – when we find it hard to wait for God – it may help us to remember the story of Simeon, who had to wait a long time before he saw the fulfilment of God's promises, and whose praise and thanksgiving grew out of the depth and richness of his waiting. And we can remember the words of Simeon, at the end of his waiting – words that have become part of our liturgy:

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people.

Revd John Waller

God for whom we wait,
you fulfilled the hope of Simeon,
who lived to welcome the Messiah.
Complete in us your perfect will,
that we may share in your eternal kingdom,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bible readings: Malachi 3. 1-5; Hebrews 2. 14-18; Luke 2. 22-40

Story: 'Simeon's waiting is over' (based on the gospel passage)