

### **The Meeting of our Lord with Simeon**

In today's gospel reading the Old Testament meets the New Testament. We hear of St. Simeon and St. Anna, righteous and venerable people, who lived most of their life under the Old Testament Law. And what were they blessed with? They were blessed with seeing the living face of God. Today's gospel reading also tells us why these Saints were blessed to be able to see the face of God. St. Simeon is described in today's gospel reading as being just and devout. The dictionary definition of just is honorable and fair in one's dealings and actions with others. Another definition is being consistent with what is morally right. Devout means sincere, worshipful devotion to one's faith. So St. Simeon was a man who always treated other's fairly and truly believed in his faith and lived it out in his daily life.

The Holy Scriptures describe St. Anna as serving God in fastings and prayers night and day. This sounds like what we as Orthodox Christians do most of the year. However, St. Anna also led a difficult life living with her husband for seven years and then as a widow for eighty-four years. Back in the days of Christ, if a woman's husband died, there was no government assistance and if a widow didn't have any family left, she would often times end up in poverty as a beggar or have to sell herself into slavery or prostitution. Being that the Scriptures say that St. Anna never departed from the Temple, she most likely was a beggar at the entryway into the Temple for eighty-four years. She probably spent many days and nights without food or shelter, if she did not receive alms during the day. When I visited some churches in Europe several years ago, it was the first time I encountered beggars at the doors of the churches asking for donations. This is probably the life that St. Anna led also.

It was to these two Saints that God chose to show His face. These were not Saints who worked extraordinary miracles or were born into royal families, but simple people who were just, devout, and lived their faith each and every day as best they could. May this gospel passage give us all hope that one day we also may be blessed by God to look upon His loving face.