

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Dec 30th 2014

There was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Today, we are living in a consumeristic society. It is advertisement which decides the choices for us. They influence us to buy or not to buy. We are mesmerised by the externals and the presentations. Whatever is shining, attract us and we become slaves to mindless consumerism. We have no capacity to purchase all that is shining. So, we end up with utter disappointment, frustration and desperation. The Apostle John today warns us against this tendency. He advises us not to love the world or the things of the world. Sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but they are from the world. They are passing things which can give us only momentary pleasure. What is of prime importance is doing the will of God which remains forever. We have as model the prophetess Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She wanted to experience real happiness, the redemption of the world. So, she never left the temple. She worshipped night and day with fasting and prayer giving no room for the attractions and temptations of the world. Where our wealth is, there will be our heart too. If we consider the world as our wealth, our focus will be only there. Like Paul, if we can say, we regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, then we will be able to regard the world and the things of the world as rubbish (cf. Phil 3:7-9).

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