

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, a man righteous and devout...and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
(Luke 2: 23)

Put in your mind what you know as basic information about Church structure in the Catholic Church. Think of our parish. You are the parishioners. You are the parish of Saint Anthony's. You live the faith in your homes and you bring your families and your faith to the parish Church of Saint Anthony's to pray and to give God the worship of your heart and to be fed spiritually. There is a pastor here and a staff which is tasked with the responsibility of assisting you in these endeavors. The priest is a necessary component part of this parish because he leads—he leads the congregation in prayer and worship and reconciles the members and baptizes and preaches. But you, the People of God, are the parish. The priest is part of the parish too.

In ancient Israel, in the city of Jerusalem was the great Temple rebuilt by the corrupt King Herod. There was a High priest and his Council, named the Sanhedrin, and many priests who ministered and especially at Passover did the actual slaying of the lambs for sacrifice. The Jewish people all believed that this Temple was theirs and they would visit at different times during the year. But not all the Jewish people who went to the Temple each day were part of the Temple establishment. They were not all priests. There were a lot of very ordinary Jewish people who went to Temple a lot. Just like there are many parishioners who come to our church on a daily basis. They come here a lot. Not as priest or deacon or staff but as parishioner, as believer, as worshiper.

One such person in the Temple at the time Jesus was born was Simeon. He was an old man and a holy man. God had revealed to him that he (Simeon) would not die until he himself saw (with his own two eyes) the Messiah of the Lord. It is this same Simeon who welcomes Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus and immediately recognizes the moment of his visitation. This little one is the Holy One of God. Simeon breaks into prayer. “Now Lord you may dismiss your servant because my eyes have seen your salvation....”

Simeon was simply a man of faith who spent time in prayer each day. And what happens to him? He is given the gift of being able to recognize the presence of the Lord when no one else can. I submit to you that if you spend more time in prayer each day something will happen to you and you will be able to recognize more clearly when the Lord is near and working. Do you believe that? That is the question of the week.