



## The Meeting of the Lord Jesus Christ

On the fortieth day after His birth, the Virgin Mary brought Jesus into the Temple of Jerusalem, in accordance with the Law, to dedicate Him to God and to purify herself. (“*Consecrate to me every first-born that opens the womb among the Israelites both of man and beast, for it belongs to me*”; Exodus 13:2) Although neither the mother nor her Son was unclean, the Lawgiver did not want to transgress His own Law, which He had given through Moses, His Prophet.

At that time, the Archpriest Zachariah (the father of John the Forerunner) was on duty in the Temple (“*serving as a priest before God in the order of his division*”; Luke 1:8) Zacharias placed the Virgin Mary, not in the temple area reserved for women, but rather in the area reserved for virgins.

On this occasion, two unusual persons appeared in the Temple: the Elder Simeon and Anna, the daughter of Phanuel. The righteous Simeon took the Messiah in his arms and said: “Now, Master, let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation” (St. Luke 2:29-30). Simeon also spoke the following words about the Christ-child: “*Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel*” (St. Luke 2:34).

The righteous Anna, (who from her youth served God in the Temple by fasting and prayers), recognized the Messiah in Jesus, glorified God and proclaimed the coming of the long-awaited One to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (*from the Synaxarion*)

“Each soul ought to be a Temple of God, to which Mary brings Jesus. The prayer of Simeon, ‘now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace’ does not simply mean that someone who has seen Jesus and has held him in his arms can now leave this life and die in peace: it also means for us

that, having seen and touched the Saviour, we are released from the hold that sin has on us, and in peace, can leave the realm of evil.” (from “*The Year of Grace of the Lord*”)