

# **“Justice For Laura” Novena - 9 Days of Prayer**

Day Three



## **Scripture Passage: “The Presentation of our Lord in the Temple”**

“And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepare in the sight of all the peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” And his father and mother marveled at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,

“Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that will be contradicted (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.” -LUKE 2:22-35

### **Meditation:**

This prophecy of Simeon is addressed in some way to all of us. The fathers of the Church and Biblical scholars for two thousand years have recognized that Mary is a sort of icon of the Church and in some way of all the human race (although at the same time this does not in any way detract from the historical person of Mary and her utter uniqueness which is due to the fact she gave birth to the Redeemer of the world), and so when Simeon speaks to her in this passage, when God speaks to her through Simeon in this passage, God is also speaking to us in a certain sense in this passage. “A sword will pierce your own soul also.” If we follow Christ, we must inevitably follow Him, as Mary did, to the foot of the Cross. What suffering must have afflicted her soul!

Imagine, a mother who like any mother loved her son in a million human ways, but also loved God in her son because God is her son! And to be there, at the foot of the Cross, seeing Him - hanging in agony, abandoned by practically all of his followers, even by most of his closest friends, the twelve. A sword indeed pierced the heart of Mary. And we must go through the same thing if we are to be authentically converted, shall we say “to the heart.”

Suffering – the Cross – is part of the Christian vocation. Period. But for us suffering takes on new meaning precisely because of who Jesus is – He is the Redeemer! And in his redemptive work of salvation, which he accomplished in and through his own suffering, he has also in some sense redeemed the very nature of suffering, giving it a sort of “salvific” meaning. Christ's body hung on the cross for the salvation of the world. We call the Church “the mystical body of Christ,” and this is not just a metaphor, this is reality! And this reality, the Church as the body of Christ, must also, at least in a sort of mystical manner, hang on the Cross for the salvation of the world. This does NOT mean that the one sacrifice of the Cross on Calvary was insufficient; far from it!

But because Christ is an eternal person, outside of time, all that he did inside of time on this earth takes on an eternal dimension, and in some sense is continually and for all time carried out by His mystical body, the Church, even today. Every Christian who truly seeks to follow the Lord has experienced this truth – for the world at large rejects the demands of the Gospel, so for us to live “Gospel lives” we too, in a certain sense, must become “a sign to be contradicted,” and how often are we contradicted in this world... But this is part and parcel of the Christian life, and it is indeed for the salvation of the world, for when we boldly take a stand for the Gospel and the values and truth it contains, even in the face of contradiction and suffering, we affirm the truth of Christ in the world, and if we are truly living in communion with Christ this becomes an occasion for great joy. We remember all the martyrs throughout the ages who have literally gone

to their deaths smiling with the knowledge that their joyful martyrdom is a witness to the truth of Jesus Christ and the salvation he freely offers to all the world. “Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the sake of the Gospel will save it.”

The Cross is a part of our lives, and above all it is a part of our conversion, which we all know is a continuous and lifelong process. But we have no need to fear the Cross! For we know and believe that after the Cross comes the Resurrection. After we “die” with Christ, we WILL be raised with him in glory, and we CAN and DO even begin to experience this in our lives here and now. But we must go to the Cross. And in doing so, we must accept and even embrace the “sword” that will pierce our hearts.

Conversion is no easy task, especially for those of us who have led terribly sinful lives before meeting Christ, for we are forced to admit and confess our sinfulness to the Lord and this recognition of our own failure to live as we ought is always painful – the admitting of our guilt implies and requires the crucifixion of our pride. Laura's murderer is no exception to this rule. He has sinned in a most grave and grievous manner, and he is called to account for that, but before he can confess it to the Lord he must confess it to himself. He must come to terms with his own failure to live as he ought, at least in the past (for we have no sure knowledge of his life since then, and no grounds for judging him, but only his past actions.) Nevertheless, he must face the truth if he is to be converted, and this facing up to the facts will not be easy - it will be a “sword” through his heart. Let us then pray for him, that he will be bold and courageous in facing the truth of his sin, but also in facing the truth of Christ who sets us free from our sins and empowers us to live a new life by grace. Let us pray for this man that he, hearing Christ proclaim the kingdom and call him to conversion, that he may also go to the Cross and “die” with Christ precisely so that he may also rise with him in the glory of the resurrection, both at the end of time and also here and now in this life. Just think of the sanctification that this man could offer to so many souls through this process of his own redemption! The example he could set by suffering what he must to be converted... many, many souls would be saved!

***And we pray for Justice For Laura.***

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**Abba, Father,**

**You have revealed Yourself as the God of Love Who desires all Your children to be saved, and Who will run to embrace any soul who sincerely turns back to You.**

**We lift up the soul of Laura's killer, Your beloved child who has wandered in a far away land squandering the inheritance which You, his most Loving Father, have bestowed upon him. We**

**beg the Holy Spirit to sing Your song of Love into his heart. Speak to his soul of his dignity and beauty as Your child, and give him the confidence to turn back to You in trust and repentance.**

**We ask this through the infinite merits of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy Whose compassion knows no bounds.**

**Amen.**

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