

The Presentation of the Lord
Homily by Bishop Felipe J. Estévez to the Vietnamese Community
in Celebration of the New Year
Christ the King Parish
February 2, 2014

A child asked her mom, the spirit of Christmas is so beautiful why does it go away so fast?

Today, with the celebration of the presentation of the Child-God, the Emmanuel, it is like tasting again the beauty, the simplicity of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Today, we hear the elders personified by Simeon, a holy and virtuous senior. Simeon had a marvelous dream – the day when he would see with his own eyes the expected Messiah, the Christos.

That blessed day came to Simeon as a great blessing, and this elder took the tiny child from his Mother, Mary and said: **my eyes have seen the salvation...a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory of your people Israel.**

We are the Gentiles! The Savior is the savior for the entire world – **Salvator Mundi.**

There is fear among our people. Fear of violence, fear of enemies who can harm us and make our lives miserable by their attacks damaging our reputation. Fear of sicknesses. Fear for the unity of the family in such a secular and at times pagan customs.

Yet the Gospel of Jesus repeats again and again: **be not afraid, you are mine.**

God wants us to live in peace, in harmony with our family and neighbors not distressed by conflicts and troubles.

Jesus said: **I am the Light of the World.** Let his word remain in our hearts and minds so that his wisdom, his knowledge may be our strength and our guidance!

As his body, each one of us is called to walk in the light. It is living in the truth. Walking in the light is saying no to lies, no to hypocrisy, no to omissions out of shyness, no to gossip.

The central message of Christmas is that the Eternal Word of the Father became flesh in Mary's womb.

He was like us in all things except only one area – sin. Listening this morning to the Letters to the Hebrews, the author marvels at the mystery of the incarnation. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the author makes clear the richness of this truth – this mystery. He says he is just like us so that He can be merciful and compassionate in our misery, toward us weak sinners.

He endured so much, he suffered such rejection and cruelty, and he was even tempted by Satan. Therefore, Hebrew says, he knows our struggle; **he is able to help those who are being tested.**

At times people make mistakes, people feel so ashamed of themselves that they distance themselves from the church, from the sacraments. We need to invite them to come to Christ who is with them and like the young say, "he is there for me." That is the meaning of **I Am the way**. Give Christ the joy of saving...of being a shepherd to the little lamb who is lost in the wilderness.

Let us all join Our Lady of La Vang, so loved throughout the centuries by the Vietnamese people in asking her to intercede for us for a year of peace. Let us keep her image in our hearts, as she presents her Son to all so that we can embrace him in love as our **King of glory!!**