

## **Presentation of the Lord - Luke 2:22-40**

Today's homily is for old people. Now this doesn't mean that if you are still in school or in your 20's and 30's, you can't listen to what I'm about to say.

In fact, I believe if you do listen, you may hear something important. But you won't understand it, because only old people can understand this homily.

They are the ones who know that life has an ending. "Wait a minute," you say, "people in their 20's know that life ends, that someday they will die." They do, but they don't believe it.

When you are young, there is always more time. You say, "I'll take this job, and if it doesn't work, I'll find another. I'd like to go out West. I can't do it now, but I'll get around to it someday. I'd love to play the guitar. One day I will teach myself how to do that." When you are young, life has no horizon. It is a group of years in which there is more than enough time to fit whatever in. There is nothing wrong with this, when you are twenty.

As you grow older, however, perspectives change because we change. Often, we are not ready for that change. A friend once gave me a perfect quote: "The only surprise in life is growing old."

Growing old is surprising because we never think it will happen to us. Then, one day we run up a flight of stairs and have to stop to catch our breath. Or we go to see our new doctor and she is the age of our granddaughter. We say, "Wait a minute. This can't be happening to me." But it is. What old people come to realize is that time is limited.

There are only so many good things that they will still be able to accomplish. That is why when old people buy their next car, they do so carefully, because they know that it might be the last car that they will buy.

If old people want to go to Italy, they go this year or next year, because they are not sure how many more years they may be able to travel. Aware that their life is limited, old people know that they have to target the good things that they still have time to experience.

This brings us to Simeon in today's gospel, Simeon was old. He knew his time was short. He also knew the one thing he wanted to experience before he died. He wanted to see the Messiah of God.

God told Simeon that would happen. Therefore, we have the touching story in today's gospel where Simeon takes the Christ Child into his arms, blesses God, and says: "Master, you may now let your servant go in peace. I'm ready to die. My eyes have seen your salvation." Aware that his time was limited, Simeon understood how blessed he was, because he saw with his own eyes the salvation of the world.

Now the beautiful thing about this story is that God tells Simeon that his wish would happen. We might think that God was so busy doing important things that he would not have time for one old man and his deepest wish.

But God did have time. God knew what Simeon wanted and God cared about his desire. This is good news for us who are becoming aware that our days are limited.

This gospel tells us that God knows what we want to see in our lives in the time that is left. It assures us that God cares about our hopes for the future.

One person might want to live to hold their great-great grandchild. Another might wish to see their son find happiness. We should also be prepared that God might surprise us and introduce into our lives things we never expected. There is still time to find ourselves saying, “Who would have thought that I would be doing this at my age.”

Today’s gospel makes clear that God cares about old people. God knows that our time is limited. God cares for the desires of our hearts.

Of course, there are no guarantees. But God promises us what he promised Simeon. God assures us that in the time we have left, he still has some great things to show us. Let us believe in God’s promise and wait for the good things to come. AMEN.