Our Sabbath Scripture Stories

FAMILIES RECLAIMING SUNDAY

Read aloud: Malachi 3:1-4
Hebrews 2:14-18
Gospel: **Luke 2:22-40**

Layers of fabric, the Bible, and two fluffy marshmallows were all laid out in the living room as the Pauline children rolled out of bed this Sunday morning. Sometime during the night, Mom and Dad had been busy planning the Sabbath Scripture reading the family would hear at today's Mass. A big sign was hanging by the living room curtains. It read: "The Pauline Action/Reaction Presentation Pageant." This would be fun!

"What's all this?" Vincent jumped in, "And who do I get to be?!"

Mom explained, "Well, your dad and I thought it would be a good idea to bring this Gospel reading to life. You, Vincent, are going to be our Simeon," she said, as she threw some fabric and a white wig on him. Next, she turned to Mary Clare and to Lucy with the costumes. "Mary Clare is going to be Anna, and Lucy gets to be Mary. Baby Ben will be our Joseph. The main attraction is going to be ... ta-da! ... Hillary's new Christmas doll, Baby Baa-Baa, playing the part of the infant Jesus!"

"Neat!" 4-year-old Hillary exclaimed, "and Baby Baa-Baa is all dressed up in the new furry lamb nighty costume that came with it!"

Out of the corner of her eye, Mom spotted Baby Ben grabbing at the two marshmallows. "Ben, wait!" she called out to him. "In the creative world of the theatre, those marshmallows are going to be our two white turtledoves!"

"It must have been getting late when you came up with that one!" the wise-cracking Vincent chuckled.

Soon everyone was in place, and costumes were set.

"I am going to read the passage," Mom instructed, "and you will act out the reading. And this is the great part," she said. "As you might have noticed, this is 'The Pauline Family Action/Reaction Presentation Pageant.' When we get to

The family cheered. Hillary sat down in front to watch as Baby Ben and

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Lucy with Baby Baa-Baa entered into the scene where Vincent, dressed as Simeon, was standing.

"Action!" Dad yelled.

Mom read, *" 'When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just 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 the sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.' " (Luke 2:22-24)*

At that point, a grinning and delighted Baby Ben placed the marshmallows on a table that Mom had turned into an altar.



Mom went on, *" 'Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared*

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in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." ' " (Luke 2:25-32)

The rest of the Presentation Pageant played out before the family's eyes. Lucy, as Mary, heard the prophetic words of Simeon that a sword of sorrow would pierce her heart. Mary Clare, as Anna, proclaimed the child Jesus as the Messiah.

The Presentation Pageant ended with Mom reading the words, *"The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40)*

"Okay, Kids!" Dad called out, as Mom closed the Bible, "now it is time for Reaction!"

"I have a question, Dad," Vincent said, as he pulled off his white wig. "Tell me about Simeon. What do we know about him?"

"Well," Dad began, "we read that Simeon was a righteous and devout man. He kept watch all his life for the moment to come when he would see the Messiah."

"So, who told him it was Jesus?" little Hillary asked.

"Good question, Hillary!" Dad said. "No one told him! Simeon knew, through divine grace, that he was holding the Messiah. God revealed it to his heart!"

"That is pretty neat!" Mary Clare said. "And wasn't Simeon also a prophet?"

"Exactly, Mary Clare!" Dad agreed. "When Simeon prays his 'canticle' of *'Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace ... ,' (Luke 2:29)* while the first part of his prayer is thanksgiving and joy, the second half is prophecy saying that Jesus would be *'a light for revelation to the Gentiles.' (Luke 2:32a)* And, he also tells Mary how she will be part of God's redemptive work and have to share in the sufferings of Jesus. That was very prophetic indeed!"

Mom looked up at the clock and realized how soon they would have to leave for Mass. "Alright, Kids!" she said. "Let's get all the costumes back together and start heading for the van!"

As everyone began moving, Mom noticed Ben grabbing the marshmallows he had put on the table. He looked like he was trying to stuff them in his pocket.

"Ben ... " Mom said, "what are you doing?"

He stopped and looked at her and then squealed with delight, "For church!"

Everyone burst out laughing. Mom swept up her young son in her arms and gave him a big hug. "I think we will bring the donation envelope instead!"

And, amid all the frenzy and giggles, they headed out the door.

certain parts, your father is going to explain what's happening or answer any questions. Does everybody understand?"

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