

Anna and Simeon



The Bible is filled with stories of faithful people who are older in age; like Anna and Simeon. Their stories can be read in Luke's Gospel, Chapter 2, Verses 25-38, when Jesus is still a baby:

'At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good, God-fearing man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's promised Messiah. Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the Law required, Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God:

"Now, Lord, you have kept your promise,
and you may let your servant go in peace.
With my own eyes I have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:
A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles
and bring glory to your people Israel."

The child's father and mother were amazed at the things Simeon said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, "This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart."

There was a very old prophet, a widow named Anna, daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She had been married for only seven years and was now eighty-four years old. She never left the Temple; day and night she worshipped God, fasting and praying. That very same hour she arrived and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for God to set Jerusalem free.' (Luke 2:25-38, Good News Bible)

Anna and Simeon must have prayed so many prayers and hoped lots of hopes during their long wait to meet the promised Messiah. With God's help, they recognised Jesus when he was just a small baby in his mother's arms. They can teach us much about being patient and staying faithful to God our whole lives. We have many 'Annas' and 'Simeons' in our parishes – older Christians who care for our churches and people without any payment. They too believe that one day they will see Jesus face-to-face.

Let's celebrate the new 'World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly' this July by finding ways to bless our grandparents, older church members and neighbours. Let them know just how much we appreciate them and the things they have taught us. Perhaps you could write them a thank you card, speak to them on the phone, or spend some time with them this summer.