

## A NOTE TO PARENTS

The Feast of the Presentation, or “Candlemas” as it is sometimes called (because the English church chose this day to bless the candles used in worship throughout the year), commemorates the episode at the end of Luke 2, when the aged prophets Simeon and Anna recognized baby Jesus as the promised Messiah, and greeted him with words that are a traditional part of Christian daily worship:

*“Lord, you now have set your servant free  
to go in peace as you have promised;  
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior  
whom you have prepared for all the world to see;  
A Light to enlighten the nations,  
and the glory of your people Israel.”*

Why was Jesus being brought to the Temple? And why the two caged birds, which *The Sunday Paper Junior* portrays but does not explain? Luke tells us that the family was carrying out the Law of Moses: “purifying” the new mother from the ritual uncleanness of childbirth, six weeks after her delivery, and offering the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” Exodus and Leviticus explain: all firstborn children, and all the firstborn of livestock, belong to the LORD, because the Israelites were spared the plague that destroyed the firstborn of Egypt. Firstborn livestock are sacrificed (but may be “redeemed” by substituting an animal of lesser value); children are “redeemed” by animal sacrifice: a lamb if the family could afford it, otherwise, two pigeons.

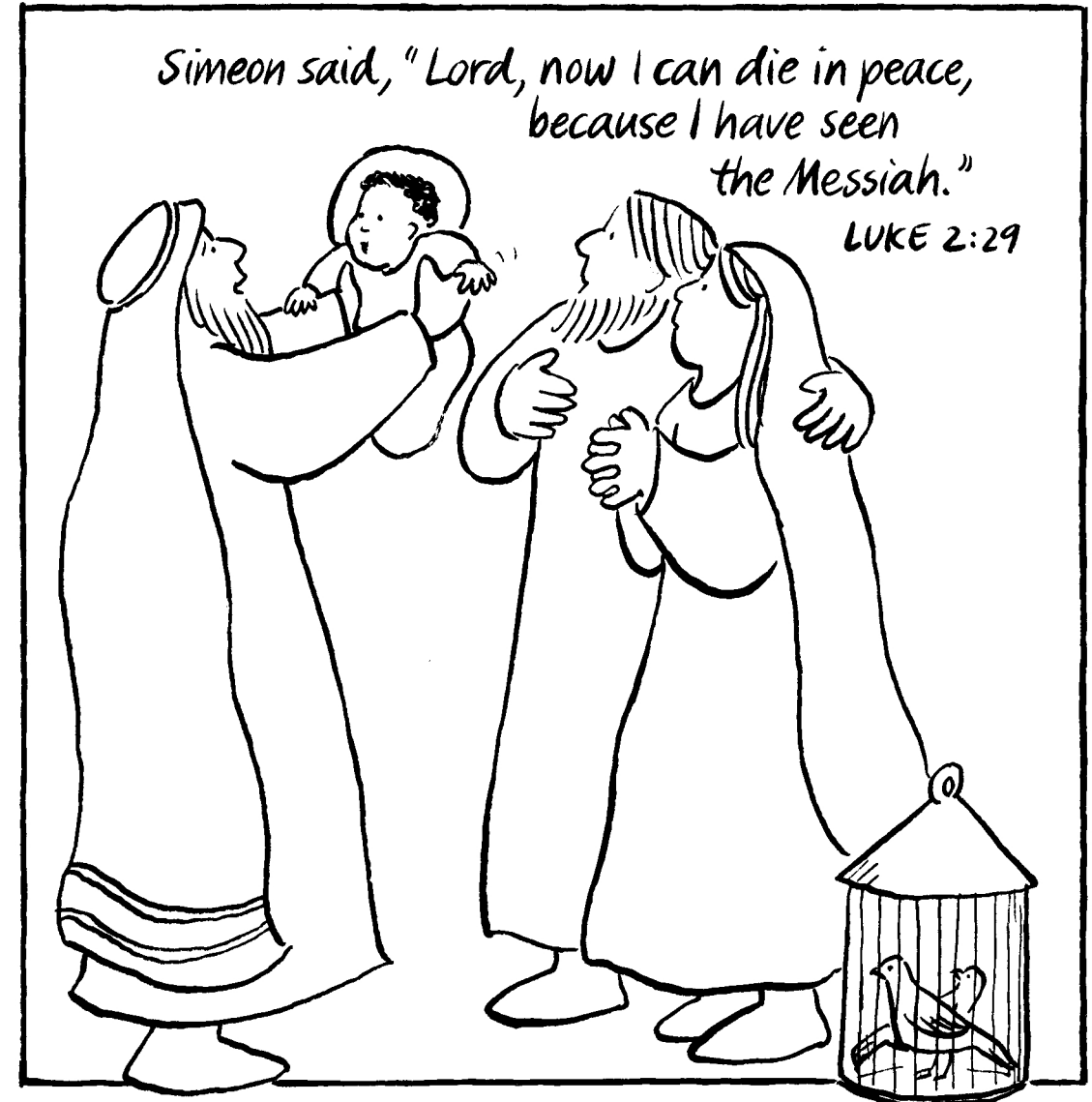
In this story, Luke lets us know that Jesus’ family was not well-off, that they were careful to observe the Law; that the story he is now telling grows out of the story of the people of Israel, who are told over and over again that they belong to God—but, unlike so many ancient cultures, they must never enact that conviction through human sacrifice. And in the words of Simeon, “a light to enlighten the nations,” Luke hints of his great theme, that the special promise once given to Israel is now to become a sign of hope for all people, everywhere.

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# THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

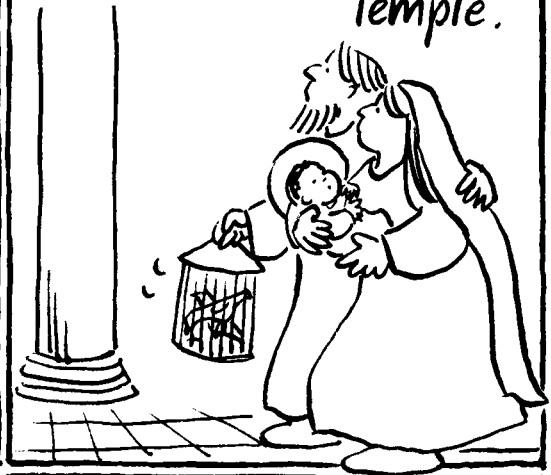
Feast of the  
PRESENTATION



Simeon was an old man. All his life, he had waited for God to send the Messiah.



One day, he saw a mother, a father, and a baby, going into the Temple.



In his heart, he knew this baby was the Messiah. He gave thanks to God.



An old woman named Anna also praised God.



The baby that Simeon saw was Jesus. When Simeon held Jesus, he called him "a light for all the nations." He thanked God for sending the MESSIAH to show God's love for all people.

In the star, draw a picture of Jesus, the light of the world.

