

Sunday Sermon 29 December 1963 Summary

In the days and weeks near Christmas we like to kneel before the crib to adore the divine Child and also to thank his Mother for bringing us the Saviour. When we look at our Lady near the Crib, we like to see here as the example and Mother of Holy Hope. With the birth of the Saviour her greatest longing was fulfilled. God the Father had set the seal on Our Lady's trust through laying the Saviour of the world in her arms. And yet the longing and hope of Our Lady by no means ceased with the accomplishment of the miracle of the Holy Night. We could even say that in a certain sense her longing increased. As she knelt before the Son of God and adored him she hoped that the tiny Child in the Crib might soon redeem his people. It was for this that she had longed and prayed.

Our Lady looked with a mother's eyes on her Child, and recognised in him the external, infinite God, God In swaddling clothes Just as we marvel at the infinite condescension of God who took on an infant form, so Our lady marveled at the mystery of this love. She looked with a mother's love on the helpless little King in the Crib, and she offered him every motherly care so that he might soon grow up to be the King and Saviour of the world. She tried to look into the future of this Child, and she tried to keep all danger from him which might hinder him from carrying out his sacred mission. According to the well known saying: "Where your treasure is, there is your heart also!", we may well imagine how the heart of Our Lady rejoiced when the treasure of her longing lay before her so helplessly and begged for her mother's love and care. With what love must not Our Lady have gazed on Our Saviour's and watched over his life.

Our Lady cared for the little Son of God with a mother's hands. Her hands are praying hands, the tending hands of a mother. It was not long before these mother's hands bore the 40 days' old Infant Jesus to the Temple, as was prescribed by Jewish law. With great love and devotion she took him to the Temple. Her hands wanted to offer to God him who is "God of God," and during this visit to the Temple she was to ransom from service in the Temple him who was already God, and who served God with each step and each rd. Believing that her Child was the Messiah who was to save the sinning world Our Lady undertook the journey to the Temple.

As Our lady climbed the steps to the Temple, ancient Simeon approached, a prophet and man of God, to whom it had been revealed that he would see the Saviour of Israel before he died. Simeon received the Child Jesus in his arms, let his gaze rest on him, and then opened his mouth at God's commission. He prophesied the fate of the Saviour, that he was to be the sign for the fall and for the rise of many, and he added to the Mother of' the Boy: A sword will pierce your soul." The heart of Our Lady must have been somewhat frightened or at least startled at this moment, for she had known nothing of this sword which was to pierce her heart. Of course she knew from the prophecies that the Messiah would be rejected by many, but she had not known the share of her own

heart! If we think of the close union between the heart of Our Lady and the Heart of Our Lord, we will not find it difficult to imagine that she gladly accepted this message of suffering. Her heart is a mother's heart which beat only in and for the Child of her womb. It is true, she did not know how all this was to come to pass. Yet she took note of these words and pondered them in her heart.

With the words of ancient Simeon: "A sword shall pierce your soul, so that the thoughts of many may be revealed," Our Lady may have realised for the first time that her service to the Saviour went much further than the childhood and youth of Jesus. If her Son, as she now heard, was to be the sign of contradiction, and if it was true that a sword was to pierce her own heart, then she must have a part to play in his entire redemptive destiny. Our Lady had until then only experienced herself as the Handmaid of the Lord. Now she saw more deeply into God's plan: She is to be his associate, He was not to bear the mockery and contempt of men alone. Not only was his Heart to bleed, but also hers. Thus Our Lady was to keep her heart prepared to share in the suffering of her divine Son.

With the same readiness with which she said her 'Fiat' to the angel at the annunciation, she now accepted the plan of the All-wise God. "I am ready to be his helpmate and Associate in the entire work of redemption." Our Saviour and the fulfillment of his mission is the deepest longing of our Lady. As a result she wishes to offer the price for it, and wishes to see her heart pierced by a sword. She wishes to drink the chalice of suffering to the dregs with him. She did not yet know how. The Spirit of God would unveil this piece by piece, and lead her towards that hour which is not only "the hour" of the Saviour, but also the hour of his permanent Helpmate and Associate.

"May your mother's heart unfold today where demonic powers powerfully hold sway
Reveal your power and your goodness as the Lord's Helpmate." (Prayer in Need)