



The Holy Face of Jesus

Newsletter/ Video log



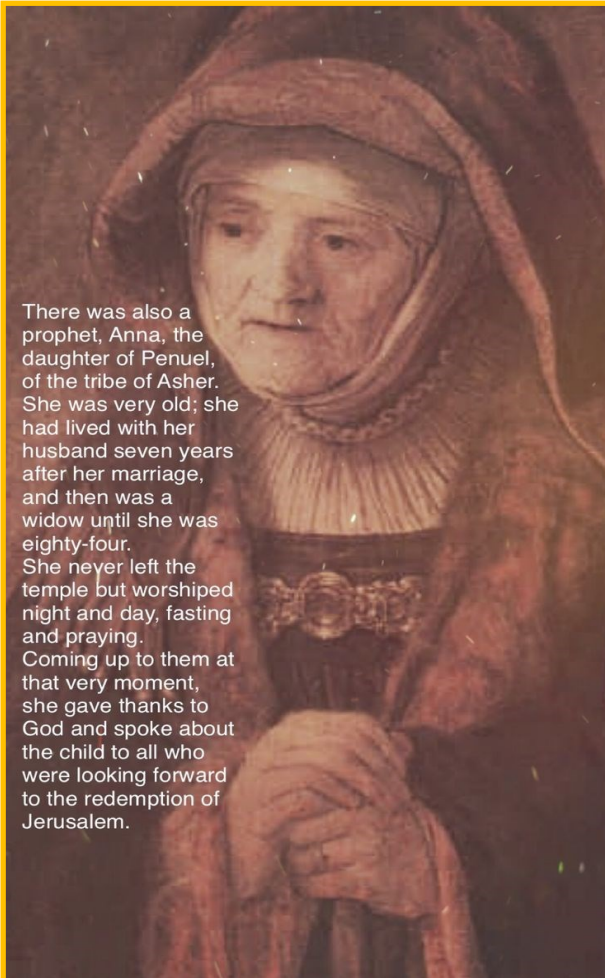
Issue 14 December 30th, 2024 'Anna, prophetess of the Holy Face'

Excerpts from [Vultus Christi Blog](#), on [Holy Anna](#)

Sixth Day of the Octave of Christmas 1 John 2:12-17 Luke 2:36-40

The sacred liturgy treats the holy prophetess Anna, daughter of Phanuel, with a particular sympathy. It is worthy of note that the Lectionary separates the account of her meeting with the Holy Family from that of Simeon, by whom she is often overshadowed. Holy Anna, in her own right, however, is deserving of more than just a passing consideration.

December 30th is her day.



There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Miriam Saint Luke introduces the prophetess Anna as the worthy representative of all the prophetesses of the Old Testament. First among these is Myriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron. After the crossing of the Red Sea and the spectacular defeat of the Egyptians by the mighty hand of God, Myriam, *“the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing. And Miriam sang to them: ‘Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea’*” (Ex 15:20-21). Miriam’s ecstatic singing and dancing roused the Israelites to the heights of an impassioned devotion; thus did she bear witness to the immanence of the Spirit of God.

Deborah

In the Book of Judges we encounter Deborah, prophetess, judge, and *‘mother in Israel’* (Judg 5:7). *“She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel, in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came to her for judgment”* (Judg 4:4-5). In many ways, Deborah, the heroine of Israel, bears a resemblance to Joan of Arc. When Deborah directs Barak to go to war against Sisera, the general of Jabin’s army, Barak replies, *“If you go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go”* (Judg 4:8). Sisera is later humiliated in death being put to death at the hands of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Deborah on hearing this, intones, together with Barak, a rather blood-curdling hymn of victory. (No shrinking violet!)



Judith: Anna reminds us of Judith who, as a young widow, “set up a tent for herself on the roof of her house and girded sackcloth about her loins and wore the garments of her widowhood....She fasted all the days of her widowhood....and feared God with great devotion” (Jud.8:4, 6, 8). This sets her up to accomplish literally cutting off the head of Holofernes, the satanic enemy and existential threat to the people of God who had planned their genocide. She could not have done so without this intense hidden spiritual preparation described beforehand. Again, Anna illustrates Saint Paul’s description of the special vocation of the widow to ceaseless prayer. “She who is a real widow,” he writes to Timothy, “and is left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day” (1 Tim 5:5).

The Face of the Infant Christ

Anna then, steps out of the shadows of the Temple into the light of Christ, on behalf of all

these, valiant women in Israel, Spirit-bearing mothers, dispensers of wisdom and of divine counsel. Anna is called “the daughter of Phanuel” (Lk 22:36); Phanuel means ‘Face of God.’ It is the very designation given by Jacob to the place of his mysterious struggle with God in the night. “Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, ‘For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved’” (Gen 32:30). The daughter of Phanuel is destined by God to gaze upon His face, not the terrible face of the Divine Holiness concealed even from Moses (Ex 33:20), but the innocent face of the God-Child, “the redemption of Jerusalem” (Lk 2:38). Anna, having gazed into the eyes of the Infant Christ, can say, “I have seen God face to face” (Gen 32:30). The gospel records that Anna “did not depart from the Temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day” (Lk 2:37). As a Jewish woman, Anna could not participate actively in the Temple liturgy; rather, from behind the lattice that concealed devout women at prayer, she would have united her heart and soul to the full-throated psalmody, the prayers, and the pungent offering of incense and sacrifices. Anna perseveres in prayer, not only by day, but even in the hours of the night. And this is rewarded by God who appoints her.

The Prototype of the Monastic Life or the hidden contemplative in the world.

It is always moving to discover in Saint Luke’s portrait of Anna the prototype of the contemplative nun, hidden in the heart of the Church. The prophetess illustrates all of the essential elements of the contemplative life. Enclosure: she does not “depart from the Temple” (Lk 2:37). Liturgy: she participates in the ritual worship celebrated in the Temple. Mortification: she fasts (Lk 2:37). Ceaseless prayer: she prays

she prays night and day (Lk 2:37).

Doxology (Praise of God)

Anna “comes up at that very hour” (Lk 2:38). Her meeting with the infant Christ, like that of Simeon, is no chance encounter. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of God’s mysterious designs. “She gave thanks to God” (Lk 2:38). For Saint Luke, every encounter with Christ bears a doxological seal, resulting in praise and thanksgiving. The encounter with Christ causes praise to rise from the heart, and come to



The Presentation in the Temple by James Tissot 1836-1902 Brooklyn Museum of Art

flower on the lips. In words certainly known

to Anna, the psalmist prays, “My mouth is filled with thy praise, and with thy glory all the day. Do not cast me off in the time of old age . . . and my tongue will talk of thy righteous help all the day long” (Ps 71:7-9, 24). Indeed, Saint Luke adds that “she spoke of Him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Lk 2:38). She cannot keep news of the Messiah to herself though she may have been dismissed or derided. In other words this woman, a matriarch at the end of her years, became the first evangelist of the Child Jesus. Having seen His Face, she proclaimed Him and the proto good news / gospel as His missionary. We who, by Baptism, have been “planted in the house of the Lord, to flourish in the courts of our God” (Ps 92:13) are called by God to “bring forth fruit in old age” (Ps 92:14). As branches abiding in Christ, the true vine (Jn 15:5), those who live from Eucharist to Eucharist are “ever full of sap and green” (Ps 92:14). For us, as for Anna, the Temple is the place of encounter with the living God, but for us that Temple is the glorious and indestructible Body of Christ, and the abode of the Spirit.

Blessed are you, Anna of the Face of God! And blessed are we who, even today, at this very hour, behold “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus, His Christ in the Eucharist” (2 Cor 4:6)!


Call to Action: HLI Ireland aims to get the Holy Face of Jesus into every parish internationally.

Remember, Jesus told Sr Marie Pierre in Tours in the mid 19th century, that He wanted the Holy Face prayers in EVERY TOWN, where they are “a weapon and a shield” and said:
“Woe to those towns that will not make this act of reparation.”

Become Familiar: through books, videos and talks. Pray the prayers for your priests to know the Holy Face. Embed the prayers in your parish by praying them all in one go (20 minutes) or pray one a day of the five (4 minute) prayers over five days e.g. Monday to Friday e.g. before or after Mass together. Organise events: video showings, book clubs, prayer meetings onsite and online.

Partner with Us: become a **HLI Ireland ally** and a **Holy Face missionary** to the world. Our entire operation is expanding, entirely running on God’s providence and we invest any surplus back into mission. We are upgrading our website, translating into multiple languages and funding for an international state of the art app to get the Holy Face EVERYWHERE.

Contact us: info@theholysface.com and let us know how we can help you and vice versa.

For an overview of the devotion go to our website right:	www.theholysface.com
History & Promises of the Holy Face devotion: >>>	Click History & Promises
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