

Mary, Heart of the Mystical Body
The Seven Sorrows Rosary, Week 1
The Presentation in the Temple

Today we'll begin our meditations with the Presentation in the Temple. In St. Luke's Gospel (2: 27-35) we read, "Simeon 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 in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Mary's experience in the Temple began joyfully enough, with the elderly Simeon welcoming the child Jesus and proclaiming him as the long-awaited Messiah. But then there was a sudden change of mood when Simeon prophesied that Jesus would be a source of controversy and that a sword would pierce Mary's heart. A sword thrust in one's heart wouldn't cause just a superficial wound; but a fatal one. Mary now realized that her Son would be a suffering servant and that she would suffer along with him. After the fiat of the Annunciation, God asked her for a new fiat. He asked her to accept a crucifying motherhood so that she could be intimately united to her Son's saving mission.

How could she have felt at this jarring news? Was she tempted to run away from her vocation? We would have been! But we know she didn't run away! During the Saturday night prayer vigil at World Youth Day Pope Francis spoke of Mary's extraordinary yes to God's call. It was not a tentative yes. She didn't say, "Well, let's give it a try, and see what happens." Mary was determined, "she knew what was at stake and said 'yes,' getting straight to the point. It was something more, something different. It was the 'yes' of someone prepared to be committed, someone willing to take a risk, ready to stake everything she had, with no more security than the certainty of knowing





that she was the bearer of a promise.... Mary did not take out an insurance policy! ... The 'yes' and the desire to serve were stronger than any doubts and difficulties.... Mary's mission would undoubtedly be difficult, but the challenges that lay ahead were no reason to say 'no.'"

During World Youth Day Pope Francis asked young people if they see themselves as bearers of a promise, if they are ready to commit themselves, to stake everything they have on Christ, like Mary did. This week as we reflect on Simeon's prophecy to Mary in the Temple, let's ask her for the grace to always say yes to God, no matter what. And let's ask this grace for young people in the Church.