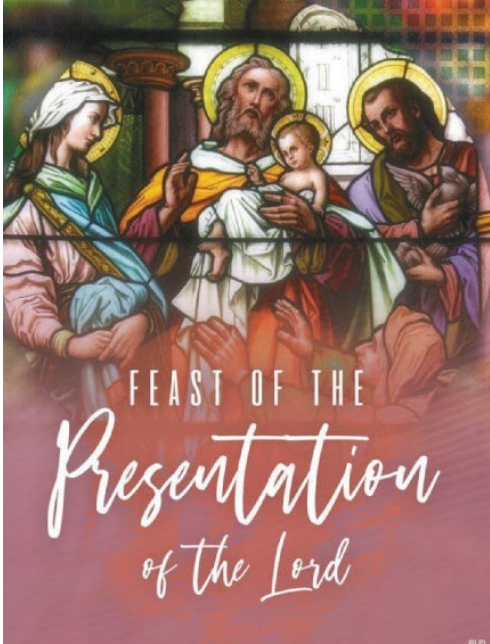


Scripture Reflection



In the Presentation of the Lord, our Blessed Mother is warned that the life of her son will end with a sword piercing her own heart, a sword that we see in many ways at the cross. I always liked the beautiful medieval image of the Seven Sorrows.

However, one thing I never liked about this image was the swords used in the icon. The current icon, using the very small, needle-like blades of the medieval period, is very different from the Roman swords with which Simeon would have been so familiar.

The Roman swords used a large leaf-shaped blade that would not have left a small pinhole but would tear open the whole heart, opening the love of the Blessed Mother to all her adoptive children.

When we hear the words of Simeon, we should never forget that just like with the Blessed Mother, sometimes the Lord uses the things that bring us pain, sorrow, and hardship to prepare and open ourselves not only to experience the love of God but to share it with the broader world. He who did not spare His only son likewise doesn't fail to give us the very experiences we need to be prepared for service to the gospel, just as He did with His mother.