

Candlemas, 2015  
The Rev. Canon Eric Beresford

In thinking about today my mind went immediately to the wonderful Bach Cantata written for this day. In German it is called "Ich habe genug". A friend of mine insisted on translating it as "I've had enough", but that would be a quite different take on the Song of Simeon! "It is enough" is how Bach's paraphrase begins.

So, "What is enough? What is sufficient? This is a question that is sometimes difficult to even ask in the midst of a culture that is obsessed with the myth of unending limitless growth. A society whose health is measured by whether the economy is bigger this year than last. Whether, we are in growth (good) or stagnation or worse recession.

And here in the commercial heart of this great city we are surrounded by signs and symbols of that preoccupation; the tall buildings that house the offices of the financial institutions, the shops whose profit must continue to grow if they are to stay in business, the dazzling variety of goods available to us, which we have simply come to expect. And in the midst of all this stands this cathedral, as a sign: a sign of the forgotten question, what is enough?

For Simeon, it was enough to hold in his arms the promised one of God. It was enough to know that, although he would never see those promises brought to maturity, God was indeed faithful, and at work in the hidden ways of the world: disclosing its, and our, true nature. For Anna it was enough to know that, as Malachi had promised, "God's messenger" – the one who would show us the face of God – had come into the temple. For Mary it was enough that God had called her to bear the promised one, and that God would bear her through the consequences and costs of that.

So what is sufficient? What is enough for you? Simeon says of Jesus that he would, "reveal the hidden thoughts" of women and men. That our response to him, would show who we most truly are and what most charms us. Is it growth, that finally insatiable appetite for ever more and more, or is it the God who is the fullness and fulfillment of everything that is. The one in whom we discover that there is truly an "enough" – that there is a fulfillment to our deepest and most desperate need – but only when we discover who we most truly are. And that is why we are here today in this cathedral. That is what this place is for, and why in the presence of Simeon and of Anna and of Mary we come to hear afresh this question. What is enough?