

## **Feast of the presentation of the Lord**

Forty days after the solemnity of the nativity of the Lord at Christmas we mark the feast of His presentation at the temple in Jerusalem. The feast of the presentation of the Lord was originally called the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is now known as the Candlemas in reference to the blessing and solemn procession of candles within the church.

The readings for today's feast teach us to recognize Jesus as the light of the world and open our hearts to His transformative presence.

In the first reading, the prophet Malachi gives us the preview of the role of Jesus in our lives. The prophet Malachi foretold that the Lord would come to His temple to refine, and purify the hearts of His people. The responsorial psalm echoes the message of the first reading reminding us that the Lord, the King of glory will enter His dwelling place.

In the gospel, we are presented with the infancy narrative of Jesus. Saint Luke recounts how Mary and Joseph followed their Jewish tradition by bringing the child Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to consecrate Him to the Lord. The Mosaic law required all Jewish parents to present their first-born son to the Lord by making a sacrifice either a lamb or a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Mary and Joseph offered the sacrifice as prescribed by the law. At the temple, they encountered two venerable elderly figures; Simeon, the prophet and Anna, the prophetess. Both were righteous and devout and were awaiting the consolation of Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon Simeon and it had been revealed to him that he would not taste death until he had seen the Savior. Simeon took the child Jesus in his arms and he blessed God. He proclaimed his famous song of praise called the Nunc Dimittis: "Now let your servant go in peace according to your promise for my eyes have seen your salvation which you prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:29). This Canticle is used as part of night prayer in the liturgy of the hours. Simeon declared to Mary that her child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and that a sword will pierce through her own soul so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. On her part, Anna praised God and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the liberation of Jerusalem.

Today's feast encourages all of us to learn from the example of Mary and Joseph. Like them, we need to take our sacred duty seriously and place in God's hands whatever we hold precious in our hearts, especially our marriage, families, children, friends, and relatives. As Christian parents, we have a religious obligation to bring our children to God. It is important to come to mass with our children, to help grow their faith and inspire them to embrace and walk in the light of Christ. Like Simeon and Anna, we need to be devout and open our eyes to recognize and embrace God's presence in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life. Let us recognize God's presence with us as we gather to be nourished and transformed by His Living Word and the Eucharist. Let us pray for the grace to allow the light of Christ to shine in us and through our words and actions inspire others to walk in the brilliance and splendor of God's light.

God bless,

Fr. Dr. Ben