

## The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord - Mal 3:1-4, Heb 2:14-18 & LK 2:22-40 (Year C)

**Theme: Like Simeon and Anna, let us also recognize Christ in one another.**

The commemoration of the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple of Jerusalem dates back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This celebration came to Rome in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. This feast is also called the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin or Candlemas Day. Candles are blessed on this day as a symbolic representation of the words of holy Simeon spoke concerning Christ: "A Light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory for your people Israel." Forty days after the birth of Jesus, his parents Mary and Joseph brought him into the Temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord as the law of Moses prescribed. According to the Mosaic law (Lv 12:2-8), the woman who gives birth to a baby boy could not touch sacred things. She also is not allowed to enter the temple area by reason of her legal impurity. At the end of her 40 days, she is required to offer a year-old lamb as a burnt offering and a turtledove or young pigeon as an expiation of sin. The couple who could not afford to buy a lamb would offer 2 turtledoves or 2 young pigeons, as Mary and Joseph did because they could not afford to buy a lamb.

In today's Gospel, Luke described the Jewish purification rite that the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph observed as another epiphany/manifestation of our Lord Jesus to the world. Through this presentation, Jesus is officially stamped as a member of God's chosen people through whom the world's salvation is to be accomplished. Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah that the prophet Malachi and other prophets of Israel foretold that would come to them. In the Temple of Jerusalem, there was a man by name Simeon. His name means "God has heard." There also was a woman by name of Anna, whose name means "Grace, Favor." They were both blessed to see the Savior of the Lord. Simeon, taking the baby Jesus in his arms, declared him as the Savior: "A Light for revelation to the Gentiles and the Glory for your people Israel." Both Simeon and Anna praised and thanked God for blessing them to see Jesus, the long-awaited Savior of the world.

Even though Jesus is God, he is also man except without sin. As the letter to the Hebrew pointed out to us, because Jesus is fully human, and as a high priest, he can intercede for us with his heavenly Father. Here are some few inspirational lessons we can learn from the celebration of the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord: First, Mary and Joseph presented their Son to God to show their confidence and faith in God's promises. They are, therefore, a model of faith and confidence in God who never fails his promises. Like Mary and Joseph, if we also place our faith and trust in God, and not in human beings, then no matter the storms of life, we will sail through because we serve a mighty God who is reliable and dependable.

Second lesson: Simeon and Anna are also models for us all. They both represent the hopes and expectations of the faithful and devout Jews who at this time were looking forward to the restoration of God's rule in Israel. They both prayed and waited to see the Messiah, Jesus. It is said that "good things come to those who wait." Yes, we must learn their patience, faith, and trust in God that he never fails his promises. Anna turned her grief into doing God's works. The Word of God tells us she served God night and day with fasting and prayer. She never left the Temple. Again, both Simeon and Anna gave praise and thanks to God for allowing them to see Jesus Christ. Like Simeon and Anna, we must also give praise and thanks to God for blessing us with his Son, Jesus Christ, who is always interceding for us in heaven. Thirdly, both Simeon and Anna recognized the baby Jesus as the Savior of the world. Like Simeon and Anna, let us also always endeavor to see Jesus Christ in and around us. We're also blessed to see Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, the real Presence of his Body and Blood at the Eucharistic celebration. Let us recognize Jesus also in one another.

Fourthly, we can also learn a lesson from the first reading. Malachi, whose name means "My Messenger," brought hope and consolation to his people who were going through difficult times. He promised them God would send his messenger to them; hence they should prepare for his coming. As part of their preparation for the coming of the Messiah, they are to purify their hearts which is a true sacrifice that pleases God. Like Malachi, we must also bring hope and consolation to those who are in distress. We also must purify our hearts as we prepare for his Second Coming. Finally, as we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, let us also present our life and our country to Jesus Christ. May Jesus Christ always find a place in the center of our life. Amen!

Today, we also celebrate a Day of Consecrated Life. Today marks the conclusion of the Year of Consecrated Life. A consecrated life is a permanent state of life recognized by the Catholic Church in response to the call of Christ. It includes those who live religious life or secular life. Please, let us pray for these men and women who have consecrated their life to serve Christ and his Holy Church. Let us continue to pray for more vocations into Consecrated Life.