

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD  
THEME: **LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE**

In today's feast we remember how Jesus, as a baby, was presented to God in the Temple in Jerusalem. The feast of the presentation of the Lord is a combined feast, remembering the Jewish practice of the purification of the mother after childbirth and the presentation of the Child to God in the Temple. It is also known as the Feast of the Purification of Mary, and the Feast of Candlemas. It is also called the Feast of Encounter because the New Testament, represented by the baby Jesus encountered the Old Testament, represented by Simeon and Anna.

Joseph offered two pigeons in the Temple as a sacrifice for the purification of Mary after her childbirth and for the presentation ceremony performed for the baby Jesus.

In our first reading prophet Malachi speaks of the Lord suddenly coming to Jerusalem to purify the lax, lazy, and indifferent priests of his Temple as silver is purified by fire. Simeon saw the Infant Jesus as the fulfillment of this passage. He saw Jesus as the Lord Who has to come to the Temple, "destined to be the downfall and rise of many in Israel."

St. Paul in our second reading proclaimed Jesus as our Eternal High Priest of the New Covenant, Who offered himself on the altar of Calvary, the only pure priestly sacrifice that could please God. Jesus replaces the former priesthood.

Our Gospel reading today describes how Joseph, as the head of the Holy Family of Nazareth, presented Mary and the Baby Jesus in the Temple of God for Mary's purification and the presentation of Jesus.

Whenever we come to Mass we come to purify and present ourselves to God. Although we were officially presented to God on the day of our baptism, we present ourselves and our dear ones on the altar before God our Father through our Savior Jesus Christ at every Holy Mass. So, we need to live our daily lives with the awareness that we are dedicated people, consecrated to God, and that we are obliged to live holy lives.

Simeon revealed Jesus as the light, not just to the Jews, but to the whole world. My brothers and sisters in Christ, the revelation of who Jesus is, is also a revelation of who we are. We are to be the light which will enlighten others, yet we are also to be the sign that is going to be opposed by others. As Christians we are called to shine out the light of Christ, even though the people of the world may prefer to remain in darkness.

Let us ask God at this mass, to give us the grace to always reflect the light of Christ where ever we find ourselves.