Feast of the Presentation

February 2, 2025

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Malachi 3:1-4 Ps.24 Heb. 2:14-18 Luke 2:22-40

Today’s feast day is one of the oldest celebrations in the church year. It has been 40 days since the birth of Christ, it is also called Candlemas, and it signals the end of the Christmas season. The tradition of blessing candles that ill be used throughout the year is also part of the celebration. The words and practices are taken from Simeon’s words in the gospel. He prophecies the child he is holding will be light o the nations, especially the Gentiles.

Mary and Joseph are fulfilling their religious obligation to bring their first-born son to the Temple to be consecrated to God.

In a sense, this feast brings together both the old and the new. The sacrifice required by the Old Law meets in Jesus who brings to us and to the people of his time the New Law of love.

Most probably there were several other parents bringing a first-born son to the Temple. Mary and Joseph would have waited their turn. Their ordinariness, displayed in their poverty of dress and offering of two doves, made them seem like any other couple coming to fulfill their religious obligation.

Simeon and Anna, two elderly people have spent years serving in the Temple. Anna worshiped night and day in fasting and prayer. Simeon, who often got the closest look at the baby being presented, since he held the baby in his arms, was paying attention to the prompting of the Spirit of God. Each of. recognized a special presence when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus. Their watchfulness and long wait came to a joyful end.

Anna speaks about the child as the one to bring the redemption of Jerusalem. Simeon blesses Mary and Joseph, but he also tells Mary that not everyone will accept the message Jesus will bring. Mary herself would suffer as she watched the rejection of her son.

Several prophecies are fulfilled because of this presentation. God promised to send a savior to the people. Jesus came not only for the Jewish people but for the whole world.

Today’s second reading reminds us that Jesus became like us, fully human, able to love, able to dream, able to feel pain. And as Paul says, Jesus was tested through what he suffered and is able to help us in our needs and sufferings.

This feast day also celebrates that Jesus is the light of the world for all people; secondly, Jesus fulfilled the law, he and his family obeyed the customs of their people; and finally, Mary and Joseph kept their deep faith and followed God’s will every step.

Simeon and Anna are an example to us that at any age we can put ourselves in the presence of God in our everyday lives. In the ordinariness of our every day, we can listen to the prompting of God’s Spirit and live in expectation of God being in our lives. We, like Christ, are to be light, not just to our family and friends, during this coming week, let’s check ourselves and see how we can shine a light in our corner of the world. Amen.