

Presentation of the Lord

Once a priest flew in an airplane. There was a young guy sitting next to him. He asked the young guy what he did for a living. He said he was an anesthesiologist. The priest said to him, "Me too", and the man wondered how. The priest said, "You give medicine to put people to sleep. I don't. People sleep when I preach."

Dear Friends,

Today the Church celebrates the feast of the Presentation of the Lord which occurs forty days after the birth of Jesus and is also known as Candlemas Day, since the blessing and procession of candles is included in today's liturgy. It was a custom in the Old Testament that the first-born male child is offered to God as an offering. So, they gave a lamp or pigeons to God as a burnt offering. Jesus was brought up to the temple by Mary and Joseph as a baby to offer himself to God.

The presentation offers two important things for us. According to the Old Testament tradition, it was considered purification and redemption. In the book of Leviticus 12, there are rules for these forty days of purification when a woman gives birth to a male child. It may not be applied in today's world.

The first reading talks about purification of sin and transformation. This is the last book of the Old Testament which makes a transformation into the New Testament. The prophet Malachi speaks of the coming of the Lord as a refining fire—purifying and transforming those who seek Him.

This Feast invites us for spiritual purification. In the second reading, we hear that Jesus became like us in every way except sin so that He could free us from the power of death. This reminds us that Christ's mission is one of healing, redemption, and transformation.

In the Gospel, we meet two key figures: Simeon and Anna, two faithful servants of God who had been waiting for the coming of the Messiah. Their encounter with Jesus in the Temple is a moment of deep revelation. Simeon, moved by the Holy Spirit, recognizes Jesus as the "light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of Israel." Anna, a prophetess, speaks about the child to all who were waiting for redemption.

Just as Mary and Joseph offered Jesus in the Temple, we too must offer ourselves to God, allowing Him to purify our hearts and guide us in His ways.

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 Jesus Christ at every Holy Mass. Hence, we need to live our daily lives with the awareness, both that we are dedicated people consecrated to God, and that we are obliged to lead holy lives.

I would like you to reflect two things: how do we offer ourselves to God every day in our lives? And how do we present Jesus to others? How do we share our light with others and the reflection of his light? Some examples to think about this week: a gift of service or helping hand, following up with someone you have been praying for, a phone call to someone who is lonely, or visiting an assisted living facility.

I challenge you to share your experience of encounter with Jesus to two people who are waiting to see or hear like Simeon and Anna.