

## Homily~The Presentation of the Lord in the Temple February 2, 2025

Today we are celebrating the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple. And for me ***this can be a good day to focus on both parents together.*** In the image of Joseph and Mary presenting Jesus in the Temple, we have a wonderful model of husband and wife united together in practicing the faith and in raising their child in the faith. In today's gospel both parents of Jesus, together, they make the long journey to Jerusalem to present their firstborn Child Jesus in the Temple as the law of God requires them to do. The Law of Moses requires every firstborn of the people of Israel to be offered to God, for God had slain the firstborn of the Egyptians but spared those of the Israelites when he liberated Israel from slavery. Every firstborn of the Israelites was therefore a memorial of this great event in Israel's history.

I am sure that this is the first time the child Jesus enters His Temple. And His presence in the Temple makes a difference particularly on Simeon and Anna. It is because His presence is worth dying for. Just look at Simeon, he was ready to die not because of old age but because of his encounter with Jesus which simply completed and satisfied all his longings. For Simeon, only Jesus satisfies.

I read this story of a young boy who was as naughty as can be. He had already been transferred from one school to another to help him with formative interventions offered by the different schools but to no avail. Finally, his parents transferred him to a Catholic school. And lo and behold, the boy changed on day one. Asked why the sudden change in his attitude, the boy replied: ***“When I saw that man nailed on the cross on every wall of my new school I knew they really mean business. It was like being told always, ‘Behave or else...’”***

Anyway, the presence of the crucified Christ changed the boy, although for a wrong reason. But if God is always before us or present in us, would it spell a big difference on how do we do things?

Actually we are not only celebrating the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. As we celebrate this feast, we are also celebrating two other occasions and these are: **Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary** and **Candlemas**. In this feast of the

Presentation, we are also celebrating the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Actually, she is not subject to the law of purification, but devotion and zeal to honor God by every observance prescribed by His law, prompted Mary to perform this act of religion. The Law of Moses ordained that after childbirth a woman should continue for a certain period of time the law calls her unclean, during which time she was not to appear in public. This term was of forty days following the birth of a son, and double that time for a daughter. When the term expired, the mother was to bring to the Temple a lamb and a young pigeon or turtle dove, as an offering to God. These being sacrificed to Almighty God by the priest, she was cleansed of the legal impurity and reinstated in her former privileges. A dove was required of all as a sin offering, whether rich or poor; but as the expense of a lamb might be too great for the poor, they were allowed to substitute for it a second dove. Such was the case, Scripture tells us, for the Holy Family.

We also celebrate Feast of *Candlemas* in today's celebration of the Presentation of the Lord. Candles are blessed on this day in commemoration of the words of Holy Simeon concerning Christ. Simeon calls **Jesus the Light** and sings with joy: "***Now my eyes have seen your salvation which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory for your people Israel,***" (vv. 30-32). In the past, candles were blessed and carried in procession, signifying the entry of Jesus as the light of the world. The light is symbolized by the candles we use at Mass, particularly the Easter Candle, the Christmas candle and the baptismal candle. All these candles represent the love, the warmth and the joy of Christ. We are called to be Christ's candles too.

Today we commemorate three great events, the Presentation of the Lord, Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and *Candlemas*. Let us be more like Simeon and Anna. Let us be joyful and announce to the world that Jesus Christ is the light that enlightens our lives. Let us strive to imitate also the humility of the ever-blessed Mother of God, remembering that humility is the path which leads to lasting peace and brings us closer to God, who gives His grace to the humble.

Peace,

*Deacon Don*