

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

February 2, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

*Please join in saying the text in **bold**.*

Welcome

Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Introduction

Dear friends, forty days ago we celebrated the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we recall the day on which he was presented in the Temple, when he was offered to the Father and shown to his people as a sign of his coming among us. His mother was purified, as we now come to him for cleansing. In their old age Simeon and Anna recognized him as their Lord, as we today proclaim his glory. In this service, we celebrate both the joy of his coming and his searching judgement, looking back to the day of his birth and forward to the coming days of his passion.

It is not ourselves that we proclaim; we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants, for Jesus' sake. For the same God who said, "Out of darkness let light shine," has caused his light to shine within us, to give the light of revelation—the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. *2 Cor. 4:5-6*

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

O Gracious Light *Phos hilaron*

**O gracious light,
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!**

**Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

**You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.**

The Collect

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The First Reading – Malachi 3:1-4

Thus says the Lord, See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

The Psalm – Psalm 24:7-10, *Domini est terra*

**Lift up your heads, O gates;
lift them high, O everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.**

**"Who is this King of glory?"
"The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle."**

**Lift up your heads, O gates;
lift them high, O everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.**

**"Who is he, this King of glory?"
"The LORD of hosts,
he is the King of glory."**

The Gospel – Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, the parents of Jesus brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Meditation

The Song of Mary *Magnificat*

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in you, O God my Savior,
for you have looked with favor on your lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your name.
You have mercy on those who fear you
from generation to generation.
You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,
Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.
You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the help of your servant Israel,
for you have remembered your promise of mercy,
The promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children for ever.**

Prayers

Let us pray to our God through Christ who is our light and life.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Eternal God, your Christ is acclaimed as the glory of Israel:
look in mercy on your Church, sharing his light.
Lord of light, **hear our prayer.**

Your Christ in his temple brings judgement on the world:
look in mercy on the nations, who long for his justice.
Lord of light, **hear our prayer.**

Your Christ, who was rich, for our sakes became poor:
look in mercy on the needy, suffering with him.
Lord of light, **hear our prayer.**

Your Christ is the one in whom faithful servants find their peace:
look in mercy on the departed, that they may see your salvation.
Lord of light, **hear our prayer.**

Your Christ is revealed as the one destined to be rejected:
look in mercy on us who now turn towards his passion.
Lord of light, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, you kept faith with Simeon and Anna, and showed them the infant King.
Give us grace to put all our trust in your promises, and the patience to wait for their
fulfilment, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Blessing of the Light

Let us pray:

God our Father, source of all light, today you revealed to the aged Simeon your light
which enlightens the nations. Fill our hearts with the light of faith, that we who bear
these candles may walk in the path of goodness, and come to the Light that shines
forever, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Song of Simeon – *Nunc Dimittis* (Luke 2:29-32)

**Lord, you now have set your servant free
to go in peace as you have promised;
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior,
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:
A Light to enlighten the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

The Final Responsory

Father, we bring to an end our celebration of the Savior's birth:
may Christ be born in our hearts today.

Praise to Christ our light.

We have shared in the joy of Simeon and Anna;
help us, like them, to trust your word.

Praise to Christ our light.

We have greeted Jesus, the light of the world;
may we be filled with the light of your love.

Praise to Christ our light.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. **Amen.**