



LIVING THE GOSPEL



The Presentation of The Lord February 02nd 2025

Theme: “[M]y eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples.”

Gathering Prayer

All: Almighty ever-living God, we humbly implore your majesty that, just as your Only Begotten Son was presented on this day in the Temple in the substance of your flesh, so, by your grace, we may be presented to you with minds made pure. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40

²² And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹ “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation

³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,

and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³ And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷ and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹ And when they had performed everything according to the

Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him

Gospel Focus

Simeon and Anna see parents consecrate their firstborns to God every day. On this day, though, these paired prophets know they are witnessing something unique. And their words amaze Mary and Joseph. Even though Jesus' parents have experienced angelic messengers and know their child is someone unique, their knowledge of his role in salvation history is still unfolding. Although their words are still mysterious, these prophets help these bewildered new parents begin to understand God's will for their little family. This is probably overwhelming, even more so than the normal burdens and bewilderment of new parenthood. However, Mary and Joseph receive these prophesies in faith, Mary adds them to what she ponders in her heart, and they continue on their journey with God.

Gospel Reflection

The prophet Malachi promises that someday the Lord will return to the temple, with a messenger before him. In the gospel reading today, the Lord does return to the temple. Simeon the temple priest grasps the importance of this visit, first by recognizing that it is indeed the Lord whom he sees. Simeon has been waiting for the arrival of a saviour, promised by God that he would be alive to witness. God appears not in might or majesty, but in the innocence of an infant. Coming out of Advent, we might take this radical presence for granted—perhaps we have been admiring the nativity scene at our parish or at our home. Alternatively, we might expect God to appear in glory as “the LORD in mighty in battle,” as today's psalm describes, picturing a God who appears decisively to solve all our problems. When Christ reveals himself to us, whether in word, in sacrament, or in the face of another human being, will we recognize him? Or will we miss him because we are expecting something else?

Upon recognizing Jesus, Simeon prophesies that “this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel,” and that Mary herself will be pierced. Malachi warns, “Who will endure the day of his coming?” Clearly the appearance of God is not all fun and games. A prominent theme throughout the remainder of Luke's Gospel is that the revelation of God prompts choice. If we recognize the presence of God in Jesus Christ, do we choose to follow, or do we walk away? Will we “rise” with Christ, or will we “fall” into sin and despair? As Malachi describes with the images of fire and lye, God desires to purify us, to cleanse us of all defect or blemish, so that we can “stand when he appears.” God is wholly love, and ultimately nothing that is not love can stand in God's presence for very long—this truth is grounds for Catholic teaching on purgatory and death. Refinement can be painful. Who among us wants to give up his attachments or vices, her worldly possessions? And who can do it without much struggle and anguish? As Simeon prophesies, Mary will be pierced for standing by Jesus to the end. Will we, too, persevere in faith?

Importantly, standing with God is not something that God asks us to do by ourselves. In fact, God's very relationship with Israel, concretised in the temple and likewise with us today, is one of abiding presence. Mary and Joseph provide a model of what standing with God can look like. At the presentation, they humbly give what they have for the service of God, trusting that God will do the rest. As Luke notes, they provide two doves as an offering for the purification ritual, given that they could not afford a lamb (see Lev 12:6). In presenting Jesus in the temple, Mary and Joseph offer back to God the very extraordinary gift that they have been given, acknowledging in this gift that neither of

them is Saviour of the world- their son is. If we trust in God's providence for each of us, then God will provide the grace to mould our hearts in his image.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Malachi 3: 1-4

¹ 'Look, I shall send my messenger to clear a way before me. And suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his Temple; yes, the angel of the covenant, for whom you long, is on his way, says Yahweh Sabaoth.

² Who will be able to resist the day of his coming? Who will remain standing when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire, like fullers' alkali.

³ He will take his seat as refiner and purifier; he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they can make the offering to Yahweh with uprightness.

⁴ The offering of Judah and Jerusalem will then be acceptable to Yahweh as in former days, as in the years of old.

Responsorial Reading — Ps 24:7, 8, 9, 10

R: "Who is the king of glory? It is the Lord!"

Gates, lift high your heads, raise high the ancient gateways,
and the king of glory shall enter! **(R)**

Who is he, this king of glory? It is Yahweh, strong and valiant,
Yahweh valiant in battle. **(R)**

Gates, lift high your heads, raise high the ancient gateways,
and the king of glory shall enter! **(R)**

Who is he, this king of glory?
Yahweh Sabaoth, he is the king of glory. **(R)**

Second Reading — Heb 2: 14-18

¹⁴ Since the children share in blood and flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the Devil, ¹⁵ and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. ¹⁶ Surely, he did not help angels but rather the descendants of Abraham; therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, ¹⁷ that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

529. The *presentation of Jesus in the temple* shows him to be the firstborn Son who belongs to the Lord.²¹⁶ With Simeon and Anna, all Israel awaits its *encounter* with the Savior-the name given to this event in the Byzantine tradition. Jesus is recognized as the long-expected Messiah, the "light to the nations" and the "glory of Israel", but also "a sign that is spoken against". The sword of sorrow predicted for Mary announces Christ's

perfect and unique oblation on the cross that will impart the salvation God had "prepared in the presence of all peoples".

Sharing and Discussion

- 1.** What sacred spaces (church, adoration room, your home, nature, etc) help bring God to life for you? Where do you go to hear God's word?
- 2.** Simeon and Anna help Mary and Joseph begin to understand the unique role their child will play in salvation history. Who helps you to hear God's call in your own life?
- 3.** A prophet's life is not one of popularity and acclaim, but often includes derision and solitude. How does one remain strong and steadfast in these situations?

Closing Prayer

All: O God, you have revealed the light of your salvation to all nations. Hear us today as we pray for ourselves and all the world, and may we be the light to the nations that you call us to be. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.