

Wednesday Jan 29 for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

OPENING PRAYER: All powerful Father, Christ your Son became man for us and was presented in the temple. May he free our hearts from sin and bring us into your presence. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE
Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22-32

The Presentation in the Temple.

22* When the days were completed for their purification* according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord,^h
23 just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,”ⁱ

24 and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel,* and the holy Spirit was upon him.

26 It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord.

27 He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him,

28 he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

29 “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word,

30 for my eyes have seen your salvation,ⁱ

31 which you prepared in sight of all the peoples,

32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.”^k

33 The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him;

34 and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted^l

35 (and you yourself a sword will pierce)* so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage,

37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer.

38 And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.^m

The Return to Nazareth.

39 When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.ⁿ

40 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.^o

Notes:

* [2:22] Their purification: syntactically, their must refer to Mary and Joseph, even though the Mosaic law never mentions the purification of the husband. Recognizing the problem, some Western scribes have altered the

text to read “his purification,” understanding the presentation of Jesus in the temple as a form of purification; the Vulgate version has a Latin form that could be either “his” or “her.” According to the Mosaic law (Lv 12:2–8), the woman who gives birth to a boy is unable for forty days to touch anything sacred or to enter the temple area by reason of her legal impurity. At the end of this period she is required to offer a year-old lamb as a burnt offering and a turtledove or young pigeon as an expiation of sin. The woman who could not afford a lamb offered instead two turtledoves or two young pigeons, as Mary does here. They took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord: as the firstborn son (Lk 2:7) Jesus was consecrated to the Lord as the law required (Ex 13:2, 12), but there was no requirement that this be done at the temple. The concept of a presentation at the temple is probably derived from 1 Sm 1:24–28, where Hannah offers the child Samuel for sanctuary services. The law further stipulated (Nm 3:47–48) that the firstborn son should be redeemed by the parents through their payment of five shekels to a member of a priestly family. About this legal requirement Luke is silent.

* [2:25] Awaiting the consolation of Israel: Simeon here and later Anna who speak about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem represent the hopes and expectations of faithful and devout Jews who at this time were looking forward to the restoration of God’s rule in Israel. The birth of Jesus brings these hopes to fulfillment.

* [2:35] (And you yourself a sword will pierce): Mary herself will not be untouched by the various reactions to the role of Jesus (Lk 2:34). Her blessedness as mother of the Lord will be challenged by her son who describes true blessedness as “hearing the word of God and observing it” (Lk 11:27–28 and Lk 8:20–21).

Questions for sharing

1. “Lo! I am sending you as a messenger to prepare the way before you.” How are you or how can you be a messenger of the Lord?

2. Who are the Anna's and Simeon's in your life and/or parish? What role do they play?
3. In the Gospel, Simeon says to Mary that because of her Child, her heart will be pierced with sorrow. What actions of children can pierce the heart of a parent? Do you have a personal experience you can share?
4. Name one thing today's Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed and act on.

Commentary

Because Mary and Joseph are devout Jews, they are obedient to the laws of their religious tradition. So this holy family makes the journey to the Temple to fulfill three different religious rites all related to the birth of Jesus: purification, redemption and presentation. Purification. In biblical religions, contact with blood made a person unclean and ineligible to enter the 5 Temple for worship. Bringing to the Temple a "sin offering"—a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons (the offering for a poor couple)—cleanses Mary and restores her to the worshipping community. Redemption. According to Ex 13:1-2, every male child belongs to God and must be "brought back" (redeemed); a male child is redeemed at the end of one month for five sanctuary shekels (Nm 18:16). Luke mentions no payment for Jesus for he already belongs to God. Luke downplays the redemption ritual by saying that the purpose of the visit to Jerusalem is to present Jesus to the Lord as it is written in the law of the Lord (2:22-23). Presentation. Technically, there is neither any biblical law nor any known custom pertaining to the presentation of a child in the Temple. Luke is using this language to allude to the story of Hannah presenting her child Samuel to Eli for service at the Sanctuary (1Sam 1:22-24). Luke's purpose is to show that the Holy Family is obedient to the law of the Lord. This obedience to God in all things will characterize Jesus' life and bring his mission to completion on the Cross. This story also signals Jesus' single-minded devotion to his Father and how that must transcend even his devotion to his earthly parents. Finally, the story features two very devout Jews who have waited all their lives for this moment. Simeon means "God has heard." He speaks an ominous word to Mary about "a sword that will pierce her heart"—an obvious reference to the sufferings Mary will endure because she is the mother of Jesus. A prophetess, Anna, whose name means "grace or favor," is presented as the ideal Jewess. Being widowed, childless and old, she is totally dependent on God's mercy and perfectly equipped to

recognize it when it appears. She heralds the Child as the One who will redeem Jerusalem.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Parish Hall and Zoom
Wednesday, Jan 29 6:30 – 7:30pm
Weekly on Wednesday
Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting
Time: Jan 29, 2025 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZolduisqDosE923wHRoszXqNBSkCL57ORPg/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhpjorHtKTthCORpx5Goj4d-jwpiFdj_oPzwjNMS9AeDvnGMBxOZFTRY

Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85136740699?pwd=Q2pXLzdzZFdNNU1NajVpeEtKUohJQT09>

Meeting ID: 811 6265 5618
Passcode: 280607

