

A Service of the Word for Candlemas (The Presentation of Christ in the Temple)

Forty days after Christmas the Church celebrates the day when Jesus is presented by his faithful Jewish parents in the Temple of God. In the natural cycle of the world, this feast marks the lengthening of the days and the approach of the new life of spring. In the cycle of Christ's life it marks the beginning of the public proclamation of his good news: the infant Jesus is acclaimed by the prophet Simeon as 'a light to lighten the nations and the glory of God's people Israel'. So arose the custom of marking the feast day with processions of candles: Jesus the light of the world fills the darkness of the church building and of the suffering world, for which as ever we pray in his name



Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. **Amen.**

Praise to you, all-holy God and Father,
through Jesus Christ, who is one with you from all eternity.
For on this day he appeared in the Temple
in substance of our flesh
to come near to us in judgement.
He searches the hearts of all your people
and brings to light the image of your splendour.
Your servant Simeon acclaimed him as the light to lighten the nations
while Anna spoke of him to all who looked for your redemption.
Destined for the falling and rising of many,
he was lifted high upon the cross
and a sword of sorrow pierced his mother's heart.
when by his sacrifice he made our peace with you.
In him is our light, our joy and our peace.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

Jesus says, 'I am the light of the world. Those who follow me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.' Let us then bring our secret sins into his light and ask for his healing and mercy:

Silence for self-examination, then we confess our sins:

God be gracious to us and bless us,
and make your face shine upon us:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May your ways be known on the earth,
your saving power among the nations:
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

You, Lord, have made known your salvation,
and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Prayer of absolution, then together we praise God:

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord.
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Silent prayer, followed by the collect for the day:

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.**

A reading from the Book of the prophet Malachi:

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.

Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 24, with the response,

The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!

The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it,
the compass of the world and all who dwell therein.
For he has founded it upon the seas
and set it firm upon the rivers of the deep. **R**

'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord,
or who can rise in his holy place?
Those who have clean hands and a pure heart,
who have not lifted up their soul to an idol, nor sworn an oath to a lie. **R**

'They shall receive a blessing from the Lord,
a just reward from the God of their salvation.'
Such is the company of those who seek him,
of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob. **R**

Lift up your heads, O gates; be lifted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
'Who is the King of glory?'
'The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord who is mighty in battle.' **R**

Lift up your heads, O gates; be lofted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
'Who is this King of glory?'
'The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.' **R**

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews:

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel acclamation:



Today the Lord is presented in the Temple
in substance of our mortal nature.

Alleluia.

Today the Blessed Virgin comes to be purified in accordance with the law.

Alleluia.

Today old Simeon proclaims Christ as the light of the nations and the glory of Israel.

Alleluia. Praise to Christ, the light of the world.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

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 (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 turtle-doves 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 for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped 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 favour of God was upon him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ!

Homily

Prayer for the world:

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

Father, your Christ is acclaimed as the glory of Israel:
look in mercy on your Church, sharing his light... ..
Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ in his temple brings judgement on the world:
look in mercy on the nations, who long for his justice
Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ, who was rich, for our sakes became poor:
look in mercy on the needy, suffering with him
Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Father, 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, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ is revealed as the one destined to be rejected:
look in mercy on us who now turn towards his passion.
Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

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.**

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

Silent prayer

An act of Spiritual Communion:

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits
you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have
borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you
sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my
heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and
follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

*Before the Blessing, all are invited to light and hold a candle as the Song of
Simeon is sung:*

**Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
according to thy word.**

**For mine eyes have seen thy salvation:
which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.**

**To be a light to lighten the gentiles:
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

**as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Blessing and Dismissal:

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill us with his grace to trust his promises
and obey his will;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be
with us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Let us go in the light and peace of Christ:

Thanks be to God.

