

CHRIST CHURCH SMALL GROUPS

The Presentation of Our Lord – The Week beginning February 2, 2025



Read 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.

Background: The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord is an ancient celebration in the Church. It is also called Candlemas because, on this day, candles are blessed in many parishes. These candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World. The feast is celebrated on February 2, forty days after Christmas. It recalls the day when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to present Him to God. This event is rooted in Jewish tradition. According to the Law of Moses, every firstborn son belonged to God. Jewish parents were to bring their son to the Temple and offer a small sacrifice in thanksgiving. By bringing Jesus to the Temple, Mary and Joseph followed God’s law faithfully. This act shows their humility and obedience to God. The feast celebrates three main ideas. First, Jesus is recognized as the Light of the World, a light for all people. Second, it shows that Jesus came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it. He and His family obeyed the customs of their people. Third, it honors the deep faith of Mary and Joseph, who followed God’s will at every step.

Talking Points:

- What did Simeon mean when he said to Mary, “and a sword will pierce your own soul too”?
- The prophetess Anna “began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.” How would you speak to others about Jesus?
- Mary and Joseph were obedient to God’s will. How can you show more obedience to God in your daily life?
- Are there any promises or prayers you are waiting on God to answer?
- What sacrifices can you make to grow closer to God?
- How can you be a light to others in your family, work, or community?

Almighty and everliving God, we humbly pray that, as your only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple, so we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.