

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple. 1/2 February 2025.

Superficially, the feast of the Lord that we are celebrating is about an important Jewish rite of passage. 40 days after a child's birth they were to be taken to the Jerusalem Temple to be presented to God and dedicated to their faith. In some ways (and not in others) it's akin to our Christian baptism; a dedication and thanksgiving to God marking the public, official beginning of a Jewish person's faith journey. St. Luke says that Mary and Joseph did all of this strictly in accordance to God's Law. In other words, Luke says Jesus began his life as a committed law-abiding Jewish male.

If this were all there was to it then this feast wouldn't be important to us. In fact, it probably wouldn't be a Christian Feast at all. It is though because of what happened at the Temple and the meaning of the words that were uttered by Simeon and Anna. To our eyes, enlightened as we are by our faith and by knowing the story of Jesus, we recognise that his presentation was far from ordinary. We understand that it's about a new coming of the eternal light of God into the Temple, into Jewish history and into the history of the world. There, in this child, came the light that perfectly fulfils the Law and God and brings into being the New Covenant of grace, mercy and forgiveness made freely available to all who seek.

The candle and prayer at the start of Mass symbolise this light of Christ with us now, glowing in his new temple, our Church, burning within each of us who are the Church, who are members of his living Body in this place and time. God's salvation, born 40 days ago, raised long ago in a little corner of this world was, is and ever shall be the light of the world. We're also reminded that his radiance is given to us and to all people of

faith and good-will and that his mission to bring and bear witness to Gods light is our mission, too. This is a call and a challenge that we strive to fulfil by believing, teaching and practicing our faith through our good works.

In conclusion, this feast day, as all of them are, is about Gods free gift to us in and through Christ. As we journey onward through our lives towards the everlasting temple of Divine light we'd do well to remember and pray these words; Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your Divine Love. Send forth your Spirit, Lord, and we shall be recreated and you will renew the face of the earth.