

# *Jesus is the New Temple*

SPRINGLINE PARISH DIOCESE OF LINCOLN

***Nine Churches, One Parish, Following Jesus***

YEAR A + EPIPHANY 4 + CANDLEMAS + 2020, THE WORD OF GOD: LUKE 2. 22- 40

## **Jesus is the New Temple**

The Presentation, the Meeting and the Purification are then all names given to today's Feast, but there is yet a fourth name – 'Candlemas' when candles are blessed today. In this country, Candlemas is connected with many popular sayings like: 'If Candlemas be fair and bright, winter shall have another flight'. This means that if today's weather is good, we shall have more cold and wintry weather before the Spring.

But what does this Feast mean for us today?

According to the Old Testament, the Jews were commanded to present their male children at the Temple in Jerusalem forty days after their Birth. This was to give thanks to God and pray for the mother and health of the child. The Christ-Child is only forty days old as Joseph and Mary presents him in the temple.

Since it is exactly forty days since Christmas, it is time for us to think about the last forty days and ask ourselves some questions:

What today can we present to Christ today? In what condition do we present our souls to Christ? What has changed in our way of life since the Birth of Christ forty days ago? What progress has been made?

Whatever our answers to these questions, on this, the Feast of the Presentation or the Meeting of Christ, one thing is certain: *If we do not open our hearts to meet Christ, then we shall never meet Him.*

That is why, Luke directs our gaze to the light of Christ.

With the story of Jesus' presentation in the temple Luke brings his nativity narrative to an end. Today we see this man, Simeon, who is described as *righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel,*

and a woman Anna, concerning whom Luke says: *She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day.*

Simeon and Anna are two sincere seekers of Jesus. Their lives were spent in living in expectation for the coming of the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

Simeon immediately recognizes in the child the fulfilment of the salvation God has promised, and with this recognition he knows that it is time for him to depart in peace.

The presentation of Jesus in the temple also foreshadows his later entrance into Jerusalem, where he will present himself to his Father upon the cross, as the true sacrifice for our salvation.

Simeon describes Jesus as *a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory of thy people Israel.*

Jesus is the one who fulfils all Israel's hopes, and in doing so he will extend God's offer of salvation to all peoples.

Jesus is the light from above, who enters into the darkness of human history to bring light into our world and our lives. Jerusalem and the temple are important for the Jews for the temple was the place where humanity encountered divinity, where God entered into our world. So Luke is telling us that now, in the child Jesus, we have the new temple, the place where God dwells with his people.

*It is to him that we must now present ourselves and our lives. He is the Living Temple with whom we can enter into communion.*

[ST Mattapally]