

Feast of the Presentation

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- As I mention in the bulletin, Monday is the feast of St. Blaise, and is a day that the blessing of throats is traditionally given.
- However, because Monday most people would be unable to attend Mass, we will have the blessing of the throats after Mass today.
- Don't worry...plenty of time left before the Superbowl.
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- Now today we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem. It's always on February 2, and just happens to fall on Sunday this year.
- But...what IS the Presentation...other than simply zipping through it as the 4th Joyful Mystery of the rosary.

- There are no accounts of where the Presentation comes from better than God's own words in the book of Exodus:
- *"The LORD said to Moses, 'Consecrate to me all the first-born; whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.'" (Exo 13:1-2) "Every first-born of man among your sons you shall redeem. And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of cattle. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb; but all the first-born of my sons I redeem.'" (Exo 13:13-15)*
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- In remembrance of God's protection of His people, all first-born Israelite males were dedicated and given to God at the temple in Jerusalem, and then "bought back"--or a better word "redeemed"--with a token 5 shekels sacrifice.
- There was no requirement by law to come to the temple for this, but I would suspect that Joseph and Mary, both having received

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angelic messages that Jesus was the Son of the Most High, and by the fact that Bethlehem was only a few miles away, felt impelled to go the “extra mile”, so to speak.

- And after giving birth to a boy, a woman would be ritually impure for 40 days (Feb 2 is 40 days after Dec 25), and at the end of that purification she would sacrifice either a lamb or, as in Mary’s case in the Gospel, two turtledoves or young pigeons.
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- In this story of the Presentation, we are given yet another of example of God’s love of humility.
- Looking at the bigger picture, mankind, in the persons of Mary and Joseph, redeeming the Redeemer...for in the Crucifixion, Jesus would redeem (“buy back”) all of us...all of mankind...from eternal death by the sacrifice of His own life.
- In Jesus’ case, God the Father is presented His own Son...God Himself not exempting Himself from His own law...so great is the humility of God.
- Wouldn’t it be nice if our politicians learned such humility?
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- Then they meet the righteous man Simeon, whom the Gospel says “the Holy Spirit was upon him.”
- Simeon’s soliloquy to God is often called the “Canticle of Simeon”, and is more traditionally called the “*Nunc Dimittis*”, from the first words of his prayer in Latin: “*Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace...*”, meaning “*Now dismiss, Lord, your servant in peace according to thy Word...*”
- And Simeon prophesies the rise and fall of many...echoing Mary’s own prayer (the Magnificat) at the Visitation to Elizabeth: “[*God*] *has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly...*” (Luk 1:52 RSV). Christianity would usher in the fall of the old order, and the rise of the new by the poor and the humble.

- And finally the prophetess—the holy woman—Anna...also given the privilege of beholding and recognizing the Savior before her death.
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- In this child...probably one among many that came to the temple every day...the Spirit led both Simeon and Anna to recognize the Savior.
- Why them? Because of their humility and fidelity to God.
- Neither ceased to worship...neither ceased to pray...neither ever ceased to trust in God.
- The lowly shepherds had been bestowed the privilege of seeing the Savior of the world before anyone else...and now here at the Presentation and in Jesus' future life as a lowly workman...we see how God values humility.
- If God himself lowers himself to live among us in a hidden life... how do we ourselves demand honors and praise?
- God's word in Isaiah is: *"This is the one whom I approve: the lowly and afflicted man who trembles at my word."* (Isa 66:2 NAB)
- And yet...Jesus' real "Presentation" was yet to come...when He presents Himself for sacrifice on the Cross, that we, His Church and His people, might be redeemed as He was redeemed at the Temple in Jerusalem 33 years before.
- Here at Mass we participate in that very same redemptive sacrifice...the Eucharist—Jesus—absolutely central.
- For God is not bounded by time; every moment is present to Him always.
- Every prayer, every sacrifice, every action of our lives He has seen from the moment of Creation, and will see for eternity.
- And thus He ever sees Jesus' redemptive sacrifice for our sins in His eternal "moment".

- Each Mass is not a separate sacrifice, but rather a participation in—and entering into—the one eternal Mass...a participation in the universal worship of all Creation of the Creator.
- Do we not say in preface before the Eucharistic prayer something similar to: “...*together with the angels and archangels, principalities and dominions, we sing the hymn of your glory as we sing: “Holy, holy, holy Lord...Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabbaoth...”*”
- When we seek God’s forgiveness in confession, He views us through the “lens” of the Crucifixion...hearing Jesus cry out: “*Father, forgive them...they know not what they do.*”
- This is his last plea for us...the last request of the Father’s beloved Son. How can He then NOT forgive when we seek forgiveness?
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- So let us always follow the path of Jesus...of God...who loves us beyond all imagination. Let us present ourselves to Him, asking for His grace to live Godly lives.
- Jesus in the feeding of the 5000 gave the loaves and fish to his disciples...not to hoard for themselves, but rather to give to others.
- That’s how God grace is! It grows with the spreading.
- The candle flame does not diminish as it is spreads from candle to candle, but with each act of giving, the light grows stronger.
- Likewise, with each prayer...with each act of charity...the light of God’s grace grows ever stronger.
- So let us today actively participate in this participation in the one, holy, universal and eternal Mass.
- Never neglect your privilege...your role in the common priesthood of Christ...and always actively participate in our communal participation in this worshiping celebration...knowing that we worship not alone, but with the Body of Christ around the world, and with the great cloud of witnesses of the angels and the saints in the Kingdom of Heaven.

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Reading 1

[Mal 3:1-4](#)

Thus says the Lord God:
Lo, I am sending my messenger
to prepare the way before me;
And suddenly there will come to the temple
the Lord whom you seek,
And the messenger of the covenant whom you desire.
Yes, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.
But who will endure the day of his coming?
And who can stand when he appears?
For he is like the refiner's fire,
or like the fuller's lye.
He will sit refining and purifying silver,
and he will purify the sons of Levi,
Refining them like gold or like silver
that they may offer due sacrifice to the Lord.
Then the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem
will please the Lord,
as in the days of old, as in years gone by.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 24:7, 8, 9, 10](#)

R. Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

Lift up, O gates, your lintels;
reach up, you ancient portals,
that the king of glory may come in!

R. Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

Who is this king of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle.

R. Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

Lift up, O gates, your lintels;
reach up, you ancient portals,
that the king of glory may come in!

R. Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

Who is this king of glory?

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The Lord of hosts; he is the king of glory.

R. Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

Reading II

[Heb 2:14-18](#)

Since the children share in blood and flesh,
Jesus likewise shared in them,
that through death he might destroy the one
who has the power of death, that is, the Devil,
and free those who through fear of death
had been subject to slavery all their life.
Surely he did not help angels
but rather the descendants of Abraham;
therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters
in every way,
that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God
to expiate the sins of the people.
Because he himself was tested through what he suffered,
he is able to help those who are being tested.

Gospel

[Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22-32](#)

When the days were completed for their purification
according to the law of Moses,
Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem
to present him to the Lord,
just as it is written in the law of the Lord,
Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,
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.

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.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit
that he should not see death
before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.
He came in the Spirit into the temple;

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and when the parents brought in the child Jesus
to perform the custom of the law in regard to him,
he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:
"Now, Master, you may let your servant go
in peace, according to your word,
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples:
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and glory for your people Israel."

The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him;
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
and you yourself a sword will pierce
so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."
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,
and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.
She never left the temple,
but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer.
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.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions
of 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.

or

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