

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord C2025

The Gospel of this morning talks about the presentation of our Lord in the Temple. This feast has been celebrated in the church since the seventh century. Celebrated forty days after Christmas, it commemorates the ritual prescribed by the Law of Moses in the book of Exodus 13: 2, 12 that recommends "Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord".

At that occasion, an offering in the temple of turtledoves or pigeons was also required. At that occasion too, Mary and Joseph met in the Temple Simeon and Anna, devout and holy people, who were waiting the consolation of Israel by the coming of the Messiah.

Mary and Joseph, as good parents and fearful of God could miss such an opportunity to show their attachment to the Law of Moses and their faithfulness to God by consecrating their first born son to God in the temple.

In the first book of Samuel 1:1-27, the same tradition has been respected with regard to the young Samuel by his parents Hannah and Elkanah. His mother Hannah came to the Temple and consecrated him according to the Law of Moses. After the consecration, she left him in the temple with Eli for the service of the Lord. In the case of our Lord, Mary and Joseph did not leave Jesus in the temple, but returned home with him.

That was a sign that our Lord was destined to more a big task than simply to remain in the temple of Jerusalem. He was himself a sign of God's presence in the midst of his people and only the consecration of his own body on the altar of the cross would bring peace between God and the whole human race. In any case, one thing is sure, namely that after his consecration in the temple the young Jesus went on growing, becoming strong, filled with wisdom and the favor of God was upon him as Simeon and Anna witnessed to his presence as the fulfillment of God's promise to his people.

Today's feast of the presentation of our Lord reminds us that our hope and deepest longings will be fulfilled by our faithful God. We will be satisfied, for all our longings that match the values of God's Kingdom will be fulfilled. All our hopes, expectations and desires, which are conforms to the will of God will be met.

By presenting our Lord in the temple Mary and Joseph fulfill the requirement of the Law. By doing so, they show that they are true worshipers of God. A true worshiper of God is not only the one who knows the Law and its requirement, but also the one who strives to put it into practice. The Law might be demanding, but he knows that he cannot live without it because it gives meaning to his life.

By presetting our Lord in the temple, Mary and Joseph manifest publicly their obedience to God. Where there is obedience, there is a stripping out of our own will so that only the will of God might prevail within us. Anyone who wants always to do what pleases him and never what pleases God cannot expect to be in harmony with him.

Moreover, to obey God is to make ourselves ready to accept his commandments. When someone does not obey, it is always because of lack of faith in God who speaks. It is proven that the one who does not obey turns a deaf ear, does not listen to the voice of God, and finds always objections to what it is brought to him. In the end, he remains in perpetual darkness as he intentionally closes his eyes lest he sees, and puts his fingers in his ears lest he hears God's commands. Mary and Joseph obey God in knowing well that without obedience there is no way of pleasing him.

By presenting Jesus in the temple, Mary and Joseph acknowledge that their baby is a gift from God. He is not the fruit of their making, but rather that of God's grace and bounty upon them. In that sense, the presentation takes the sense of thanksgiving to God for the blessing he has bestowed on them. Mary and Joseph acknowledge that they are not their own master, but it is God who is the master and giver of the gifts we enjoy in this world. Because God is the master, we, human beings depend on him and our life has no sense outside of him. What we can do is just to be grateful to him for the gifts and blessings we receive from his hands.

The presentation of our Lord in the temple is a moment of revelation of the sorrows that will pierce the heart of Mary: "and you yourself a sword will pierce..." Those sorrows have to do with the Blessed Mother's suffering in seeing the rejection of our Lord by the Jewish establishment; the negative response reserved to his teaching and his Passion and death on the cross. Our Lady witnessed and shared the grief of a Son who bore the weight of the sins of the world and died on the cross for our salvation.

We pray that the Lord may help us understand that all the blessings and gifts we enjoy in this world come from his hands. Therefore, it is our duty to be grateful to him by offering him back what we have received from his generosity. Amen!

Malachi 3: 1-4; Hebrews 2: 14-18; Luke 2: 22-40



Homily Date: January 26, 2025
© 2025 – Fr Felicien I. Mbala, PhD, STD
Contact: www.mbala.org
Document Name: 20250202homily.pdf