

The Feast of the Presentation

This feast is also known as Candlemas and it is the final end to Christmas. On this feast, it was traditional to bless the candles for the year and also to use those candles to bless throats on the feast of St Blaise on the day after. Candles have always had a special place in the Church, first for their light properties but second for their way of life. Yes, the way of a candle is that it gives up its life to create light. It a reminder to each of us that we, too, are created to give light by our lives.

As I was getting ready for this Mass, I was thinking about the Feast of the Presentation and wondered what we can get from this Feast. I believe that when we encounter the Christ we should be changed, healed or perfected, inspired to live our life in the new and holy way that God has given us. So what can you and I take home from the Feast of the Presentation?

For me, I see some great examples here and people that see things in a way that I don't see. Simeon - he spent his whole life waiting to meet the Messiah. He waits faithfully for many years and he has a great delight in meeting him. He teaches me that there is something great here that is happening in the Mass and I must daily prepare myself for this great thing that is happening. Such joy, such knowledge he has because he has spent his life preparing. I want to have that desire and excitement in encountering the Messiah. He is here, and woe is me that my heart is too dead to rejoice that my hope and salvation have come so near.

Then we have the example of Mary and Joseph. Poor and humble, offering the minimum to fulfill the requirement that God required, not because they were cheap but because they were poor. You were supposed to offer a sheep or goat to redeem your first born son as a reminder of the Passover and how God ransomed His people from Egypt. Now they are bringing the Lamb of God to the temple to thank God for this son. I like how Mary and Joseph are faithful. They don't think that the law doesn't apply to them, even though they have the Son of God here. They could have thought that that was the old covenant and now they have the new one. No, they follow the Law. I love the Holy Family. They are so humble and in no need of salvation, so to speak. The work for Mary was done and Jesus was God and Joseph was pretty incredible but they did not consider themselves above the Law. Are there ways that we consider ourselves above the Law? Are there things that we feel we don't have to follow in the Laws of God and His Church? I think this is a great example of humility and obedience.

Next there is Anna the prophet. She is an interesting character to say the least. She is from the tribe of Asher. That might not seem weird to you but if your biblical history is not quite up to date, ten of the Tribes were lost. They were taken away in captivity and never came back. Judah, Benjamin and Levi were all that were left. Asher was lost and now she is back. Asher is back because the Messiah is here and Asher, too, is waiting to be saved. To be once again joined back into the folds of Christ. There is only one who saves and that is the one whose name is "God Saves" - Jesus. We, too, can follow the prophetic vocation of Anna and draw others back into the salvation that Jesus is offering.

As we encounter this great feast of light we, too, are reminded that we are called to be lights to the world. Jesus today will be coming into our temple to consecrate it for a holy purpose, to bring a light that our hearts want. A consolation that our heart wants and truth that our heart needs. This feast is meant to change us, to strengthen us, to give us the light we need to share Christ to the world.