



CELEBRATING AT HOME
THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

If Christ is the light, who are we? (Luke 2:22-40)



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Today's feast recalls the presentation of Jesus in the Temple forty days after his birth. It was a common Jewish religious practice to offer a sacrifice to present the first-born male child to the Lord and for the purification of the mother. Liturgically, the celebration of the feast includes the blessing of candles followed by a procession with the lighted candles, recalling the great Christmas feast of Light. A rite of Blessing of Candles is provided here for those unable to attend the Eucharist this Sunday.

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Blessing of Candles

All gather with unlit candles.

Forty days ago we celebrated the joyful feast of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we recall the holy day on which he was presented in the temple, fulfilling the law of Moses.

Led by the Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the temple, recognized Christ as their Lord, and proclaimed him with joy.

Let us pray.

**God, source of all light,
today you revealed to Simeon
Christ, the Light of the nations.**

Bless these candles and make them holy.
**May we who carry them to praise your glory
walk in the path of goodness
and come to the light that shines for ever.**
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The candles are now lit and remain lit until the conclusion of the Gospel reading.

Scripture Reading (Luke 2:22-40)

When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, –

observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord – and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said:

'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised;
because my eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared for all the nations to see,
a light to enlighten the pagans
and the glory of your people Israel.'

As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.'

There was a prophetess also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile the child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him.

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Reflection - *If Christ is the Light, who are we?*

Today's Gospel tells us the story of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. During the presentation, two holy people, Simeon and Anna, witness to Jesus as the "light of the nations". So, it is the Church's custom to celebrate this feast with the blessing and lighting of candles - a reference to the Christmas theme of light. The candles can serve as a reminder that Christ, our Light, is always present with us.

In the gospel, Luke presents Simeon as one who looks forward to the salvation promised by God through the prophets and who recognises that salvation in the child before him. Anna speaks about the child to all who were looking forward to the deliverance (salvation) of Jerusalem. Both proclaim Jesus as the 'promised one of God'. Simeon describes Jesus as, 'a light to enlighten the pagans, and the glory of your people Israel.'

If Christ is the Light, then who are we? The Gospels tell us not only who Jesus is, but who we are, too, as members of the Body of Christ, living and working under the reign of God's grace.

Today's feast draws our attention back to Christmas with its theme of light. It also draws our attention to wonder how we, as the Body of Christ here and now, might be Light for each other especially in the darkness of human experience.

Prayers of Intercession

May your Church and its leaders,
**always be a light for the nations of our times,
and a way to truth and freedom.**

Jesus was dedicated to God in the temple and blessed by Simeon.

Have mercy on children who have no one to guide them in the path of holiness.

The people of Israel longed for the coming of the Messiah for many generations.

Show compassion to all who are exiled from their homelands or cut off from their families.

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

Thy kingdom come.

**Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Closing Prayer

O gentle, strong God, we rejoice in your care for us.

**Let the saving light of Jesus bring truth and peace
to our world.**

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

Rejoicing in God's love for us

**we go now in peace and love
carrying the light of Christ within us. Amen.**



Journey into the Light

This resource is presented by the Carmelites for use by individuals, families and small groups as a prayerful celebration of the Word of God to help prepare us to celebrate the Eucharist with our worshipping communities. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. We are also conscious of the many people who, for various reasons including sickness and infirmity, cannot physically attend the Eucharist. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer all the members of our family.



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