

Sunday 31 January, 2021

The Presentation of Christ in Temple
(Candlemas)



*If a household are praying together,
one person may act as leader and the
others as the congregation and they
join in the words in bold type.*

If alone, read all the words aloud.

*You may want to light a candle before you begin, and have
a Bible,
cross or crucifix to look at.*

*You might prepare for this act of worship by listening to
some music, or by being still.*

Preparation

At Candlemas we cross a threshold: it is a vantage point from which we look back 40 days to Christmas, and forward to the approaching seasons of Lent and Passiontide. Simeon's words in the Gospel help us do this. He recognizes Jesus as the embodiment of salvation for all, but warns Mary of the suffering and pain to come. The feast calls us to be 'temples' with Christ making his home within us.

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

The Act of Penitence

Hear the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ:
'I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me shall never walk in darkness
but shall have the light of life.'
Let us therefore bring our sins into his light
and confess them in penitence and faith.

cf John 8.12

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our
neighbour, in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love,
and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. **Amen.****

Words of forgiveness

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Special Prayer for this week

Lord Jesus Christ,
light of the nations and glory of Israel:
make your home among us,
and present us pure and holy
to your heavenly Father,
your God, and our God. **Amen**

The Word of the Lord

First Reading | Hebrews 2. 14-18

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

Since the children share flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The Holy Gospel | Luke 2. 22-40

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke
Glory to you, O Lord

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.' Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.' And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.' There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by 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 favour of God was upon him

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ.

Affirmation of faith

With our Christian brothers and sisters, we affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.**

**Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is
Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

cf Philipians 2.6-11

Prayers of intercession

*(Here you may wish to offer prayer in your own words,
or be prompted by the words here)*

*We pray for our world, especially at this time of anxiety
and fear...*

We pray for our nation and its well-being...

*We pray for neighbours, family and friends and we
remember all those self-isolating at the moment...*

*We pray for all who are sick, worried or anxious, and for
those who feel cut off from friends and family...*

*We pray for those who have died in recent days, and all
whom we remember with love and affection....*

The Lord's Prayer

Joining with Christians throughout the world,
we pray:

Our Father...

or

Our Father in heaven...

The Grace

We conclude our prayers

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God, and the fellowship of the
Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen**

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate
us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.