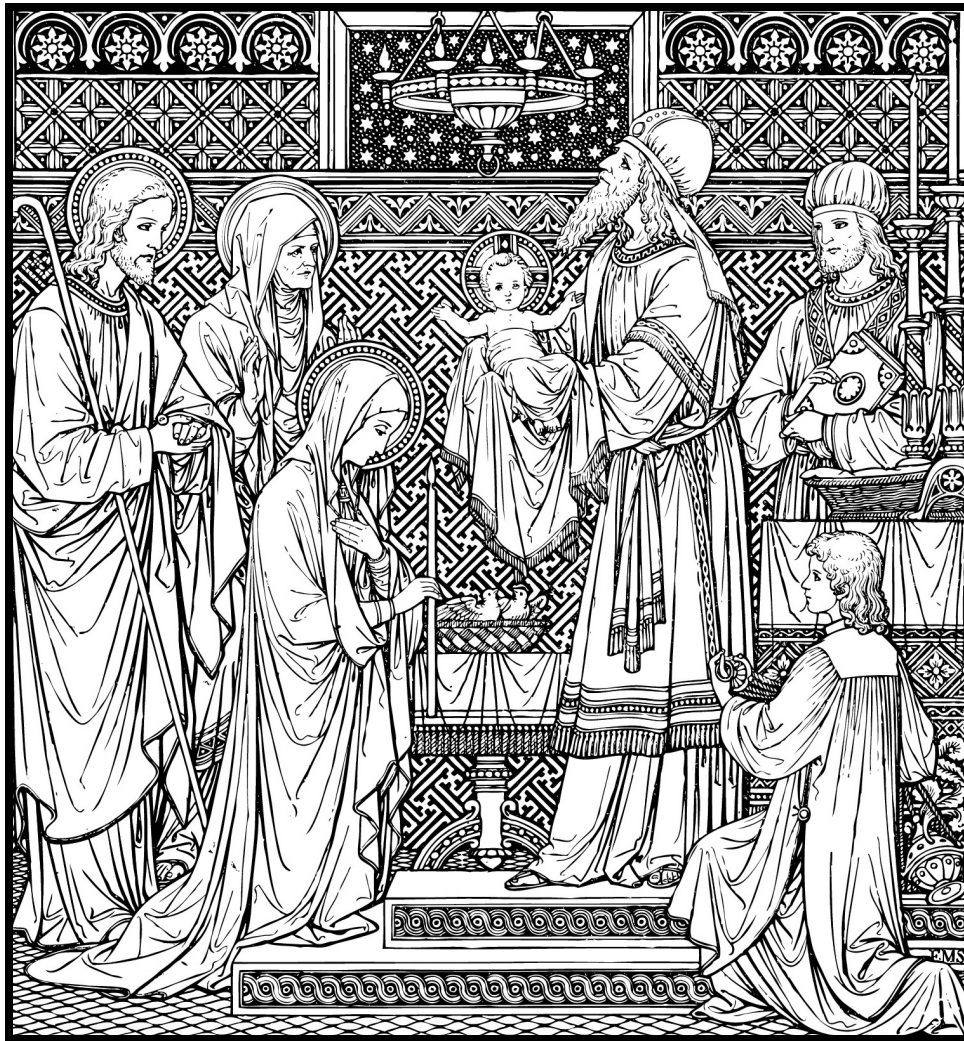


Solemnity of the Presentation

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2020

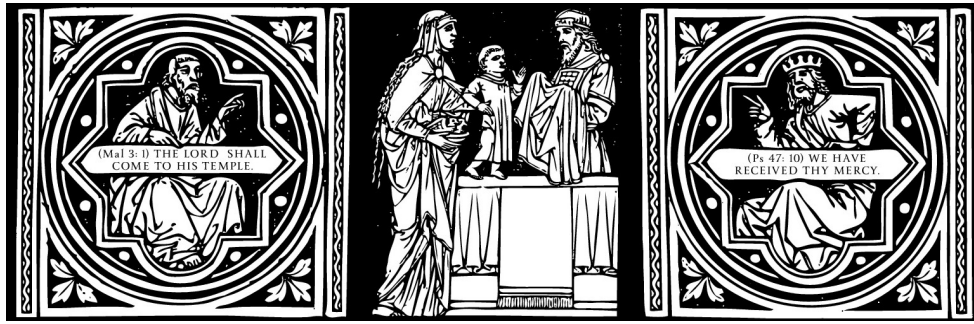
Bring candles from home or blessed candles will be available in the church next weekend for a donation



Background on the Feast

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple occurs on February 2; 40 days after the Nativity and the traditional close to the Christmas Season. It is known as **Candlemas Day**, and the **Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary**.

This is a day of purification, renewal, and hope. We commemorate Mary's obedience to the Mosaic Law by submitting herself to the Lord for the ritual purification, as commanded in Leviticus. Mary, of course, didn't *need* this purification, but she submitted out of obedience to the Law. Also, Our Lady and St. Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple for His "redemption," also per the Law. The "redeeming of the firstborn," known as *pidyon ha-ben* in Hebrew, is why this day is also known as The Presentation.



Commemorated on this "Feast of Light" is the prophecy of Simeon – the just and devout man of Jerusalem who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to know that he would live to see the "consolation of Jerusalem" – and the encounter with Anna, the Prophetess, who lived in the Temple and confessed Christ upon meeting Him.

It was Simeon to whom Mary presented Jesus, and in his prophecy to her, he told Mary her heart would be pierced with a sword. This prophecy and the sorrows that befell Mary during her life are why depictions of the Immaculate Heart always show her heart pierced by a sword. Before Simeon gave this prophecy to Mary, he referred to her Infant Son as the **Light to the revelation of the Gentiles**, and because of this, light and candles play an important role, hence the most common name for this Feast – **"Candlemas."**

At the Sunday Masses next weekend, there will be a blessing of candles. The symbolism of the candles is described by Dom Prosper Gueranger, OSB, in his "Liturgical Year":

The mystery of today's ceremony has frequently been explained by liturgists, dating from the 7th century. According to Ivo of Chartres, the wax, which is formed from the juice of flowers by the bee, always considered as the emblem of virginity, signifies the virginal flesh of the Divine Infant, who diminished not, either by His conception or His birth, the spotless purity of His Blessed Mother. The same holy bishop would have us see, in the flame of our Candle, a symbol of Jesus who came to enlighten our darkness. St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking on the same mystery, bids us consider three things in the blessed Candle: the wax, the wick, and the flame. The wax, he says, which is the production of the virginal bee, is the Flesh of our Lord; the wick, which is within, is His Soul; the flame, which burns on top, is His divinity.

The blessing of candles on Candlemas is one of the three principle blessings of objects during the liturgical year. The others are the blessing of palms on Palm Sunday and ashes on Ash Wednesday. It is customary to bring candles from home to be blessed for use during the Anointing of the Sick, during storms, or times of trouble. **Blessed candles will also be made available at church following the Mass for a donation.**

