

Presentation of the Lord – 2025

In the darkness that so often weighs upon our world, the Church celebrates today the Presentation of the Lord, the revelation of the Light of the World. The background here is the key event of Old Testament history, the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. In the last of the ten plagues, the firstborn of the Jews are protected by the Blood of the Passover Lamb, avoiding the death that visited their oppressors. In enduring commemoration of this saving event, each Jewish firstborn was to be presented to the Lord along with a sacrifice. It was to be a reminder across the generations that the God beyond time had intervened in time, working in their own history to set them free. On their journey to the Land of Promise, God's light guided them by a pillar of fire in the night.

So Jesus comes to the Temple, Mary's firstborn but also the only-begotten Son of God, the true Paschal Lamb. *Jesus comes, not to be redeemed, but as the Redeemer.* He is presented to God, not as one spared from death by the sacrifice of another, but as the very Sacrifice that will one day be offered to purify His people and guide them through the darkness.

So that is the theological depth Luke packs into these few verses – interesting perhaps to Scripture scholars, but what does it mean for us? First, Simeon's words assure us that God is faithful to His promises, always. In Jesus, the Risen One, the Light continues to show us the way. We walk as pilgrims of Hope enlightened by truths the world often ignores and a peace the world cannot give. Jesus remains a sign that contradicts the logic of selfishness, our Passover and our lasting peace.

Mary takes us further: as Simeon said, her compassionate and sinless heart was pierced with the sword of a mother's sorrow so that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed. The Cross of Jesus still lays bare what is in every heart. Today we ask – *what do I find in my own?* Is there selfishness, pride, bitterness, jealousy, fear, preoccupation with distractions and trivialities? Or is there gratitude, kindness, patience,

understanding, compassion, love? If we are honest, there is some of both: light and shadow, grace and sin, trust and doubt. The Light revealed in the Temple 20 centuries ago still promises us that we can come back into that light: not to be punished but to be purified, not to be rejected but embraced, not to be condemned but to be healed. Like that day in the House of God, we are here with Jesus, assured that God is faithful, leading us by the same Light we can already see, even if imperfectly and in glimpses.

The Church gives us feast to proclaim with hope that amid all the contradictions of our world, and the swords that can pierce our spirits, we can trust God even with the secret thoughts of our hearts. We'll take a moment of quiet time now to offer Jesus your thoughts, your fears, your regrets, whatever darkens and clouds hope, along with your gratitude and praise for His Presence in your life. His faithfulness brings healing, His Light reveals peace, and His Word speaks only truth and mercy. Today we see bread and wine changed into the living Presence of Jesus, and we say with Simeon: ***“Now, Master, you let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation.”***