

Sunday 31st January 2021

Candlemas or The Presentation of Christ

Baby Jesus is presented by his parents in the Temple



Today's Gospel reading: Luke 2:22-40.

If you are following our service online, please listen carefully to this reading. Or you can read it here. Then you might like to try the quiz below!

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, his parents 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 for 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.

Quiz time!

1. Who took Jesus to the Temple?
2. What did they offer as a sacrifice?
3. Who were the two people waiting for them in the Temple?
4. What did Simeon do when he saw Jesus?
5. How old was Anna?
6. After this event, where did Mary and Joseph take Jesus?

Did you know:

- Candlemas falls on 2 February – but sometimes we move our celebration to the nearest Sunday.
- Candlemas commemorates Joseph and Mary keeping the Jewish law for three ceremonies: the purification of the mother, the redemption of the firstborn and the presentation of the child to the service of God.
- The words of Simeon's prayer of thanksgiving form the "Nunc Dimittis", sung or said every day of the year in our churches and cathedrals at Evensong.
- The festival is called Candlemas because this was the day that all the Church's candles for the year were blessed.
- Candlemas marks the end of the Christmas season, but continues the celebration of Christ as the Light of the World – hence all the candles!
- On Candlemas night, many people place lighted candles in their windows at home.
- This ancient festival of light marks the mid-point of winter, half way between the winter solstice (shortest day) and the spring equinox.
- Snowdrops are known as "Candlemas bells" and are a symbol of hope that springtime will come. These tiny white flowers appear like little lights in dead wood and foliage, as a sign of hope, new beginnings - and the light of Christ.



- There are many old customs and rhymes about Candlemas. Here is one:
If Candlemas Day be fair and bright
Winter will have another fight.
If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain,
Winter won't come again.
- At Candlemas we turn from the celebration of Christmas and begin to look towards Lent, in preparation for Easter.

If you can print this picture, you could colour it as a reminder of the story of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. You might also like to ask an adult to help you to light a candle to place in a window to mark Candlemas?



Answers to the quiz:

1. Mary and Joseph;
2. A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons;
3. Simeon and Anna;
4. He took Jesus in his arms and praised God;
5. Anna was 84 years old;
6. They took Jesus back to Nazareth.

