



Morning Prayer
Presentation of Christ
in the Temple
31st January 2021

An Order for Morning Prayer on Sunday

31 January 2021

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

† Preparation

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Prayers 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

Lord God,

we have sinned against you;

we have done evil in your sight.

We are sorry and repent.

Have mercy on us according to your love.

Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.

**Renew a right spirit within us
and restore to us the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessed is the Lord,
for he has heard the voice of our prayer;

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy
and in our song will we praise our God.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
creator and redeemer of all;
to you be glory and praise for ever.
From the waters of chaos you drew forth the world.
and in your great love fashioned us in your image.
Now, through the deep waters of death,
you have brought your people to new birth
by raising your Son to life in triumph.
May Christ your light ever dawn in our hearts
as we offer you our sacrifice of thanks and praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
Blessed be God for ever.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

Amen.

† The Word of God

Psalmody

Psalm 24.1-10

- 1 The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it,
the compass of the world and all who dwell therein.
- 2 For he has founded it upon the seas
and set it firm upon the rivers of the deep.
- 3 'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord,
or who can rise up in his holy place?'
- 4 'Those who have clean hands and a pure heart,
who have not lifted up their soul to an idol,
nor sworn an oath to a lie;
- 5 'They shall receive a blessing from the Lord,
a just reward from the God of their salvation.'
- 6 Such is the company of those who seek him,
of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.
- 7 Lift up your heads, O gates;
be lifted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
- 8 'Who is the King of glory?'
'The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord who is mighty in battle.'
- 9 Lift up your heads, O gates;
be lifted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
- 10 'Who is this King of glory?'
'The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory.'

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and shall be for ever. Amen.

First Reading

Malachi 3.1-5

Thus says the Lord God: ¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Old Testament Canticle

A Song of the New Jerusalem

- 1 Arise, shine out, for your light has come,
the glory of the Lord is rising upon you.
- 2 Though night still covers the earth,
and darkness the peoples;
- 3 Above you the Holy One arises,
and above you God's glory appears.
- 4 The nations will come to your light,
and kings to your dawning brightness.

- 5 Your gates will lie open continually,
shut neither by day nor by night.
- 6 The sound of violence shall be heard no longer in your land,
or ruin and devastation within your borders.
- 7 You will call your walls, Salvation,
and your gates, Praise.
- 8 No more will the sun give you daylight,
nor moonlight shine upon you;
- 9 But the Lord will be your everlasting light,
your God will be your splendour.
- 10 For you shall be called the city of God,
the dwelling of the Holy One of Israel. *Isaiah 60.1-3,11a,18-19,14b*

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Second Reading

Luke 2.22-40

²²When 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. ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord’), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.’

²⁵Now 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. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided 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, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,

according to your word;
³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.’

³³And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then 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 ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’

³⁶There 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, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At 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.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.
⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead
And Christ shall give you light.

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.
Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

Set your minds on things that are above,
not on things that are on the earth.
And Christ shall give you light.

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.
**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give you light.**

Gospel Canticle

Benedictus

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *Luke 1.68-79*

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Sermon (There is a reflection at the end of this booklet)

The Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.



Prayers

Let us pray, as we are commanded by the Law of God.

Give to the Church the spirit of prophecy, to proclaim the light that has come to lighten all nations ... As Mary and Joseph made their offering according to the Law, so may all Christian people offer their prayer and praise for the gift of the Son according to his new law of love.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Let all people know that the day of salvation has come and the love of God reaches out to the ends of the earth ... May those who administer justice understand that all law and power come

from God, to be offered back to him with humility ... Give grace to all who teach, that they may be guided in wisdom and insight.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

As Jesus found the shelter of an earthly home in Nazareth, may his presence bless our homes and all the families in our community ...

Bless those who rejoice in a new birth ... Be with our older people and grant them still the bright vision of divine love.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Have mercy on parents whose hearts are pierced by the loss or suffering of their children ... May the light that was brought by the Son of God be their light in the time of darkness ... Bless those who are near to death, that they may be sustained by the sight of salvation.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have departed in peace from this world and entered into the greater life ... May the light of heaven shine perpetually upon them, in the realm where the secrets of all hearts are revealed.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray in the name of Christ, our light and our salvation.

**Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Collect is said.

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son

was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

† The Conclusion

The Blessing

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

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Presentation of Christ in the Temple by Bridget Nichols

THE Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple is also known by other names - the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Candlemas. Three titles (with their hinterland of tradition, and doctrinal development) gesture towards the complexity of the event recorded in Luke's Gospel (Luke 2.22-40). Luke compresses into the visit of Mary and Joseph to the Temple, with their baby son, the statutory purification of the mother, the symbolic ransom of the firstborn (Exodus 13.2), and the dedication of a child to the Lord's service (echoes of Samuel are probably not accidental). The luminous treatment of this dense material turns narrative into prophecy, and dramatic irony.

So Mary and Joseph offer the sacrifice prescribed for those unable to afford a lamb (Leviticus 12.8), but they have brought with them the Lamb of God (John 1.29-30). For John, this is the Passover lamb, whose blood marks God's people for liberation. Luke's treatment will suggest that this firstborn child is offered to ransom all of God's later children (Hebrews 1.2 and 1.6; also Romans 8.29, Colossians 1.15 and 18). Simeon now makes his entry, his greeting confirming that the child is a sign of salvation, "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2.32; Isaiah 49.5-6). Perhaps Luke allows himself a little wordplay, associating Simeon's name (Greek: Simeōn) with the Greek word for "sign" (sēmeion).

Artistic representations fix Simeon in our imaginations as a high-priestly figure, gorgeously robed and majestically bearded. This is not what Luke tells us. All we know about Simeon, is that he is an inhabitant of Jerusalem who exemplifies the faithfulness of waiting. A lifetime of longing and praying for "the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2.25) is being concluded as the Spirit guides him to the Temple. Yet his words to Mary (Luke 2.35), still digesting the testimony of the shepherds (Luke 2.8-19), are stark. It is left to Anna, the model of devoted worship, to restore a note of joy, praising God, and excitedly sharing the news of the child with other visitors to the Temple (Luke 2.38). Once again, the Evangelist seems to be at play, his earlier reference to the birth of Samuel (Luke 1.46-55; 1 Samuel 2.1-10) completed here, with the appearance of another [H]anna[h] to greet and encourage this mother of a much greater son.

But greatness is necessarily deferred. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews explains that Christ did not come "to help angels but the descendants of Abraham" (Hebrews 2.16) and, for that reason, "had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect" (Hebrews 2.17). The

"Lord" who will "suddenly come to his temple" and purify the corruption of the priestly order (Malachi 3.1) learns first to be human, before assuming the role of high priest and judge. And this has given generations of Christians confidence to pray that, as God's "beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh", so they also "may be presented to [God] with pure and clean hearts" (Collect of the Day).

This great movement from humility to glory, from humanity to divinity, is captured exquisitely by the 19th-century hymnographer, John Ellerton (1826-93) in his Candlemas hymn, "Hail to the Lord who comes, comes to his temple gate" (see Psalm 24.7-10). The hymn draws on all the human emotion in the presentation scene: the young mother with her first child; Joseph overawed; Simeon holding up the baby to proclaim him "the glory of all lands" as they stand by, anxious in case the old man drops him. The fourth verse hails "the great First-born" and hints that Ellerton had recognised another connection. Later in Luke's Gospel, the newborn Lord returns to his Temple city (Luke 19.28-40; see also Matthew 21.1-11, Mark 11.1-10, John 12.12-19). This time, he is acclaimed by shouting crowds, but he has come to die. The liturgical provision for the Presentation marks this eloquently, as candles are extinguished, and the Church prepares for Lent and Passiontide (Common Worship: Times and Seasons):

Hail to the great First-born,
Whose ransom-price they pay!
The Son before all worlds,
The Child of man to-day,
That he might ransom us
Who still in bondage lay.