

February 2, 2020

The Presentation of the Lord

Sunday of the Word of God

Today we hear from Luke's Gospel because of the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, but normally this liturgical year we hear from Matthew's Gospel. God in his goodness and the Church in her wisdom give us plenty to feast upon when we hear the Scriptures proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word.

The Gospel: Our Sunday Gospels follow a 3 year cycle. Matthew's Gospel is known for his sermon on the mount (which we will begin hearing from next week) which portrays Jesus as the new Moses, going up the mountain to teach and deliver the law of the new covenant. We pray Matthew's version the Our Father at Mass. In Christian art, Matthew is often portrayed as the human face, using imagery associated with each Evangelist from the prophet Ezekiel (1:10) and the Book of Revelation (4:7).

The First Reading: While the Gospel readings follow a sequence from week to week, unique Old Testament readings are paired with each Gospel. Sometimes the reason is easy to discern, and sometimes it is more challenging! Making these connections is one of the tasks of the homilist, so pray for those who preach the word. The Church has paired the readings together to show us some aspect of Jesus visible in the Old Testament. Often this is a miracle or parable, but sometimes it is an identity like priest, prophet, king, redeemer, or beloved son.

Read today's first reading and Gospel again with family or friends and ask: how do the prophet Malachi (3:1-4) and the Evangelist Luke (2:22-40) describe the Lord's coming to the Temple? How is the Christ-child both a purifying fire and a light to the nations? God was present in the Temple, but where is he present in the Church today: The word? The Sacrament of the altar? The tabernacle? The heart of each person?

Written by Reverend Brian Meldrum