

The Bells of St. Mary's The Church of the Immaculate Conception

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord
February 2, 2020

From Fr. George Okoro, MSP

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of The Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple. This presentation finds its complete and perfect fulfillment in the mystery of the passion, death and Resurrection of the Lord. The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord is a combined feast, commemorating the Jewish practice of the purification of the mother after childbirth and the presentation of the child to God in the Temple and his buying back (redemption) from God. It is also known as the Feast of the Purification of Mary, and the Feast of Candlemas. It is also called the Feast of Encounter (Hypapante in Greek) because the New Testament, represented by the baby Jesus, encountered the Old Testament, represented by Simeon and Anna.

Today's feast highlights Christ's two essential missions in the world: Solidarity with Humanity and Light for The World.

SOLIDARITY WITH HUMANITY

The Second Reading from Hebrews 2:14-18 brings out this sense of Jesus' solidarity with the common mass of humanity. The Jewish high priest was a mediatorial figure who enacted the divinely prescribed rituals on behalf of God. But along with this unique status that set him apart, he was also a member of the sinful mass of humankind, aware of his weakness and needing to offer sacrifices for his own sin.

In portraying Jesus as High Priest, the author of Hebrews does not think of him as personally sinful, he simply expresses Jesus' solidarity with the sinful human condition in every other respect. The offering 'pleasing to the Lord' that the prophet Malachi required is in fact that made by Jesus in his offering of himself to suffering and death, to remove the sentence of eternal death hovering over all his human 'brothers and sisters'. So, when Mary and Joseph bring the child Jesus to the Temple and make on his behalf the offering prescribed for the poor, this foreshadows the offering, supremely 'pleasing to the Lord' that he will later make for the salvation of the world.

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

Beyond the confines of Israel, the child will be 'a light for the revelation to the Gentiles'. This aspect of boundaries being extended, salvation being more widely cast than expected, is going to cause trouble. As Simeon points out in second oracle, the child is destined 'for the fall and the rising of many in Israel, and as a sign of contradiction'.

In her reflection in Living Faith, Elizabeth – Anne Stewart writes "...like all prophets, Simeon saw beyond the surface. Even as he spoke two thousand years ago, Roman forces occupied the land and atrocities abounded. What he saw was the presence of God cradled in the palms of his hands. As he gave thanks, he was not so naive as to imagine the Child would banish all suffering; rather, he knew that by embracing the suffering of the world, this Child would show us that love is always a possibility."

Messianic Salvation is a "Beacon" shining before all nations, a Light that dissipates the darkness and enlightens them. In the Light of his presence, there can be no neutrality, for he is the Light that reveals our innermost thoughts and forces us to be part of his Light. For in his light we see light (Psalm 36 vs 9).

A young man told a story of the first time he held a baby. He was travelling on a plane from New York to Houston when a nursing mother sitting beside him begged him: "could you hold my baby for me, please? I want to use the bathroom." "Sure," the young man replied, and took the baby from her mother, who darted off to the airplane bathroom.

This young man said he had never felt more fidgety in his life. He literally shook all over. Probably his shaking woke the baby who immediately began to cry. Her crying increased his anxiety. He did not know what to do. He even said to me: "I swear, if we were in a bus, I would have dropped the baby there and run."

What relief he felt when the mother eventually came back, and was able to take back her baby. His feeling, on handing over the baby, was a mixture of relief and shame. The shame came from his realization that he could not take care of a little human.

In a way, each of us, is in the same sort of situation as this young man. Every Christmas God Himself asks us, "Could you hold My Baby for Me, please?" and then thrusts the Christ Child into our arms. And we're left with the question, "What are we going to do with this Baby?" But an even deeper question is just, "Who is this Baby?" If we look at Scripture, we find all kinds of titles and names for this Baby we hold in our arms: Emmanuel, "God-with-us;" Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Christ the King, Jesus. Can you hold him in your arms? Would you hold him lovingly and patiently, or would you want to drop him and run?

Stewardship

*Tithing - God's Plan for Giving on Sunday, 1/26/2020 our Offering was \$ 3,412.00

.. Today's our second collection is for the Church Heat.

.. Next Sunday's second collection is for Peter Pence.

Food Collection: Today we will have our monthly food collection for the needy in our community and as always thank you for your generosity in helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal

2020 Appeal Goal: \$37,500

The Goal Formula & Calculation is based on collections from the 2018 fiscal year. Please note that our assessment remains the same as our 2019 assessment, 2 month (s). Parishes are assigned an assessment between one month and three months to raise in support of the Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal.

The parish goal assessment does not include archdiocesan second collections, holy days, or major holidays in this fund.

Rebate Policy

Any cash received over goal is subject to a 60/40 split, with parishes keeping 60 percent and the Appeal/retaining 40 percent of the cash over goal. Appeal / rebate will be paid twice, first in round in October of the same calendar year and again in March of the following calendar year.

Our Parish Community which is made up of Arabic, Spanish, and English speaking parishioners, has never lacked behind in these annual efforts. May you all experience in this new year God's blessings in all you do.

YOUTH CORNER

The next meeting for the youth group will be Saturday February 29, 2020 in the Church Hall from 12:00 p.m. at 3:00 p.m.

Sundays Readings:

First Reading: Malachi 3: 1-4 p. 60

The prophet Malachi prophesied that the Lord God will send a messenger "to prepare the way. "The LORD will appear at the temple and God will "refine and purify" the people.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 24: 7, 8, 9, 10 p. 60 Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

Second Reading: Hebrew 2: 14-18 p. 61 Jesus was fully human. Through his death he frees all who live in fear of death. Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help all who are tempted.

Gospel: Luke 2: 22 – 40 p. 61

Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the temple to be consecrated. Simeon, a holy and pious man, took the child in his arms, and Anna the prophetess gave thanks to God.

Religious Education

February: 2020

2/08/20 - Religious Education Classes

2/15/20 - Religious Education Classes

2/22/20- No Religious Education Classes

2/22/20 - For children being baptized in the Religion program Baptism will be at 2:30 pm.

2/23/20 - Sunday Confirmation Class 2nd Retreat at Stepinac High School.

Please be at the Rectory at 11:00 am. Please eat lunch at home.

2/29/20 - Religious Education Classes

2/29/20 - Our 2nd grade class will be doing Reconciliation @ 9:45 am. They are to come to the Hall like always.

Parents please have all the children come to Mass as a family and study their PRAYERS.

**Mass Intentions for the week of
February 1 to February 9, 2020**

Saturday, February 1, 2020:

12:05 pm - Terence Brennan & Family (Living) * Maureen Brennan

5:00 pm - Lisa Hind Abassi * Bonanno Family

7:30pm - Legion De Maria * Laura Lopez

Sunday, February 2, 2020:

7:30 am - For The Parishioners/Por Los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Margot Navarro + * Ofelia Otero

11:00 am - Hector Paredes + * Julius & Arelis Rodriguez

Monday, February 3, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

Tuesday February 4, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

Wednesday, February 5, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

Thursday, February 6, 2020

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Carl & Vee Motta + * Son George Motta

7:00 pm - Sagrado de Corazon de Jesus * Marta Vega

Friday, February 7, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:00 pm - Sagrado Corazon De Jesus * Marta Vega

Saturday, February 08, 2020:

12:05 pm - Jack Brennan & Family (Living)* Maureen Brennan

5:00 pm - Francis J. Walsh + * Catherine Reid

7:30pm - Sagrado Corazon De Jesus * Lila Perez

Sunday, February 09, 2020:

7:30 am - For The Parishioners/Por Los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Luz Cortes & Candida Figueroa + * Maria Ramirez

11:00 am - Hector Paredes + * Julius & Arelis Rodriguez

+Indicates deceased *Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.

BIBLE STUDY

“Ignorance of the Scripture is Ignorance of Christ!” - St Jerome, 5th Century

Our Bible studies have started on Monday nights at 7:00 pm in the Parish Hall.

Studies are both in Spanish and in English.

MASS BOOK

If you want to book a Mass for any particular Intention, call the Parish Office .

HELP KEEP OUR CHURCH CLEAN

We are still working on the Guidelines for the use and rental of our Parish Hall.

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

To catch up with your Sunday contribution, you can do it now before we start preparing the statements for your Tax purposes.