

Reflection: Presentation of Christ in the Temple

We may be making Christingles today and even becoming a big Christingle ourselves, but the essence of today's worship is the Feast of Candlemass.

Candlemass is the Church's celebration of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Luke 2. 8-40) gathering together a number of inter-related and striking themes: presentation, meeting, purification and light for the world. But the strongest attraction of Candlemass is the 'bitter-sweet' nature of what it celebrates. It is a feast day and the revelation of the child Jesus in the Temple, greeted by Simeon and Anna, calls for rejoicing. Nevertheless, the prophetic words of Simeon, which speak of the falling and rising of many and the sword that will pierce, lead on to the Passion and Easter.

The Scriptures and the liturgy of the Christmas season have several pointers to the suffering of our Lord, but none more potent than the words of Simeon. Coming as they do at the very end of the Christmas celebration and with Lent nearly always very close, they make Candlemass a kind of pivot in the Christian year. It is as if we say on 2nd February, 'One last look back to Christmas, and now, turn towards the Cross' (*Promise of His Glory*).

Fr David



Today we will be making Christingles.

NEXT SUNDAY 04.02.2024 2nd Sunday before Lent
10.30am in the Hall

READINGS: OT Proverbs 8: 1, 22-31
NT Colossians 1: 15-20
GOSPEL John 1: 1-14



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St Thomas, Exeter

28th January 2024

Candlemas

10.30am in Hall

Today

10.30am in the Hall

Hymn Numbers

39 As the deer pants for the water
317 Lord, the light of your love is shining
321 Love divine, all loves excelling

Wednesday 31st January

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

7.30pm PCC Meeting

Thursday 1 February

9.30—11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12.30pm Knit & Natter, 19 Maple Rd.

Details from Jenny 01392 498725

3-5pm Warm Space in the Hall

Friday 2nd February

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting



Collect

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**

Malachi 3: 1-5

See, 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. But 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; he 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. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. Then 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.

Hebrews 2: 14-18

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins

of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Luke 2: 22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him 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.

Responses to the Intercessions

The Lord of hosts. **He is the King of Glory**

Post Communion

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

NOTICES

Community Larder There will be a collection box in the hall on Sundays for food donations. The need remains great so please be mindful of our wider community.

Pioneering Parishes: A series of four fortnightly webinars to help parishes start to move their energy outwards and become more pioneering. **When:** Tuesday 9th January, Tuesday 23rd January, Tuesday 6 & Tuesday 20th February. **Time:** 14.00-15.30.

Please refer to weekly email and/or speak to Fr David or Revd Sarah.

House Group will meet fortnightly from 9th January until 13th February in either Helen or John's house. Throughout Epiphany they will study the Book of Proverbs. Details from Mic, John or Ian.

A message from Jenny Tuckett: St Petrock's was delighted to receive all the goods the K & N group displayed last Sunday. Many most sincere thanks to everyone who contributed. Everything is much appreciated.

Sunday 4th February 12 noon. Hall Committee

