

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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February 2, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we remember and celebrate the presentation of the Lord in the temple. When Jesus was 40 days old, Mary and Joseph brought him to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, according to their tradition to fulfill what the law had prescribed (Luke 2:22-40 – today's Gospel reading). Anna and Simeon, two elderly people of great holiness recognized Jesus. They were filled with joy. Simeon took Jesus in his arms and sang a beautiful prayer song. In his prayer song, Simeon said: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation" (Luke 2:29-30) - now that he has seen the messiah, he could die in peace. This embrace of the messiah was enough for Simeon...life was fulfilled....hunger and thirst were satisfied.

This reminds me of what Jeremiah said, "When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me." (Jeremiah 29:13-14) The Psalmist sang about his longing for God, "As a doe longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, oh God. My soul thirsts for God for the living God." (Psalm 42) St. Augustine said, "our hearts are restless until they rest in God."

These are ancient words of Jeremiah and the Psalmist, over three thousand years old and those of St. Augustine, 1670 years old. Yet they are still living words. Most of us have experienced dryness in the throat, restlessness of the spirit, longing of the heart, urgency of the desire, passion for something bigger than us, hunger and thirst for God and God's ways. We too are blessed with deep, intense and passionate desire for a vision of God like Simeon and Anna, Jeremiah and the Psalmist and St. Augustine. We are often not aware of this hunger and when we are aware, we tend to satisfy ourselves with perishable bread. Some of us are not even aware that there is imperishable bread that can satisfy the deepest longings of our heart.

There are those moments when we have to pull back from the daily routines of our lives and bless ourselves with silence, solitude.....freed from lectures, sermons, chants, laments, buying and selling and the like that crowd our lives! Simeon and Anna spent their lives in the temple, contemplating and waiting for the Messiah to come and sang their song when they found him. Jeremiah, the Psalmist and Augustine delved into their loneliness, doubts and fears and found God and God's way and sang their song of joy.

Some time ago, a gentleman told me how terrible his weekend was because the Cable was out, the internet didn't work, the phone did not work properly...static fills all conversations. Power

outage and power surge and other hiccups tend to mess up our lives. Oh, how dependent we are on the modern conveniences! Could this be an opportunity to bless ourselves into silence?! I lived twenty long years in a village in the missions in India without a car or a refrigerator or cooking gas or electricity or microwave or cell phone or TV or computer or any other convenience that I take for granted now. What am I supposed to do now in the absence of a computer?!!! Now, I can't imagine what it would be without a cell phone!!! Could this be an opportunity for me to bless myself into silence and solitude, into prayer and contemplation, into reading a good book or the Bible, into spending quiet time with family and friends and discover or rediscover the blessings in our relationships?! What would it mean for you to bless yourself into silence?

When we cut the wires, we find ourselves in free fall.... like a tree cut off from its roots. Roots are the most vulnerable part of the plant. They grow cell by cell into the soil, into the cracks in the bedrock. They long for water. Roots need darkness, solitude, silence. Roots understand the patient descent into the earth. Roots provide the anchor for the tree, the flower, the bush. We need those connection.....wires connected.....roots going deep down!!!

The Psalmist prayed.... "O God, You are my God whom I seek; For you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts. Like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water." (Psalm 63) Listen to what Jesus says... "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for holiness: they shall have their fill." (Mathew 5:6) The hunger which this beatitude speaks of is not the hunger which could be satisfied with a candy bar and the thirst is not the kind that could be satisfied with a glass of lemonade or ice-tea. It is the hunger of the person who is starving for food and the thirst of the person who will die unless he drinks. Blessedness comes to the person who, in spite of failures, hangs on to a passionate love for the highest, the best - for goodness, truth, holiness – for God and God's way.. The true wonder of man is not that he is a sinner, but that even in his sin, he is haunted by the goodness of God.

The hunger and the thirst refer to the craving, the urgent longing of a person for goodness and truth and love and God and God's ways and not the possession or achievement of it. To hunger and thirst means to have "a healthy, hearty appetite", to desire intensely, deeply, personally, to long for something urgently, to will to attain what is desired....to be intentional and purposeful. Get in touch with your own inner longings...the desires of your hearts....

During this week, take a break, a few minutes of silence, a minute vacation and bless yourself with silence and solitude and discover the many hidden treasures in your heart and in your relationships and find your God of comfort and courage, peace and joy and above all the wisdom of God waiting to be tapped into and sing your song of Joy as Simeon and Anna did.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Scroll down to read the reflections on the Scripture readings of today's mass....

The Presentation of the Lord

February 2, 2025

Thus says the Lord GOD: If the wicked man turns away from all the sins he committed, if he keeps all my statutes and does what is right and just, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of the crimes he committed shall be remembered against him; he shall live because of the virtue he has practiced.
(Ezekiel 18:22)

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
we humbly implore your majesty that,
just as your Only Begotten Son
was presented on this day in the Temple
in the substance of our flesh,
so, by your grace,
we may be presented to you with minds made pure"
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Liturgy of the Word

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

**Purposeful people plan their lives to make things happen
rather than letting things happen on their own.**

Malachi 3:1-4

This excerpt tells us of Malachi's vision of someone whom God would send to turn the hearts of people away from sinful ways to God's ways. The words and deeds of this person would have the power to cleanse and purify the hearts and minds of people and strengthen and transform their lives.

Be open to the cleansing, purifying and transforming power of the spirit of God!

Psalm 24;

**The Lord's is the earth and its fullness
the world and all its peoples.
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm**

Hebrews 2:14-18

In the biblical sense, "flesh" means human nature considered in its weakness and frailty and is contrasted with the "spirit" which is from God. The author of the letter to the Hebrews tells us that Jesus has conquered this "flesh" by his death and has empowered us to conquer our own "flesh".

Luke 2:22-40

This excerpt from Luke tells us about Mary and Joseph consecrating Jesus in obedience to the Law of Moses, which they have come to know as the law of the Lord. Seeing Mary and Joseph and their baby, Simeon, a holy and wise old man rejoices and sings his song of surrender. This is a beautiful song of surrender which, in essence, says that Simeon has seen all that he hoped to see and now is ready to return to his master. Simeon blessed them and prophesied about the great things the child will grow up to do and the pain that would come to his family.

Simeon was a man of hope and his hope was fulfilled in his vision of Jesus. Be men and women of hope and let your hope be fulfilled in Jesus!

Simeon sang a song of surrender. Sing your own song of self-surrender. Pray for the wisdom to know God's plan and the courage to surrender to his plan for you.

Be Still for a few moments!

Pray for your needs and those of your family and community.

Spiritual Communion

Lord Jesus, I believe in your real presence in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Altar. I place myself in your presence and adore you, worship you and glorify you. I am unable to receive you in Holy Communion at Mass today. I hunger and thirst for your way, your truth and your life. Come into my heart Lord and satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst. Bless me that I may give witness to your presence in my life. Amen

Be Still for a few moments!

Saint of the Day, February 2 - Feast of the Presentation of the Lord and 27 other saints are remembered this day.

Today we remember and celebrate the joyful event described in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke. When Jesus was 40 days old, Mary and Joseph brought him to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, according to their tradition to fulfill what the law had prescribed.

Anna and Simeon, two elderly people of great holiness recognized Jesus. They were filled with joy. Simeon took Jesus in arms and sang a beautiful prayer song. The young and the old have embraced.....tradition and newness have met...holiness was recognized and embraced!

In his prayer Simeon said, now that he saw the messiah, he could die in peace. This embrace of the messiah was enough...life was fulfilled.... hunger and thirst were satisfied. Simeon also spoke of sadness that would come and pierce the heart of Mary.

Remember the many mothers, (perhaps you know someone) whose hearts are pierced because of the sufferings of their children.

Simeon called Jesus “a light to the nations”. We celebrate the light of Jesus today. And Jesus called us to “be the light of the world”. Reflect on this call...on the blessing and grace of being in the light of Jesus and on the responsibility that comes with being called to be light to the world.

Today is also “Candlemas Day”. It is a festival of lights. On this feast enough candles are blessed to last the whole year. Many Churches celebrate Mass with people carrying candle lights. Light a candle today. Look at its light. Let the light come into your heart and into your mind. Let the light of Jesus bless you and Grace you. And bring a little light into the life of someone today.

Be Still for a few moments!

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**The Steadfast Love of the Lord is not Seasonal.
His Loving kindness does not have winter or summer days.
His love is forever fresh and new.**