

February magazine

February begins with 'The Presentation Christ in the Temple', on Candlemas, the famous part of Scripture that relates the story of Mary and Joseph meeting Simeon and Anna, the aged servants of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the prophetic words uttered regarding the child Jesus.

After bringing Jesus into the temple, they encounter Simeon. The Gospel records that Simeon had been promised that "he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ". Simeon then uttered the prayer that would become known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, or Canticum of Simeon, often said at Evening Prayer and funerals, which prophesied the redemption of the world by Jesus:

"Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a Simeon's prophecy also includes a foretelling of the suffering that Jesus and His mother, Mary, would endure. He speaks of Jesus as a sign that will be opposed and tells Mary that a sword will pierce her own soul"

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Anna, a prophetess and widow, also recognizes Jesus as the Redeemer. She gives thanks to God and speaks about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple is rich with theological significance. It marks the first public recognition of Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour, not only for Israel but for all nations. The event emphasizes Jesus' fulfilment of the Law and the continuity between the Old and New Covenants. Simeon's and Anna's recognition of Jesus highlight the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing divine truth and the anticipation of redemption through Christ. The idea of presentation crops up a lot in our liturgy. At Holy Communion, baptism, marriage, funerals, ordination and

coronation of the monarch. On all these public occasions someone is 'presented' for a purpose and to recognise a calling.

The other occasion which has fallen off in recent years is confirmation, which is as significant as the others. At confirmation the person stands and confirms the promises made on their behalf by parents and Godparents at their baptism. A truly momentous occasion when the bishop anoints and confirms the person with great joy.

In private, each time we come to prayer, we also 'present' ourselves to God with honesty, and humility in the knowledge that He will listen and respond.

May you find peace and comfort each time.

Every blessing

Rev James, Rector.