

## **Feast of the Presentation of the Lord - Lectionary: 524**

Readings: [Malachi 3:1-4](#); [Psalms 24:7, 8, 9, 10](#); [Hebrews 2:14-18](#); [Luke 2:22-40](#) or [2:22-32](#)

### **Reading 1** [MAL 3:1-4](#)

Thus says the Lord GOD: Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me; And suddenly there will come to the temple the LORD whom you seek, And the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who will endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like the refiner's fire, or like the fuller's lye. He will sit refining and purifying silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, Refining them like gold or like silver that they may offer due sacrifice to the LORD. Then the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem will please the LORD, as in the days of old, as in years gone by.

**Responsorial Psalm** [24:7, 8, 9, 10](#) R. **(8) Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!**

### **Reading 2** [HEB 2:14-18](#)

Since the children share in blood and flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the Devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. Surely he did not help angels but rather the descendants of Abraham; therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

### **Gospel** [LK 2:22-40](#) OR [2:22-32](#)

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted --and you yourself a sword will pierce-- so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of 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 favor of God was upon him.

For the proper context regarding the readings from Scripture this weekend and to more fully understand the short section proclaimed at Mass today, I strongly recommend that people take some time and read the 3 short chapters in the book of Malachi. The whole book of Malachi is as much a 'word' for the children of God today, as it was 2500 years ago. It is as much a 'word' for the judgement in the last coming of God among us as it was for the first. It speaks to the unfaithful priestly shepherds and, from among the fellowship of the faithful, it speaks to the fallen away through hardness of heart, the grumbling who desire to hear that sin is virtue, the arrogant who would presume to the place of God, the preachers of error who emphasize human wisdom...

It will also add to our understanding the living Word of God proclaimed today from Malachi, if we notice that it, through the Holy Spirit, finds its place at the end of the Old Testament, and really is like a bridge into the book of Matthew. We might say that what God desired us to know through Matthew, is intertwined with what God desired to say through the prophet Malachi.

God speaks through Malachi, of the darkness in the world – a darkness that His children have chosen to embrace. He speaks of the broken covenant with Him, as an adulterous relationship because the Israelites have become unfaithful. God also speaks of the one who is to come, to purify and to make right... in the great and terrible day of the Lord... of Him who comes incarnate among His own. Matthew begins his Gospel situating Jesus within the tumultuous history of Israel and establishing both his human and divine identity, as the promised Messiah King. The King of Glory. The Lord. The first reading today from Malachi leads us into Matthew where we see the loving and merciful response of God, the fulfillment of the prophetic words... we see the new covenant of reconciliation.

The second reading in Hebrews focuses our deepening reflection on our salvation, found in Christ by His coming into our sin darkened world where the enemy has had the power of death. He comes as one like us in all things but sin, to free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. He didn't act to save the fallen angels, He comes for us, as obedient Son, as faithful high priest and as the pure sacrifice, to expiate the sins of the people.

The author of Hebrews, in the second reading, is recalling the prophesy of Malachi, emphasizing and reminding the people of the reason for their hope in the midst of their misery and encroaching darkness. He speaks in a time which is not that dissimilar to those of Malachi, and of our own time. He saw that they were in very real danger of apostasy from their Christian faith. The danger wasn't due to persecution from outsiders but to a weariness with the demands of Christian life and a growing indifference to their identity and mission. ([Heb 2:1; 4:14; 6:1–12; 10:23–32](#)). He is focused on the priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus ([Heb 3–10](#)), to restore their lost fervor and strengthen them in their faith.

Today on the Feast of the Presentation, which has been observed since the fourth century, we are being reminded of our hope. Simeon, led by the Holy Spirit to the Holy Family, takes Jesus

into his arms and proclaims Him “a light of revelation to the Gentiles”... words that we hear Jesus proclaim in the Gospel of John... “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). The light without which we can not truly live. Without the light that is Christ, we are lost in the valley of the shadow of death as slaves bound by fear and subject to death.

In the early Church as now, to become a child of God is to have the darkness of despair banished by the radiant light of revelation. To die and rise in Christ in baptism is to be ‘enlightened’. This is why, at Easter Vigil, we don’t begin until the sun sets and from the fire the Easter Candle is lit. Held high by the Deacon, it leads the way as the Deacon proclaims ‘Christ our Light’. From it is lit, every persons candle, representing the light received at baptism and symbolized by the candle given. The darkness banished by the growing ‘light of the world’ represented by the candles.

Christ is our light. Christ who makes of us lights of the world. (Mat. 5:14). We are to keep the light burning bright. Recall the words at our baptisms the baptisms of our children... Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He (she) is to walk always as a child of the light. May he (she) keep the flame of faith alive in his (her) heart. When the Lord comes, may he (she) go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.

If we are not to become luke warm, hard hearted, unforgiving, seduced the promises of the enemy... if we are to be able to go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom... we must remain in His Light and desire nothing than to be reflections of His light in the world.