

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Your merciful love, O God, we have received in the midst of your temple. Your praise, O God, like your name, reaches the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with saving justice.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 23)

ANTIPHON: Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

RESPONSE: Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

LECTOR: O gates, lift up your heads; grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory! **R.**

LECTOR: Who is the king of glory? The Lord, the mighty, the valiant, the Lord, the valiant in war. **R.**

LECTOR: O gates, lift high your heads; grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory! **R.**

LECTOR: Who is he, the king of glory? He, the Lord of armies, he is the king of glory. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! This is the light of revelation to the nations, and the glory of your people Israel. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) My eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples.

TODAY'S READINGS Malachi 3:1-4; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40

NEXT WEEK (5th Sunday of Year C) Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 137; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

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*A child to light
up the world*



February 2 2025 Presentation of the Lord Year C

Have you ever wondered what God looks like? Various images might come to mind, but why not turn to the person next to you who is made in the image and likeness of God? But, what if God looks like this baby? A child whose crying wakes us and worries us at moments as we hold them close, a child who depends on us for life.

Forty days after Christmas, Mary and Joseph travel to Jerusalem, where she is to present herself and her child, as the Law required. But there, in the Temple, something unexpected happens. They are amazed at what Simeon and Anna have to say about their baby, but it's not clear to them what it might mean – how could it be? – because God's ways often upend our way of doing things.

Before he utters his prophetic words, Simeon takes this baby in his arms and gives praise to God. That's what we're asked to do: to take Him in our arms, take God to heart, and give thanks. But often we're not too sure about this. We're open to it, but we hesitate, and Simeon reveals why, when he speaks of Him as being rejected by many in Israel and of a sword piercing Mary's soul.

Perhaps we find it difficult to imagine His birth and His death at the same time. Indeed, we may prefer to put any thought of the cross out of our minds for a while and think fondly of the baby in his crib or his mother's arms.

Of course, none of us is anticipating grief, but when grief enters our lives, how to respond? As the aunt of a baby who died soon after birth once said, "It's tough to believe that we will emerge from the darkness." Later she reflected, "In each of us we harbour both the living and the dying Christ." Recalling her words on first seeing her niece - "You are so beautiful. I love you so much" – she realised that's what God says to us ... always. Taking to heart her words, when we hear of the Lord suddenly entering his Temple, not in power and might, as in the first reading, but in weakness and need as a baby, we see in this child a light to enlighten the world.

This child is our salvation. So today, which is also known as Candlemas Day, we might light a candle and give thanks for His coming amongst us. For He comes to free us from our fear of death, as the second reading says, so that, in time, we may find ourselves sharing the gift of His life with others. We're invited to take Him into our hearts and accompany Him as He grows in maturity, wisdom and grace.

Whatever the future holds, God is with us.

Damian Coleridge
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