

The Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord

The Gospel for The Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord this Sunday is Luke 2:22-32. This text has two and perhaps three narratives. First there is the Purification of Mary. Next there is the Presentation of Jesus and in that report is the Nunc Dimittis.

Following the birth of a son, the mother had to wait 40 days before going to the temple to offer a sacrifice for her purification. If she could not afford a lamb and a pigeon (or dove), then two pigeons (or doves) would be acceptable. This helps us to understand that Joseph and Mary were of a humble state (Luke 1:48), i.e., too poor to be able to afford a lamb.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Simeon came to the Temple just at the time when Mary and Joseph were there with the baby Jesus. He took the baby in his arms, praised God and spoke what we call *The Nunc Dimittis*. In keeping with God's promise, Simeon saw God's salvation with his own eyes. He declared Jesus as the Light of all the nations and the Person Who was Israel's greatest glory.

The Nunc Dimittis has been used constantly in the liturgies of Christian churches for 14 centuries. We sing it at the close of our Communion liturgy. It reminds us that we have just been given the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We go then refreshed and empowered to be a witness to the Salvation procured by Jesus' death and resurrection.

Prayer: Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people: A light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, and is now, and ever will be forever. Amen.