

Read



Malachi 3:1-4

Psalms 24:7, 8, 9, 10

Hebrews 2:14-18

Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22-32

LIVING THE WORD

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

February 2, 2020



REFLECTION

As Christians, we are a Resurrection people. We live each day in the joy of Christ's victory over death. We know that life and love always win, but sometimes it is easy for this to move from the forefront of our minds. Our world is filled with systems of oppression and injustice. Poverty is prevalent and violence seems unending. Kindness often falls to selfishness, and trust fades to disbelief. But this is not the end.

Today's Gospel reminds us that we wait for something more. Like Simeon and Anna, we long to see the fullness of the reign of God here on earth. We ache for the peace that God alone can bring. We yearn for the Light that will vanish all darkness. We wait, trusting God's promise to be with us always. While we try to live as Christ now, we wait for the day when we will live in the joy of the Resurrection, because the Kingdom is both here and not yet. We wait for the day when we, like Simeon and Anna, will know the salvation of God that has been promised to us.

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What does it mean to you to say that the Kingdom of God is both "here and not yet"?
- ❖ What are some of the other promises God makes to God's people? How do these promises impact you?



ACTION

Simeon's words in today's Gospel, known as the Canticle of Simeon, are typically prayed at the end of each day. This evening, pray Simeon's words before you go to sleep. Ask God to let you sleep in peace, knowing God's promise to be with you. Rest confident and assured that Christ is the light that destroys all darkness.





February 2, 2020

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #524

Malachi 3:1-4

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Hebrews 2:14-18

Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22-32

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

The Presentation of the Lord paints for us a portrait of love, hope, and divine promise fulfilled. When Simeon beholds the infant Jesus he quickly knows that God has fulfilled his promise to Israel and to Simeon personally. Revealing what he understands about Jesus, Simeon proclaims Jesus' mission to Joseph and Mary.

Q FOCUS: *God's promise was fulfilled, and salvation arrived.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

We remember St. Josephine Bakhita on Saturday of this week. This tenacious and holy woman was kidnapped into slavery as a young child, but in adulthood regained freedom through Italian courts. She lived a simple and holy life in her order, Institute of St. Magdalene of Canossa. Her love for God and others was well known.

Church Teaching Connection

"Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ, for He is going to say, 'I came as a guest, and you received Me' (Matthew 25:35). And to all let due honor be shown, especially to the domestics of the faith and to pilgrims" (*The Rule of St. Benedict*, chapter 53).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 2:22-32

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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, / white you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: / a light for revelation to the Gentiles, / and glory for your people Israel.”

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

The Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph were observant followers of the Jewish Law, and Jesus grew up observing the ancient laws described in what we now call the Old Testament. One of those laws pertained to childbirth—after giving birth to her baby boy, Mary would have been considered unclean for seven days, then spent thirty-three days in purification after giving birth. The chapter in Leviticus where this process is explained also contains detailed instructions on what to do when the purification days come to an end. Observant Jewish mothers would have brought pigeons or turtledoves to the priest for sacrifice, and this is what Mary and Joseph did when they presented Jesus at the Temple.

► How do you observe the law of God?

Holy Simeon was from Jerusalem. Earlier in his life it had been revealed to him that he would live to see the Christ, the long-awaited Messiah. When Simeon saw Jesus, the holy man knew that his eyes beheld God's salvation, and he stated, “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” (Luke 2:29–32). These words, heard by the Holy Family, must have been received in understanding by the holy boy's parents. Mary, of course, knew she would be the mother of the Most High. Joseph too knew his child's special and unique identity. Hearing Simeon's words must have given the parents joy to know that somebody else saw their son's unique identity, while giving them pause as they learned about his future and Mary's great pain. What joy Simeon must have felt in knowing that salvation had arrived, and in personally experiencing God's promise to him!

Simeon's words echo something very important to us, too. Recognizing Jesus, the holy man proclaimed that Jesus would be “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, / and glory for your people Israel” (Luke 2:32). All of the Jewish people knew that they waited for a Messiah to save them—what wasn't clearly known then is that Jesus came for all people, not for Israel alone. What a gift Simeon saw in the tiny Christ child—he beheld the promise of God, the words of the Spirit ringing true, and he saw the vastness of God's great love for his people and for all of creation. What a tremendous gift Simeon held in his arms that day, and what a witness he bore to the salvation of humankind.

► What gifts has Christ given you?

► What gifts do you see in others?

► How might you help others see the gifts that Christ has given them?

Like Simeon, we too can see our salvation. We too know that God keeps his promises to humankind. We know that in Jesus we see our future, and we see the greatness, vastness, generosity and wonder of our God. Like Simeon, we can see the hope that Jesus Christ brought us—we also know the hope in which Jesus Christ calls us to live. As we wait joyfully for Christ's return, we must live out that which he taught us, growing closer to God through our Catholic faith.

► What helps you to grow closer to God?

► How do you live out what Christ teaches you?

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 128.

What does it mean to see and understand salvation? Have you ever had prayerful experiences when you realized the greatness of salvation?

Simeon spent a great deal of time waiting to see God's promise fulfilled. Like Simeon, we too wait to see the coming of the Lord. What do we do in our wait?

We are called to live out our faith as we wait for the Lord, and we are called to represent our faith every day of our lives. How do we accomplish that mission?

Act on the Word

St. Benedict's Rule

Holy Simeon spent his life waiting for the arrival of the Messiah, knowing that he would see the promised one coming in his lifetime. As Simeon waited, he would have known that he would soon encounter the Christ child, the very child God promised his people. Centuries after Holy Simeon's life there lived a Christian, St. Benedict, who wrote a rule that would govern the lives and daily practices of monks and nuns. This set of rules is called *The Rule of St. Benedict*, known to many simple as "the Rule." In the Rule, St. Benedict outlines how people should treat one another. Specifically, he states that visitors and the sick should be treated as Christ himself.

St. Benedict based these rules on Matthew 25:35–40:

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him and say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and

welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?" And the king will say to them in reply, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

Like Simeon anticipating meeting the Christ child, we can anticipate the presence of Christ in the poor, the sick, in our neighbors, our families, friends and guests.

► How do we serve them?

► How do we live out our Catholic faith in our relationships with them?

Choose ways that you can live out your faith in service to others, treating them as you would treat Christ himself. Ask yourself questions such as these, and live out the answers to those questions, treating "the least" as Christ himself.

► If I were staying in Jesus' home, how would I behave? How would I contribute to the running of the household?

► If the homeless person on the sidewalk was Christ himself, how would I perceive him?

► If a girl at school is being bullied, how would you help her if that girl was actually Jesus?

Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ,
Light of the World,
may we who carry candles to honor you today
come one day to the light of your eternal glory,
where you live and reign with the Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.