



February 2 is The Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord. Jesus was circumcised on 8th day after His birth and was given the Name Jesus as instructed by the angel before He was conceived in the womb, **St. Luke 2:21**. His faithful parents followed the commands of the Law offering two turtledoves, as stated in **Leviticus chapter 12** for those who could not afford a lamb “**And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean**” **Leviticus 12:8b**. Jesus has come to fulfill the Law already for the second time in his young life. Nothing is left undone in the fulfillment of the Law by our Savior as He journeys toward the work of salvation for us on His cross.

God's provision of the alternative for those unable to afford a lamb by offering two turtledoves shows His compassion in Christ who has come for all people. The offering of turtledoves is symbolic pointing forward to Mary's Son, Jesus, who would be the sacrifice for sin that would end all sacrifices forever. In the person and work of Jesus, the sins of all people would be atoned for as God's wrath against the world would be laid on Jesus, Himself the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (**St. John 1:29**).

They are then approached by Simeon to whom it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit, that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ (**St. Luke 2:25-26**). As the Scripture continues, Simeon takes Jesus up in his arms, blessed God and said,

**“Lord, now you are letting your servant
depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence
of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel” (St. Luke 2:29-32).**

You know these words in the liturgy for Holy Communion the **Nunc Dimittis (Song of Simeon)** sung after the distribution.

Simeon has seen the Christ, the long promised Savior who frees His people from sin, death and the devil. The words of Simeon demonstrate his faith and his readiness to depart this life for the life everlasting by God's grace in Christ. Even before Jesus is old enough to do much of anything, (by human standards) He is already fulfilling the Law by His circumcision at 8 days old and now being presented in the temple at 40 days old as the first born of Mary. God's will for our salvation through Jesus is already being carried out through this small child who is destined for the cross. Simeon fears nothing for he has seen the Lord's Christ. Simeon knows the promises of God are in the real flesh and blood baby he sees and holds in his arms.

Like Simeon, we see the promises of God delivered to us in The Lord's Supper, the body and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ given to us in, with and under the bread and wine for us to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins. Simeon saw and held God's promise which strengthened his faith and made Simeon ready for the salvation given in Christ that he could enter into life eternal. We too are prepared for everlasting life as we are made presentable before God's presence through the blood of Jesus which cleanses us from sin. Therefore, as we sing the words of the **Nunc Dimittis** after receiving His body and blood, we too are overjoyed at the salvation God has revealed and given to us in Jesus our Savior.

By the end of February, the church year will be in the season of Lent, a time of repentance of sins, and reflection of our Savior's suffering and death for us on His cross. While the season of Lent is certainly a time of repentance and sorrow over sin, we who live this side of the cross after Christ's resurrection and ascension are blessed by the knowledge of Christ accomplishing our salvation. But Simeon had a faith that could see beyond the simplicity of the baby in his arms. By God's abundant grace, Simeon trusted in His Savior, the very salvation in human form that he saw with his own eyes. With the faith of Simeon, given by God's grace for us in Christ, we too see and receive our Savior for our forgiveness, life and salvation. Through Christ, God prepares us to meet Him “**according to His Word.**” The prayer of the day for **The Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord (February 2)** makes known how God makes us ready to be presented to Him through Jesus Christ, the One who accomplishes salvation.

“Almighty and ever-living God, as Your only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in the substance of our flesh, grant that we may be presented to You with pure and clean hearts; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen”

In Christ,
Pastor Ahrendt