

amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by 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 favour of God was upon him.

The Gospel of Christ
R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Celebrant: Almighty God, accept the joyful offering of your Church, and grant that your Son may shine in us as the light that lightens every nation. We ask this in the name of the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
People: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Celebrant: God for whom we wait, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon, who did not die till he had welcomed the Messiah. Complete in us your perfect will, that we in Christ may share in your eternal kingdom; for he is Lord for ever and ever.
People: Amen.

THE WORD OF THE LORD : TODAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS **At the Liturgy at Nine-Thirty** **CANDLEMAS**

This special feast commemorates the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple in the rite of dedicating him to God. The temple is important in Luke’s story of Jesus and the early church, and there is no shortage of Old Testament texts to join him in that affirmation of the temple as central in the life of God’s people. Malachi pictures the awful day of the Lord’s coming to the temple to cleanse and purify. The psalmist sings not only of the Lord’s coming to the temple but also of the beauty and attractiveness of the temple for all those who trust in God. The text from Hebrews shifts the image, portraying Christ as the meeting place of the eternal and holy God and the people who are but flesh and blood. In order to be for us a place to meet God, Christ, who came from God to be one of us, was made in every way like his brothers and sisters.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for you have sent us your salvation. Inspire us by your Holy Spirit to recognize him who is the glory of Israel and the light for all nations, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
People: Amen.

BLESSING OF THE CANDLES

Celebrant: Almighty, everlasting God, who as on this day was pleased that your only-begotten One should be presented in thy holy temple, and received into the arms of St. Simeon, we numbly beseech your mercy that you would vouchsafe to bless, and sanctify, (and kindle with the light of your heavenly benediction) these candles, (which we your servants desire to take up and carry in honour of your Name,) to the end that by offering them to you our Lord God, and being inflamed by the holy fire of your most sweet brightness, we may be found worthy to be presented in the holy temple of your glory. Through the same your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
People: Amen.

FIRST READING: Malachi 3.1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight — indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

The word of the Lord
R/. Thanks be to God

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 84.1-7



R/. How dear to me is your dwell - ing O Lord of hosts.

How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. The sparrow has found her a house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; by the side of your altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God. *R/.*

Happy are they who dwell in your house! they will always be praising you. Happy are the people whose strength is in you! whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way. *R/.*

Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, for the early rains have covered it with pools of water. They will climb from height to height, and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion. Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; hearken, O God of Jacob. *R/.*

SECOND READING: Hebrews 2.14-18

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The word of the Lord
R/. Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Luke 3.32

Alleluia. Alleluia. This is a light to reveal God to the nations and the glory of his people Israel. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Luke 2.22-40

R/. Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were