

## Missionary Commentary

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord  
February 2, 2025

## Sunday Readings

Malachi 3:1-4  
Psalm 24:7-1  
Hebrews 2:14-18  
Luke 2:22-40

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

## The Unknowns of Mission

This feast of the Presentation of the Lord presents us with so many inspiring and challenging themes—more, certainly, than can be fully addressed in this brief reflection. Presenting a newborn male child was part of the Jewish law for all families. Joseph and Mary, being a good Jewish couple, fulfilled this requirement. When they recalled together the unusual circumstances of Mary's conception and Joseph's orientation in his dreams, they must have wondered: who was this newborn son? And what would be his future? But, remaining faithful to the precepts of the law, they came to the temple.

Because of their faithfulness, they met and heard the words of Simeon and Anna, which probably only added to their perplexity and wonderings. With these moments of unknowing—and the necessity of fleeing to Egypt to save the life of Jesus—they had the faith to eventually return to Nazareth and raise Jesus, who grew in strength and wisdom. For us, these are times of trouble, doubt and fear, not only in our country, but in the world. Pope Francis has declared this year a Jubilee Year and we are to be Pilgrims of Hope. Certainly, Mary and Joseph are our examples of action and hope because they believed in God's presence in Jesus and in themselves.

The words of Simeon and Anna must have touched them in the depth of their hearts. "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel...and you yourself a sword will pierce, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Fearful words, violent words, painful words. And yet Mary and Joseph remained strong in their desire to construct a Holy Family where their son and they themselves could live their faith in the God of Israel no matter the cost. The Gospel tells us of Anna, "...she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem." As a woman in the Jewish culture, one would think that she might be hesitant to speak of this child sent by God. But, once again, her faith in the inspiration that she received from the Spirit gave her the fearlessness and audacity to proclaim her wisdom.

The thread that I see running through this moment in the lives of all these people is **mission**. Mary and Joseph knew that God was asking them to embrace and live something seemingly impossible. It was the belief in their mission that helped them continue on the way with Jesus. For Mary, this mission had many painful and sorrowful moments: moments of unknowing; moments of having to be the strength for the men and women who followed Jesus but felt like they lost him after his death. Simeon was able to relinquish his own life because his mission had ended. He had seen the Redeemer and knew that God's promise had been fulfilled. Anna's mission was to speak

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to everyone who awaited the salvation that God had promised. All these people did what they did because they believed in a God who called them to action in spreading God's will for all of us.

Now it is our turn. What is your mission in these days? How can you manifest God's love in such a world as ours? Look and see what is happening and where God's love is needed the most. What can we do?

## **Notes on the Sunday Readings**

### **First Reading**

Malachi 3:1-4 — The prophet Malachi sends us a very hopeful and inspiring message: yes, the Lord is coming! We have been seeking the Lord and now is the day. But there is a catch to these astounding words. We must be prepared. Just like gold and silver need a purification process, we, too, must go through a conversion process to be able to meet the Lord.

### **Responsorial Psalm**

Psalm 24: 7-10 — Following the tone of the first reading, this, too, is a psalm of hope and joy. Can you hear the melody of this psalm from a few years ago? "Who is the King of glory..." We are hopeful and encouraged because our King is strong and mighty.

### **Second Reading**

Hebrews 2:14-18 — As the prophet Malachi says, a purification experience is needed to fully live in peace with our God. Hebrews follows this thought. Jesus, the great high priest, suffered to show us the need of suffering so that our conversion can lead us to a greater love.

### **Gospel**

Luke 2:22-40 — On this feast of the Presentation of the Lord, we see how Mary and Joseph were adamant about fulfilling the Jewish laws concerning their son, Jesus. Every Jewish newborn boy had to be presented to God in the temple. The holy and wise elders, Anna and Simeon, prophesied about the future of Jesus in a way that must have astounded Mary and Joseph, leaving them very perplexed. It would be many years before they would begin to understand the words of Anna and Simeon, but their faith was strong.

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