



SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

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THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE

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FIRST ANTIPHON

My heart overflows with a good word: I speak my poem to the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. R.: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee forever. (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (R:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. Bend Thy bow, and prosper, and reign. (R:) O Son of God, Who wast borne in the arms of righteous Simeon: save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"! Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the scepter of Thy kingdom is righteous. (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

- *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.* TROPARION OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD (see below)
- *Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy face.* TROPARION OF THE MEETING
- *I shall commemorate thy name in every generation.* TROPARION OF THE MEETING

LITTLE ENTRANCE

The Lord has made known His salvation; He has revealed His justice in the sight of all nations.
Save us, O Son of God Who art risen from the dead, as we sing to Thee: Alleluia!

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 8): From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three- day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD (Tone 4): Rejoice thou who art full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos! For from thee hath risen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice thou also, O righteous Elder, as thou receivest in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who also grants us the Resurrection!

KONTAKION FOR THE MEETING OF THE LORD (Tone 1): Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

TODAY'S EPISTLE READING

*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the humility of His servant.*

The Reading from the Epistle to the Hebrews

(Heb 7:7-17) Brethren, it is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. Here tithes are received by mortal men; there, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him. Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him, "Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

(Luke 2:22-40) In those days, the parents of Jesus brought Him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said 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, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Thy people Israel." And His father and his mother marveled at what was said about Him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having

lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, and as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of Him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him.

SPECIAL HYMN TO THE BIRTHGIVER OF GOD: *O Theotokos, thou hope of all Christians; keep and shelter and preserve them that set their hope in thee.* In the shadow and letter of the Law, let us the faithful contemplate a prefiguring: Every male child that opens the womb is holy unto God. Therefore, we magnify the first-born Word, the Son of the Father Who is without beginning, the first-born Child of a Mother who has not known wedlock.

A WORD ABOUT THE MEETING OR PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

The feast of the “Meeting” or “Presentation” of the Lord (also known as “Candlemas”) is one of the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons on the Feast by Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilocius of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407). Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns: St Andrew of Crete in the seventh

century; St Cosmas Bishop of Maium, St John of Damascus, and St Germanus of Constantinople in the eighth century; and St Joseph of Thessalonica in the ninth.

But who is it that is “presented” in the Temple? The Lord—Jesus Christ—as a baby, only 40 days old. According to the Law of Moses, each family had to “present” its first-born son to the Temple: that is, the child was consecrated to God, in the same way that the first yield of the crop was presented to God—a solemn way of thanking God for His gifts, and for asking His blessing upon one’s efforts. When something is offered up to God, it is thereby made sacred (it is “consecrated”) and rendered fit to remain there, in the holy place. How can a consecrated offering—the child—be returned to “regular” life, outside the Temple? Parents would “buy it back” by offering instead a young lamb; poor people would bring two turtledoves.

The feast is also called “Meeting of the Lord.” Who “meets” Him? Symeon, an



old priest, and the old prophetess Anna. It is on this occasion that Symeon bursts out in Spirit-inspired song, with words that the Church has retained for its prayer: "Lord, let now Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word. For my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to enlighten the gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel."

The old man had received a divine promise that he would not die before seeing with his very eyes, the One who bring "salvation." And, indeed, he confesses: "my eyes have seen" ... Seen what? God's salvation, namely the Glory of God, the object of Israel's worship. "The Glory" is God's living manifestation to the patriarchs and prophets of old—the fiery presence that called Moses from the bush, led Israel out of Egypt, and covered Sinai at the giving of the Law ... But what Symeon saw was even more astonishing: God's Glory in-the-flesh, under the humble appearance of a little baby! And the prophetess Anna also, "spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38) because she understood the same. Some icons of the Feast show her holding a scroll which reads: "This Child has established heaven and earth."

The richest theology flows like fragrant myrrh from the experience of the worshipping Church. Here are some excerpts from St. Cyril of Jerusalem's *Sermon on the Meeting of the Lord*:

[2] He who, of old, conversed with Moses on mount Sinai, in a manner befitting God, today fulfils the Law inasmuch as, in a manner befitting a servant, He was born under the Law. [5] I see an infant bringing forth a sacrifice to the temple, on earth, according to the Law, but himself in heaven receiving the pious sacrifices of all; one and the same in the arms of the elder, according to [divine] dispensation, and on the thrones of the cherubim, as befits God; one and the same being carried forth and purified, and purifying and cleansing everything ... [11] Hear, O Israel, this is the Lord your God. ... [12] It is this child who, of old, parted the sea for Israel, and drowned Pharaoh, and gave the Law to the Israelites, and rained down manna, and led the Hebrew nation by a pillar of fire, and rent the rock asunder, and kept the bush unconsumed in a flame of dewy fire.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Sunday, February 23** (Sunday of the Last Judgment— "Meatfare"): we have been invited to join our fellow Christians at Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church for Matins (9 AM) and Divine Liturgy (10 AM), followed by a pre-Lenten luncheon. *This is also a special, bittersweet, occasion: Father Paisius, who has been serving Sts. Peter and Paul with great dedication for some 13 years, is now moving to serve two mission parishes in the South.*

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Dollie (recovering after heart attack); Don (Dollie's brother); Ann (Wilson), recovering after surgery; Nyal, Jean's son-in-law (motorcycle accident); Joseph Totin; Ion, Marius & Katherine (Stan); Serbanescu and Becker families; Gabriel; Karen (Jane Best's daughter); Charitini; Stella & Dimitrios; Christine (Abraham); Dollie; Venetia; Maura; Ann; Ed, Peter, John, Jonathan and Joanna; Andrei; Kent, Bob, David (relatives of Jean); Stelian; Diane; Maura (Andronic); Susannah; Ed Sr (Totin).

DEPARTED: Frank (Seba's brother); Kurt (Melinda's father); Jackie (Rose Totin's mother); Maria (Stella Lyras' sister); Sula; Kurt (Diane's son); Viorica; Norma; Miltiades; Tim (Becker); Silviu; Ross (Chrissi's friend); Richard Johns; Viorica; Bishop Antoun; Vito (DiPento); Jim and Marion (Raimondi); Stephanie (Yazge); Job; George (Georgiades); Abie (Abraham); Bill (Thomas); Marta.