

TRINITY NEWS

Epiphany IV The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

The presentation of Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem links circumcision, naming, and the glory of God together. The public witness is central to the presentation of Jesus. He is carried into the visible heart of the Sacred in Judaism. The scene is painted in marvellous word pictures by Luke. We can see the child being carried in by Mary with Joseph at her side. We can see Simeon pointing to the child and bursting into praise about him. Then Simeon reaches out to him with words that are like a banner in the sky, saluting the coming of the Lord amongst his people. We can say with Simeon that the Lord is our peace and that in meeting Jesus we have found “salvation”. “Shalom”, i.e., “peace shaped by a continuing recognition of God’s presence”, goes with “salvation”. There is no point in claiming salvation unless it transforms our life.

God shines into our life and leaves a definitive shape there on the mirror of our soul that remains as the light of our life and the spark of our heart. “Those who walk in the shadow of God cast a shining light, and all who walk within their light are inspired by it”. God’s “shadow” has more light in it than any light on earth. What then must the full radiance of God be like, as it was seen on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the Resurrection?

Mary and Joseph were doing their best for Jesus according to the sacred traditions of their people. We do that when we bring a child to the Lord for baptism. It is not only the naming of the child, and the universal symbol of water. It is also the threefold signing of the cross which is Trinitarian and matches the three points of the Cross visible above the ground at Calvary. Although it is in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we call it “the sign of the cross”. It is also a presentation of the child to the Lord in our sacred traditions as in the case of Yeshua. Even when he is a child, we are imitating Jesus in our own traditions of initiation, though we combine it with his baptism at the Jordan River in our complete baptismal rite, whether it is for a child or an adult.

Initiation rites point forward. What happens has future implications. The first step of a child, watched so closely, is the first of millions of more steps. The saying is sure, “It is in the act of walking that we make the road”. It is like going through the gate on our first day at school. We have no idea of what is coming, we only know that we have to trust the carer alongside us.

Nothing that was done to Christ, nothing that he said or did or taught is outside our experience. We do not expect to be crucified on a cross, but in a look or glance that penetrates or a sarcastic comment that carries sting, we can be crucified in our soul. When we decide to walk with Christ, he is not only with us in Spirit, he also walks with us in so many of his experiences that match our own life. I am sure that he had a radiant smile. Irenaeus said that he was a man “fully alive”. Jesus asked others to be awake and alert to the presence of God in the world. He was fully awake and alert and alive with the glory of God within him. The Rabbis called it *Yekara* glory, “the glory of God shown in human conduct”, available for everyone to display.

Dispensing happiness is the best prescription for human sanity. The knowledge of God brings an underlying joy that puts utterly real hurts, disappointments and sadness into a more wholesome perspective. Try dispensing happiness this week in a conscious way and allow the joy of gratitude to rise up in you to give you and others hope in a troubled world.

With love in the Lord,
Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

February 4, Wednesday.

- Bible Study, 10am
- Group Study, 7:30pm, Parish Office.

February 5, Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

2 Kings 4:18-21,32-37; Psalm 142; I Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

UPCOMING EVENTS:

February 17. PANCAKE SUPPER/SHROVE TUESDAY

February 18. ASH WEDNESDAY.
