

1-12-2024

## Presentation of the Lord - 2 February 2025

Joe Tedesco

### Urgent Appeal - Pastoral Liturgy needs help

Follow this and additional works at: <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), and the [Liturgy and Worship Commons](#)

#### Recommended Citation

Tedesco, Joe. "Presentation of the Lord - 2 February 2025." *Pastoral Liturgy* 55, no. 1 (2024): 1-6. <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy/vol55/iss1/18>

This Liturgical Resource is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pastoral Liturgy by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@ND. For more information, please contact [researchonline@nd.edu.au](mailto:researchonline@nd.edu.au).





# 2 February 2025

## Presentation of the Lord

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

### Sunday of the Word of God Introduction

The Catholic Church in Australia celebrates the Word of God Sunday on the first Sunday in February. It is an opportunity to focus on an important part of our lives as Christians as encouraged by Pope Francis in an Apostolic Letter in September 2019.

### Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. Lord have mercy.

You bring salvation to all sinners. Christ have mercy.

You fill us with your wisdom and love. Lord have mercy.

### First Reading

#### Malachi 3:1-4

Malachi speaks of a messenger who will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. The suddenness of God's coming indicates that many will miss the forerunner's call to prepare their hearts.

### Responsorial Psalm

#### Psalm 23(24):7-10

*Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!*

This psalm is one of the psalms that are said when going into the Temple of Jerusalem. It is fitting that we continue to try to understand God through the scriptures.

### Second Reading

#### Hebrews 2:14-18

Christ enters into our reality in every sense and is, therefore, able to help us as an understanding friend, a companion on the journey of life.

## Gospel Reading

### Luke 2:22-40

The reading from Luke marks a transition from the revelation of God found in the Law of Moses to its fulfilment that will come through the child Jesus presented today. Two faithful characters are introduced in Anna and Simeon who break out in joy at the recognition of God found in their midst. It is also relevant as Word of God Sunday in the way in which the Hebraic and Christian texts are strongly connected.

## Reflection

The presentation of the Lord in the temple captured in Luke is traditionally held forty days after Christmas. The forty days after birth is based on what is mentioned in the Gospel itself as the time of purification 'according to the Law of Moses' (v. 22).

According to such a rite, the mother would have to abstain from entering the Temple or even touching any holy object for forty days after giving birth (see Lev 12:1-5).

Such an opening to our scene underscores the devoutness of Jesus' family.

Previous to this scene Jesus was circumcised and named according to the Jewish law (Lk 2:21) and, in addition to the adhering to the time of purification, Jesus as the firstborn is being presented to the temple also according to the Jewish law. All this paints a picture of Jesus being steeped deeply in the Hebraic tradition, with his family honouring their traditions and showing devotion to God that was the revealed way at the time of Jesus' birth.

Two other characters are introduced in the gospel scene in the form of Anna and Simeon. They are described as righteous and devout (in the case of Simeon) and a person devoted to Temple worship, fasting and prayer (in the case of Anna when the longer Gospel reading is used). Luke is clearly making a point that devotion to the Law of Moses, the central most important place of revelation of God as it had existed to that point, was integral part of the Christ event. As if to underscore the point, the closing line of the reading states 'When they had done everything the law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee ...' (Lk 2:39). Many commentators and theologians have reflected on the pains that Luke goes to indicate a link between Jesus Christ and the Hebrew tradition into which he was born. However, the broader theological implications aside, there is something worth reflecting on about the devoted piety (in the best sense of the word) displayed by the characters.

The first reading provides and insight to unpacking the Gospel. It speaks of a messenger 'preparing a way' (Mal 3:1). The Christian tradition interprets this as a prophetic image of John the Baptist. It then follows this with the line 'the Lord who you seek will suddenly enter his temple.' The word 'suddenly' is key here. The original Hebrew *pit'ōm* can be rendered as suddenly meaning abruptly or quickly. As such, it is often understood in relation to the appearance of John the Baptist who, according to Luke, is born six months before Jesus. However, the term *pit'ōm* equally holds the notion of surprisingly or startling; as in an event one does not see coming (e.g. Josh 10:9; 11:7).

When Jesus is brought to the temple in the Gospel narrative, this too is a surprising event in many respects. Jesus would have been one of many hundreds of first born males that would have been brought to the temple in any given year as was customary in the day. The 'surprise' is that the babe presented in this case is Jesus the Christ, the salvation for all people, 'light to enlighten the Pagans' and the 'glory of your people Israel'. Obviously for Simeon who utters these words it is indeed a pleasant surprise. But what was it that allowed him to see what could otherwise be easily missed, an event that one could easily not see coming as the first reading implies? Why was it that Simeon and Anna were able to perceive what Jesus was while others might not? There are two parts to answering these questions. The first is already highlighted. They were devoted to their faith in God, devoted to expressing that faith in worship and diligent in their practice. That devotion to the law of the Lord, a tradition that has its roots at the time of Abraham many thousands of years before Christ, allowed Simeon and Anna to see, in some sense at least, the newness of God's saving revelation in Christ in their contemporary experience.

The second reason is found particularly in reference to Simeon. The Gospel notes that the Holy Spirit rested on Simeon. Not only that, but it was the Holy Spirit which revealed to Simeon that he would see the Messiah of the Lord in his lifetime. The Spirit is mentioned a third time in quick succession as that which leads Simeon to the temple at the time of Jesus' presentation. Previous to the scene in today's gospel reading, throughout Luke's infancy narrative, Elizabeth, Zechariah and, of course, Mary were able to recognise and play their part in God's novel unfolding plan by drawing on the Spirit in different ways. Similarly, here Simeon is able to recognise and find joy in the encounter with Jesus because of his openness to the Spirit.

When we struggle to recognise what God is doing in our time, how the ongoing revelation of Christ is to be found in our day and in our midst, perhaps we can look to the characters of today's Gospel reading and attempt to emulate their two-part approach. We need to remain faithful to the way God has revealed God's self in our religious tradition. On the other hand, we need to be filled with the Spirit and open to the ever-new ways that God's saving presence is being manifest. To simply dismiss our Christian heritage is to drift out of touch with the ongoing story of God's revelation. On the other hand, to simply focus on religious practice that has gone before without sensitivity to the dynamic calling of the Spirit is to lose touch with how Christ is revealed in the reality of the here and now. Both extremes risk us missing the blessing of Christ in our midst. We pray we can be emulators of Simeon and Anna – faithful to the best of the old while open to the blessing of the new.

# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

The psalmist tells us that the king of glory is the Lord! Therefore, let us lift our hearts and needs to God with confidence.

## Petitions

We pray that the leaders of our Church remember that God alone is the King of Glory. May we who purport to love in his name know that without him we can do nothing.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that leaders of every nation are aware that from God alone springs all good, and that they may govern for the benefit of all.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all people who are suffering. May we have the courage and sensitivity to be as Christ to them in the joy of Christ's love for us.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that on this Presentation Day we will make a full and unreserved gift of ourselves to the Lord, to this worshipping community, and to those we serve.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who have departed this life, thankful for their example to us. May they rest in your peace and may those who mourn in this difficult time will be comforted.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

## Conclusion

God of all time, we give thanks and rejoice that you have gifted us with your Son, and that you hear our petitions as we pray through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, the Christ.

**Amen.**

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

### The Presentation of the Lord, Year C (Word of God Sunday) (2 February 2025)

Title	AOV	AOV2	CWB	CWBII	GA
At last, all pow'ful master				225	
Blessed Jesus, at your word*			626	457	531
Canticle of Simeon			636		301
Christ, be our light		3			404
Church of God			652		652
Hail Mary, gentle woman					544
Joy to the world	170		728		728
Let all mortal flesh keep silence					190
Lord God, you now have set your servant free				226	
Lord, you give the great commission*				308	313
My master, see, the time has come			636	227	
Of the Father's love begotten			779		
Praise to you, O Christ our saviour*	28			587	407
Priestly people			796		
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly			808		
Song of Simeon					301
Take the word of God with you*				607	494
The light of Christ	186		826		406
There is nothing told				418	548
In the temple now behold him				427	

\* Selections for Word of God Sunday.

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Among all	8		
Hail Mary, gentle woman			336

## Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 23: Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord.

	CWB	JOBF	LPSF	PM2
Psalm 23	453	pg. 32	pg. 70	pg. 19