

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

(Children)

Dear children today we celebrate the presentation of the Lord Jesus to God in the Temple in Jerusalem by Mary his mother and his legal father, St Joseph.. Every mother and father at that time were required to make over their first-born new baby to the Lord 40 days after its birth. Its bit similar to what we do when a baby is baptised. The church people first began to celebrate this feast way back in the 4th century.

At the same time as the baby was 40 days old the mother would also be ritually purified as laid down in the book of Leviticus in the Bible. Every Jewish mother had to go through this. In presenting Jesus to God in the Temple they were stating that the baby belonged to God but in making the offering of two turtle doves and two pigeons they were also in a sense buying him back, emphasising that Jesus also belonged to us. Jesus brought this out in his preaching later on in his life when he referred to Himself as not just the Son of God but also the son of Man. In presenting the doves and pigeons Mary and Joseph are seen as poor in this world's goods (the rich people gave a lamb) but in God's eyes they were very rich because they always did the will of God. No matter how much money you have you can't buy your way into Heaven.

To most people in the temple that day Jesus was just another little baby and Mary and Joseph another ordinary couple. But they met a lovely elderly couple, Simeon and Anna who sensed that Jesus was an extra special baby. They were really good people who fasted and prayed quite a bit and so would have the spiritual intuition to know who Jesus was. The Holy Spirit had prompted them in prayer that Jesus was the one foretold by the prophets hundreds of years who would save his people and indeed all of us in future generations from our sins. As the Light of the world, he will overcome the darkness of sin and death. This happened when Jesus gave his life for us on Mt

Calvary. As Simeon foretold Mary would also share in his pain: 'a sword of sorrow would pierce her heart'

In connection with this today is also known as Candlemas day. In churches up and down the country on this day beeswax candles are blessed during mass. These candles will be used at mass over the coming year. Today the people at Mass carry lighted candles into the church as we did this morning at St Vincent's. Today, Candlemas day may we will always follow Jesus, the Light of the World, and be never separated from Him by walking in darkness. May he lead us to the Eternal Light?