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Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Date: Monday, February 2, 2026 | **Season:** Ordinary Time before Easter | **Year:** A
First Reading: Malachi 3:1–4
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 24:7–10 | **Response:** Psalm 24:8
Gospel Acclamation: Luke 2:32
Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22–40
Preached at: the Chapel of Emerald Hill Children's Home **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Let us picture this moment in our imagination.

An old man stands in the Temple holding a baby. The child is warm and light. He has no idea who he is or what is being said about him. The old man's hands shake a little, so he slows himself down. He holds the child carefully, as if he knows this moment matters. Around them, nothing stops. People walk past. Prayers carry on. And still, something important is happening right there.

Mary and Joseph are there because this is what faithful people do. They turn up. They do what the Law asks. They bring their firstborn and offer what poor people are allowed to offer. Two pigeons. Not a message. Not a gesture. Just what they can manage. They give what they have, openly and without fuss. And God accepts it.

The prophet Malachi said the Lord would come like fire, burning away what is wrong and cleaning what belongs to God. But when the Lord comes, this is what the fire looks like. A child who needs to be carried. A child who could be dropped. A child who relies on others to bring him where he needs to go. God does not arrive loudly. God comes quietly and allows himself to be handled. This fire makes room for what is right. It purifies offerings so they are honest. It calls out those who take advantage of widows and orphans. It protects the vulnerable. It does not frighten them.

Simeon sees the child because the Holy Spirit has stayed with him for a long time. He does not bump into Jesus by chance. The Spirit brings him to the Temple at the right moment. Simeon has prayed through many ordinary days,

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days that felt much like the ones before. The Spirit has been there in all of them. That kind of prayer changes how you see. It helps you notice when God is close, even when nothing looks special.

Simeon speaks simply. My eyes have seen your salvation. He is not talking about an idea or a future plan. He is holding salvation in his arms. He also says this child is not just for his own people. He is light for the nations and glory for Israel. This child will not stay in one place. Like St Dominic's friars, Preachers of Grace, sent out poor from a common life and trusted with people's souls, the light is meant to travel.

Then Simeon says what is hard to hear. This child will be opposed. People will push back. Mary will suffer. He does not soften this reality. Love that is real always costs. This moment in the Temple already points ahead. One day Mary will stand again, not here but at the foot of a cross. The same child. The same offering. Only then it will cost everything.

Anna comes forward too. She has lived many years with prayer and with loss. The Temple has been her daily place. When she sees the child, she thanks God and speaks about him to anyone still hoping for things to change. Anna knows how tired people get. She shows that you do not need power or position to speak hope. Many women in consecrated life live this way, quietly holding others up when faith feels weak.

Today is the World Day of Consecrated Life. The two pigeons matter here. They represent a truth. God does not wait for something impressive. Consecrated life publicly promises to live simply, like that poor offering. It is a stable way of life in the Church, professing the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience for the sake of the Kingdom, vows that we will witness being renewed this morning. It is a life where time is kept for God. Where we encourage careful attention to the Word, and study done faithfully. Staying with one another when it would be easier to pull away. Turning up again tomorrow. In a place where many people live with very little, this kind of life – consecrated religious life – makes sense, and people recognise it. Let us give thanks for being blessed with this vocation.

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We also bless candles today. Their small flames are easy to lose if you are careless. You have to shield them with your hand. That is a good picture of our life. Our prayer needs care. Our community life needs patience. Fire can warm or it can burn. How we carry it matters. May we always hold it as a light and a guide for our community.

As the memory of Christmas fades and we move into this new month, the Church places the child back into our arms. Not so we can admire Him, but so we can carry Him into the months ahead. The Spirit is still arranging meetings. Still bringing Christ quietly into our daily routines. Still surprising us.

So with Simeon and Anna this morning, we say thank you.
And like Simeon, we loosen our grip.
What we have offered, slowly and over time, is enough.
Let us trust that God will take care of the rest.

As we pray with this Gospel this morning, here are a few simple questions to prompt our prayer:

- Where might the Spirit be asking me to notice more carefully today?
- What truth am I avoiding because it would cost me something?
- Whose tired faith could I steady just by being faithful where I am, as I am?

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.