

Homily  
Feast of the Presentation of the Lord  
February 2, 2024

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...” *John 3:16a*

How many ways has Jesus given of Himself to us through His incarnation? Today we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, where we remember Mary and Joseph presenting Jesus to the Lord in the Temple. Jesus, and His parents, were Jews, faithful and obedient. According to the law of the Lord spoken to Moses, “Consecrate to me every firstborn; whatever opens the womb among the Israelites, whether of human being or beast, belongs to me,”

Jesus, being human, was fulfilling the law. Jesus, being God, was establishing the New Covenant. Malachi foretells the arrival of the Lord to the Temple. Firstborns are either given to the sanctuary to be raised as a priest or were ‘redeemed’ which means ‘brought back’ as in returned to the parents. Luke does not say that Jesus was redeemed or bought back from his priestly role. Rather, the great mystery is that Jesus was brought to the Temple and was presented and consecrated for service as a royal priest! Jesus himself is not redeemed; he is the Redeemer!

Throughout His life, especially during His ministry, Jesus continually provides elements of our Salvation in the New Covenant. He gave us His Word, which we celebrate in the Liturgy of the Word, presented here. He established the Sacraments, most notably the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the giving as an offering of His very Body and Blood, fulfilling the ultimate and final sacrifice.

Jesus fulfills for us everything we need. By His becoming one of us, in all ways but sin, He shows us the way. He is the perfect example of how we are to live our lives. He gives us everything we need to grow and change in our faith journey. He has prepared for us a place in the glory of heaven. He stands ready to receive us at the end of our pilgrimage on this earth.

Throughout the Old Testament, Jesus is hidden, preparing His becoming one of us in the Incarnation. Throughout the Gospels, He shares with us the Good News. Throughout the rest of the New Testament, His glory is shared and given as a testament of how we are to live our lives.

The beauty of the story of Salvation is made present to us in today’s celebration as we witness the faith of Simeon and Annas in the temple. May our faith be as strong as theirs.