4 C 2025

 On today’s feast we contemplate the Lord Jesus, whom Mary and Joseph bring to the Temple *“to present Him to the Lord.”* This Gospel scene reveals the mystery of the Son of the Virgin, the consecrated One of the Father who came into the world to do His Father’s will. Simeon identifies Him as *“a light of revelation to the Gentiles*” and announces with prophetic words his supreme offering to God. This is the meeting point of the two Testaments, Old and New. Jesus enters the ancient Temple, He who is the new Temple of God. Jesus comes to visit His people, bringing to fulfillment obedience to the Law and ushering in salvation.

 It is interesting to note that at the entrance of the Child Jesus into the solemnity of the Temple, in the great comings and goings of many people busy with their work: priests and Levites, numerous devout people and pilgrims to encounter the God of Israel, yet none of them noticed anything. Jesus was a child like the others, a first-born Son of very simple parents. Even the priests proved incapable of recognizing the signs of the new and special presence of the Messiah and Savior. Except for two senior members of the community, Simeon and Anna.

Led by the Holy Spirit, in this Child, Simeon and Anna find the fulfillment of their long waiting and watchfulness. They both contemplate the light of God that comes to illuminate the world. Their prophetic gaze is opened to the future in the proclamation of the Messiah: *“the Light of revelation to the Gentiles.”* Upon seeing the Child, Simeon and Anna understood that Jesus was the long awaited One.

The light that is Jesus comes and shines on Mary and Joseph, on Simeon and Anna, and through them, on everyone. On Christ’s face the light of such beauty shines forth as a reflection of divine goodness. The Church contemplates and experiences the light which shines forth from the Incarnate Word.

In contemplating the Child Jesus, their message is that Jesus, in His humanity, will be the occasion for the purification of the people. God enters the limitations of our human condition, and submits to the power of death. Divine love does this. We have a God who is vulnerable, a God who faces suffering, who encounters rejection, who is subjected to the powers of darkness. Simeon and Anna foresee His destiny of death and resurrection for the salvation of all peoples. They proclaim this mystery as universal salvation.

Jesus enters our own lives for the illumination of a dark world that longs for redemption and rekindling Jesus brings. Whether His coming is, for us, a sudden shock—as the prophet Malachi intimates it will be—or a gentle arrival into an ordinary day, we become in our reception of this radiant light like “doors,” reaching high and flinging wide so that the King of Glory may come in; like “windows” that Christ-light may shine out to the world.

By our profession as Franciscans, we are called to bear this prophetic witness, linked to its two-fold contemplative and active living. God enters humanity and becomes one with us, in everything, except sin. Let us embrace our limitations and imperfections. Let us be transformed by the fire of the Holy Spirit by accepting to whatever suffering is part and parcel of being limited.

Indeed, we are to show the place of God in our lives, to have passion for the Gospel as our form of life, and to bring it to the poor and the lowliest of the earth in whom Jesus lives. Our vocation is born of God, from friendship with Him, from attentive listening to His word in the many circumstances of life. Let us be the light that announces that Divine Love is here, present in the temple of our hearts. In this way in the daily experience of living, we witness the Gospel and the Kingdom already present and active.

