

Jesus is presented in the Temple



Luke chapter 2:22-24 refers to the "*Presentation of Jesus in the temple*". When Jesus was 40 days old Mary and Joseph travelled to the temple in Jerusalem to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded.



According to Law, God required Israelite parents to bring their first-born sons to the Temple in Jerusalem to present them before Him there. Perhaps one reason for this law was to help new parents understand how valuable their children were and how important their responsibility was in God's eyes. It was a way of saying to God, "*This is not as much my child as it is Your child. Therefore, I will raise this child as You want me to.*"

To dedicate someone means to offer him to God. The parents of the firstborn son had to take an offering with them as they dedicated their son to God in the temple. The offering needed to be a lamb. If a family didn't have enough money to bring a lamb, God allowed them to bring a pair of doves or two young pigeons. Mary and Joseph loved and obeyed God. They obeyed His laws regarding the First born Son. This little baby, Jesus, was God's Son. Mary and Joseph began their travel from Bethlehem to Jerusalem bringing *the only offering they could afford 2 young doves.*



This is Jesus' first visit of many to the temple. It is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi in the first reading, "*suddenly there will come to the temple, the Lord whom you seek...*" (Mal 3:1)

The text in Malachi goes on to say that when the Lord enters the temple he will purify and refine the Levites so that they will offer a pure sacrifice to the Lord and then the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem will please the Lord (Mal 3:3-4). When Jesus was presented in the temple everything foreseen in Malachi was already beginning to unfold and would be fully unfolded when Jesus would die on the cross and his priests of the New Covenant would continue to make that sacrifice present in the pure sacrifice of the Eucharist. The second reading from Hebrews confirms that *Jesus is the high priest of the New Covenant (Heb 2:17)*. Jesus offered himself on the altar of Calvary, the only pure priestly sacrifice that could please God.

It's time for us to *think about the last forty days* and ask ourselves some questions:

- What sacrifices have we made in the last forty days?
- What today can we present to the Temple of Christ, the Church?
- In what condition do we present our souls to Christ?
- Have we attempted to give up an old vice and begun cultivating a new virtue?
- Do we pray and read bible regularly?
- Have we thanked God for all that we have received?

Whatever our answers to these questions may be, one thing is certain:

If we are not spiritually prepared to meet Christ, then we shall never meet Him.