

Reflection for Epiphany 4 – The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

‘For there is always light,
if only we’re brave enough to see it.
If only we’re brave enough to be it.’

These words by poet Amanda Gorman were spoken at President Joe Biden’s inauguration ceremony this week, and quoted on social media within minutes. It seems that her performance had resonated with people in many different countries and cultures.

Her words reminded me Simeon’s poetic and prophetic speech in today’s Gospel that Jesus will be a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of God’s people Israel. It is clear that this light is no spluttering flame, but the Christ-light which brings healing, wholeness and salvation. It will illuminate the deepest corners of corruption and deceit – both in the hidden spaces of the world and within our own hearts.

Jesus makes clear to his disciples that they too bear his light to the world (Matthew 5: 14). The light of Christ shines through us, into our homes and communities.

As Gorman says so beautifully, our challenge is not simply to see the light, but have the courage to **be** it – as light-bearers to the world.

Revd Sarah

Codes for the Zoom worship at 10.30

These are codes for Sundays from 6 December to the end of January:

Meeting ID: 894 0983 2572

Passcode: 061920

Telephone numbers: 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

NEXT SUNDAY 07.02.2021 2nd Sunday before Lent

SERVICES 10.30 by Zoom, 12 noon in Church



READINGS

OT Proverbs 8: 1, 22-31

NT Colossians 1: 15-20

Gospel John 1: 1-14

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St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 31st January 2021

Candlemas

10.30 by Zoom (phone-in available)

12 noon Mass in Church

You are invited today to take part in a **Candlemas** service to mark Jesus as the Light of the World: to look backwards towards Christmas and forwards towards Lent. On Zoom, we will be combining the theme of Candlemas and Christingle, so you might want the regular stuff of Christingle in front of you, or use the printed sheet available by post or on the web. At least, it would be good to light a candle on this Sunday. We will be blessing candles at the 12 noon Mass, but without a procession. Candlemas is transferred to 31/1 as the nearest Sunday, but is normally marked on 2nd February.

The feast of **St Blaise**, a 4th century Armenian Bishop is on 3 February. Traditionally, he is patron saints of sore throats, so the tradition on St Blaise’s Day was to rub your throat with the candle blessed the day before. Presumably, it had been extinguished by then. There is a church dedicated to St Blaise in this diocese at Hacombe.

Fr David



Collect

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Malachi 3: 1-5

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Hebrews 2: 14-18

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins

of the people.⁸Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Luke 2: 22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.' Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.' And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.' There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the

Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Post Communion

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

NOTICES

Community Larder The Community Larder will be collecting on **Tuesdays only** from 10am-12noon, and is allowed to continue operating during the period of lockdown. The collecting point will now be in the Church Hall. Please continue to be generous.

Knit and Natter Update for February 2021 We are delighted that so many members of the congregation are knitting blanket squares. This comforting activity is resulting in three more large blankets to add to the five already being enjoyed at Parkland House. Eight inch squares are the best – any wool, any colour, in garter stitch. Nattering is on Thursdays via Zoom from 11.15am to 11.55am, thanks to Vanessa for setting this up for us, whilst we aren't able to meet in person. All information from Jenny on 01392 498725

House Group. Tuesday evenings. Please contact Ian Totterdell for Zoom details.

