

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Your merciful love, O God,
we have received in the midst of your temple.
Your praise, O God, like your name,
reaches the ends of the earth;
your right hand is filled with saving justice.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
we humbly implore your majesty
that, just as your Only Begotten Son
was presented on this day in the Temple
in the substance of our flesh,
so, by your grace,
we may be presented to you with minds made
pure.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Mal 3:1-4

A reading from the prophet Malachi

The Lord God says this: Look, I am going to
send my messenger to prepare a way before
me. And the Lord you are seeking will suddenly
enter his Temple; and the angel of the covenant
whom you are longing for, yes, he is coming,
says the Lord of hosts. Who will be able to resist
the day of his coming? Who will remain standing
when he appears? For he is like the refiner's
fire and the fullers' alkali. He will take his seat
as refiner and purifier; he will purify the sons
of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and
then they will make the offering to the Lord as
it should be made. The offering of Judah and
Jerusalem will then be welcomed by the Lord as
in former days, as in the years of old.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 23 (24):7-10

Response:

Who is the king of glory? It is the Lord.

- O gates, lift high your heads;
grow higher, ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory! (R.)

- Who is the king of glory?
The Lord, the mighty, the valiant,
the Lord, the valiant in war. (R.)
- O gates, lift high your heads;
grow higher, ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory! (R.)
- Who is he, the king of glory?
He, the Lord of armies,
he is the king of glory. (R.)

SECOND READING

Heb 2:14-18

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

Since all the children share the same blood
and flesh, Jesus too shared equally in it, so
that by his death he could take away all the
power of the devil, who had power over death,
and set free all those who had been held in
slavery all their lives by the fear of death. For it
was not the angels that he took to himself; he
took to himself descent from Abraham. It was
essential that he should in this way become
completely like his brothers so that he could be
a compassionate and trustworthy high priest
of God's religion, able to atone for human sins.
That is, because he has himself been through
temptation he is able to help others who are
tempted.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! The light to enlighten the
Gentiles
and give glory to Israel, your people. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 2:22-40

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke. Shorter form (Lk 2:22-32) read between
>>

>When the day came for them to be purified as
laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of
Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him
to the Lord, – observing what stands written in
the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must
be consecrated to the Lord – and also to offer
in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in
the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two
young pigeons.

Now in Jerusalem there was a man named
Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he
looked forward to Israel's comforting and the
Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed
to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see
death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the
Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the
Temple; and when the parents brought in the
child Jesus to do for him what the Law required,
he took him into his arms and blessed God; and
he said:

'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in
peace,
just as you promised;
because my eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared for all the nations to
see,
a light to enlighten the pagans
and the glory of your people Israel.'
<

As the child's father and mother stood there
wondering at the things that were being said
about him, Simeon blessed them and said
to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is
destined for the fall and for the rising of many
in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected –
and a sword will pierce your own soul too – so

that the secret thoughts of many may be laid
bare.'

There was a prophetess also, Anna the
daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She
was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over,
she had been married for seven years before
becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four
years old and never left the Temple, serving
God night and day with fasting and prayer.
She came by just at that moment and began
to praise God; and she spoke of the child to
all who looked forward to the deliverance of
Jerusalem.

When they had done everything the Law of the
Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their
own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile the child grew
to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and
God's favour was with him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the offering made with exultation by your
Church
be pleasing to you, O Lord, we pray,
for you willed that your Only Begotten Son
be offered to you for the life of the world
as the Lamb without blemish.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

My eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in the sight of all the
peoples.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

By these holy gifts which we have received,
O Lord,
bring your grace to perfection within us,
and, as you fulfilled Simeon's expectation
that he would not see death
until he had been privileged to welcome the
Christ,
so may we, going forth to meet the Lord,
obtain the gift of eternal life.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday Message

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year C • 2 February 2025 • Colour: White • Psalter Week 4



WISE OLD HEADS

LK 2:22-40

In the summer of 2019, a then 93-year-old appeared on the main stage at Glastonbury, the biggest music event of the year in Britain.

It was the festival's last day, and his appearance was unexpected. To make it onto Glastonbury's main stage is a singular achievement. Many artists spend years hoping to headline there. Most never make it. So the fact that a 93-year-old made it was all the more surprising, especially as he wasn't even in the music industry. The 93-year-old was Sir David Attenborough.



A huge roar greeted the environmentalist and television presenter as he emerged on stage. He was there to urge people to protect our planet. And he wanted to thank the organisers for making the festival plastic-free. His speech drew rapturous applause from the young audience.

David Attenborough was teaching another valuable lesson, because we live in a world that worships youth and beauty, and tends to tune out the reality of old age. Our culture tells us that to be a success, to be worth it, you must be young, attractive. Look at celebrity magazines or the world of modelling, look at reality TV. Girls feel the pressure especially, but boys feel it also.

A study published in the UK some time ago showed a worrying rise in the number of teenagers admitted to hospital to be treated for an eating disorder. And it blames celebrity

culture and social media for contributing to this rise.

"With the rise of social media and the celebrity culture, people are being bombarded by these images of what seems to be the ideal body," an expert said.

In this youth and beauty obsessed world, more and more people are using plastic surgery, botox and all sorts of fads and diets to try to look young.

In today's Gospel, we meet two old people who are not into beauty regimes or diets. Simeon and Anna are deeply religious people who have spent years in the Temple, devoting their lives to God.

Along comes a young couple, Mary and Joseph, with their new-born baby. They have brought Jesus to the Temple to consecrate him to God, as the law requires.

The Temple is full of people, including priests and scribes. These are the educated ones, the ones who know their theology and scripture, but they don't recognise who this child is. Instead, it's these two uneducated seniors, Simeon and Anna, who have the wisdom to recognise the Lord.

The others in the Temple probably had dismissed them as a pair of pious old fogeys, two geriatrics who keep getting in the way, but Simeon and Anna are the tuned-in, clued-in, awake ones, able to decipher what is happening. This unlikely duo are the agents God uses. ■

DO

Visit an elderly family member or relative this week. Take time to listen to them. Value their wisdom and insight.

SAY

"Lord, help me to see and appreciate the beauty in everyone, irrespective of age or circumstance. Amen."

PRAY

Pray that, like Simeon and Anna, you will recognise Christ as your Lord and proclaim him with joy.

LEARN

Founded in 1997, this is the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life. Pope John Paul attached it to Candlemas Day because consecrated men and women are to be a light in the world, imitating Jesus, the Light of the World.

REFLECT

Today's Gospel offers valuable lessons about ourselves and about old age.

First, to appreciate who we are, the way we are. Our culture is so obsessed with looks and image that it overlooks what's really important, which is what's inside – the kind of people we are and the values we hold. We can't measure these by looking in the mirror or at pictures on Instagram, but these are what matter most of all. It's not how I look, but who I am; not whether I can model for a top ad agency but whether I am a model person; not whether I'm a size 8 or can pump more iron than anyone else in the gym, but how big my heart is.

The first lesson is to appreciate who we are, the way we are, with all our physical imperfections. None of us is perfect. We grow older and we grow old. It's part of the beauty of life. What matters is being our best selves, making the best use of the gifts God has given us.

The second lesson is to not obsess about the past. Anna and Simeon are unusual: you would expect these old people to dwell on the past, on what happened in their young days, their memories and losses. Instead, their focus is on what is to come. Something yet to happen dominates their life, and they are alive with hope and expectation, hungering for God's presence, longing for the day when they will see for themselves the glory of God. In our 21st century world, dominated by so much despair and fear, we need something of that hope and expectation which filled Simeon and Anna.

The third lesson is to appreciate older people – for they have so much to teach us. Their long years in the Temple helped Anna and Simeon to tune into God. It's the wisdom and insight of old age. It's what older people have in abundance. It's what we can too easily ignore.

Think of what your older family members give you, and treasure it. Value them while you can, and learn from them, as Mary and Joseph learned from Anna and Simeon.

As David Attenborough reminds us, we can learn so much from the older generation, irrespective of whether or not they make it onto the main stage at Glastonbury. ■