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Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (B) — White
World Day for Consecrated and Religious Life

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PLOT TWISTS

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come in the form of a forty-day-old baby boy who needs to be hand-carried to the temple? Only two kinds of people are able to recognize the Lord's coming: his earthly parents and the holy elders Simeon and Anna. The former are young and simple, bent on doing what the Lord asks them to; the latter are wise, discerning the many ways the Lord comes to them through their lives. Yet in this encounter between the young and the old, there is the baby Jesus who is humble enough to obey the Law of Moses and is wise enough to sit among the teachers in that same temple. Power and majesty are indeed found in the humility of the Child!

But like all great stories, the plot begins to twist. Simeon is clear-eyed to see that Jesus will indeed rise to reign—not from the golden throne of David but from the wood of the Cross raised on Calvary. It is in pain and suffering that God will be powerful and majestic to reign. No wonder the sign of our faith is not the crib in Bethlehem but the wooden throne of the Cross! O the paradoxes of God that make suffering and death give way to the glory of Resurrection and eternal life!

May today's celebration lead us to pray over the different "plot twists" of our lives so that we may always see that it is the Lord leading us from sorrow to joy, from darkness to light, from glory to glory.

A few days ago, I was scrolling through the X (formerly Twitter) page of my last advisory class. One of the most reacted tweets therein was a direct quote that my all-too-listening high school students picked up from me as we were discussing Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*: "Sometimes, the greatest source of your happiness can also be the source of your greatest sufferings. That's why roses have thorns." It is funny and paradoxical to think that more often than not, the best memories are not those which have been experiences of pure bliss but those which have been obtained through struggle, suffering, and pain. No wonder we Filipinos love a good sob story or a *telenovela* protagonist who triumphs after going through much sorrow and defeat.

The same seems to apply

even to what we now call as the "joyful" mysteries of the Rosary. As happy as the Incarnation was, our Blessed Mother—a teenager at that time—must have borne in silence the doubts of Joseph, not to mention the threat to her life if proven unfaithful. As poignant as the Visitation was, it seems no joke for a teenage mother to travel for hundreds of miles, braving bandits and highway robbers, to take care of an aged cousin. As cute as our modern portrayals of the *Belen* may be, having to give birth in a cave-stable is no joke. Today's Feast is no exception as it rings two kinds of bells: the festive bells that remind us of the joy of Christmas and the funeral bells that toll the suffering and death of Good Friday.

Today's First Reading shows the coming of God to his temple in power and majesty. Who would imagine that God will

PART I: BLESSING OF CANDLES AND PROCESSION

(At an appropriate hour, a gathering takes place at a smaller church or other suitable place other than inside the church to which the procession will go. The faithful hold in their hands unlighted candles. The priest and his ministers wear white vestments. The priest may wear the cope instead of the chasuble during the procession. The candles are then lit.)

Introduction

(The priest may address the assembly using these or similar words)

P—Today is the blessed day when Jesus was presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the Temple. Enlightened by the same Spirit, they recognized the Lord and confessed him with exultation. Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us also proceed to the house of God to encounter Christ. There we shall find him and recognize him in the breaking of the bread, until he comes again, revealed in glory.

Blessing of Candles

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, true light, who create light eternal, spreading it far and wide, pour, we pray, into the hearts of the faithful the brilliance of perpetual light, so that all who are brightened in your holy temple by the splendor of these candles may happily reach the light of your glory.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

(The priest sprinkles the candles in silence. He then takes the candle prepared for him, and the procession begins with the acclamation:)

P—Let us go in peace to meet the Lord.

Procession

(During the procession, an appropriate hymn is sung. As the procession enters the church, the entrance chant of the Mass is sung. When the priest reaches the altar, he venerates it. Then he goes to the chair [and replaces the cope with the chasuble]. The Mass begins with the Gloria.)

PART II: MASS

Gloria

All—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

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

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.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Mal 3:1–4) *(Sit)*

The prophet Malachi proclaims the day when the Lord will come to the temple. A messenger will be sent to prepare the people for their meeting with the Lord.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Malachi

THUS SAYS the Lord GOD: Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me; and suddenly there will come to the temple the LORD whom you seek, and the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who will endure the day of his coming? And

who can stand when he appears? For he is like the refiner's fire, or like the fuller's lye. He will sit refining and purifying silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, refining them like gold or like silver that they may offer due sacrifice to the LORD. Then the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem will please the LORD, as in the days of old, as in years gone by.

—The word of the Lord

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 24)

R—Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

1. Lift up, O gates, your lintels;/ reach up, you ancient portals,/ that the king of glory may come in! **(R)**

2. Who is this king of glory?/ The LORD, strong and mighty,/ the LORD, mighty in battle. **(R)**

3. Lift up, O gates, your lintels;/ reach up, you ancient portals,/ that the king of glory may come in! **(R)**

4. Who is this king of glory?/ The LORD of hosts; he is the king of glory. **(R)**

Second Reading

(Heb 2:14–18)

In Jesus Christ, the Lord comes to us in human form, like us in every way except sin, that he may become our merciful intercessor before God.

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

SINCE THE CHILDREN share in blood and flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the Devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. Surely he did not help angels but rather the descendants of Abraham; therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he

is able to help those who are being tested.

—The word of the Lord
All—Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Lk 2:32) *(Stand)*

All—Alleluia, alleluia. A light of revelation to the Gentiles and glory for your people Israel.
Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Lk 2:22–40)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
All—Glory to you, O Lord.

WHEN THE DAYS were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, *Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord*, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.”

The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is

destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted—and you yourself a sword will pierce—so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of 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 favor of God was upon him.

—The Gospel of the Lord
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily *(Sit)*

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Today, our Savior was presented in the Temple and revealed as light to the nations. Let us pray to the Father that as we honor his Son, the source of our light, we may also be light and guide to others. With confidence, let us pray:

R—Lord, in your love, hear us.

C—May Pope Francis, bishops, priests, and deacons follow the example of Mary and Joseph who revere God and are faithful to religious traditions. We pray: **(R)**

C—May political and civil leaders console and support the elderly, the sick, and the abandoned. We pray: **(R)**

C—May Christian communities commit themselves to defend the weak, the poor, and victims of violence and injustice. We pray: **(R)**

C—May all consecrated persons, religious men and women enlighten the minds of all in building their lives on Jesus, the light of all people. We pray: **(R)**

C—May our departed brothers and sisters, who still yearn to see you face to face, receive eternal joy and peace. We pray: **(R)**

P—Father, as we celebrate the presentation of your beloved Son in the Temple, we offer our humble petitions and ask him to bring us to your presence.

Through the same Christ, our Lord.

All—Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—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.

All—Amen.

Preface: The Mystery of the Presentation of the Lord

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For your co-eternal Son was presented on this day in the Temple and revealed by the Spirit as the glory of Israel and Light of the nations.

And so, we, too, go forth, rejoicing to encounter your Salvation, and with the Angels and Saints praise you, as without end we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (*Kneel*)

Acclamation (*Stand*)

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(*Kneel*)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Lk 2:30–31)

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

Prayer after Communion

(*Stand*)

P—Let us pray. (*Pause*)

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.

All—Amen.

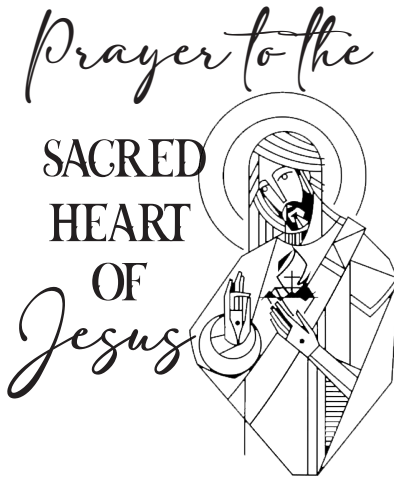
THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P—Bow for the blessing. (*Pause*)



Divine Jesus, you have said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," behold me kneeling at your feet, filled with a lively faith and confidence in the promises dictated by your Sacred Heart and pronounced by your adorable lips. I come to ask this favor: (Here silently mention your petitions.)

To whom can I turn if not to you whose Heart is the source of all graces and merits? Where should I seek if not in the treasure which contains all the riches of your kindness and mercy? Where should I knock if not at the door through which God gives himself to us and through which we go to God? I have recourse to you, Heart of Jesus. In you I find consolation when afflicted, protection when

The hearts of your faithful submitted to your name, entreat your help, O Lord, and since without you they can do nothing that is just, grant by your abundant mercy that they may both know what is right and receive all that they need for their good.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

Dismissal

P—The Mass has been offered. Go in peace glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.

persecuted, strength when burdened with trials, and light in doubt and darkness.

Dear Jesus, I firmly believe that you can grant me the grace I implore, even though it should require a miracle. You have only to will it, and my prayer will be granted. I admit that I am most unworthy of your favors, but this is not a reason for me to be discouraged. You are the God of mercy and you will not refuse a contrite heart. Cast upon me a look of mercy, I beg of you, and your kind Heart will find in my miseries and weaknesses a reason for granting my prayers.

O Sacred Heart, whatever may be your decision with regard to my request, I will never stop adoring, loving, praising, and serving you. My Jesus, be pleased to accept this my act of perfect resignation to the decrees of your adorable Heart which I sincerely desire may be fulfilled by me and by all your creatures forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I know that there is but one thing impossible to you: to be without pity for those who are suffering or in distress. Look upon me, I beg of you, dear Jesus, and grant me the grace for which I humbly implore you through the Immaculate Heart of your most sorrowful Mother. You have entrusted me to her as her child, and her prayers are all-powerful with you. Amen.