

In v. 33, Joseph is Jesus' legal father. Simeon prophesies in vv. 34-35 through the Spirit (v. 25). Jesus is destined for the death and resurrection ("the falling and the rising", v. 34) of many; he will meet opposition, and will cause many to think deeply about him. Mary too will need to decide for or against Christ ("own soul", v. 35). Simeon and Anna together stand before God; to Luke, men and women are equal in God's eyes. Anna praises God, and tells many the meaning of Jesus, as Simeon has prophesied. Like Samuel, "the favour of God was upon him" (v. 40).

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~ Notices ~

**Prayers** - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on [frkevinobrien@me.com](mailto:frkevinobrien@me.com) or call me on 065 672 4721.

**YouTube** - our YouTube channel now has over 125 videos, comprising services, talks and sermons. Please do visit the channel by searching for **St Columba's Church Ennis** and do *subscribe* if you can, we are aiming to reach 100 as soon as possible - we stand at 86 at present. Also visit our **Facebook** page:

**Drumcliffe Church of Ireland Ennis**

**Services in the New Year** - due to Covid 19 measures our churches must remain closed, however, our online services continue.

**Rector:** Email: [frkevinobrien@me.com](mailto:frkevinobrien@me.com) Tel: 065 672 4721

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**- Mission Charities -**

The two charities being supported this year are below. Women's Aid gives support and sanctuary to women and children suffering from domestic abuse - which has sadly greatly increased during the Covid 19 pandemic. Jigsaw supports young people who are struggling with their wellbeing and mental health - also a prevalent problem during so many months of lockdown and isolation.

**Womens Aid                      Jigsaw**

[www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)      [www.jigsaw.ie](http://www.jigsaw.ie)

See the diocesan website for the Bishop's address:  
<http://www.limerick.anglican.org>



**The Presentation of Christ  
(Candlemas) (Year B)**

**Collect**

Lord Jesus Christ, light of the nations and glory of Israel: make your home among us, and present us pure and holy to your heavenly Father, your God, and our God. **Amen**

**Suggested Hymns** - *For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.*

- 1) Christ, whose glory fills the skies.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xr7IYNgy0mE>
- 2) King of glory, King of peace  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikj7CiC7v0U>
- 3) , Praise to the Holiest in the height  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIbGTmiJCPI&t=5s>
- 4) Fairest Lord Jesus  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DY7HjUxGS6U>

**Malachi 3:1-4**

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.

**Psalms 24.7-10**

Lift up your heads, O gates!  
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!  
that the King of glory may come in.  
Who is the King of glory?  
The Lord, strong and mighty,  
the Lord, mighty in battle.  
Lift up your heads, O gates!  
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!  
that the King of glory may come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts,  
he is the King of glory.

**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. Because 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.

### **Commentary**

#### **Malachi 3:1-4**

Cyrus, King of Persia, has permitted the people of Israel to return to Palestine. The Temple, gutted in 586 BC, has been restored, but Israel is still a Persian province. People expected that their fidelity to God would be rewarded by (material) prosperity, but life has continued to be hard, so after several decades, they have lapsed into waywardness. It is the ungodly who prosper. In the old days, the king was God's agent, but now (there being no king), the priests have assumed this role. In previous chapters, the prophet has condemned the priests for despising God, corrupting worship and misleading the people.

A "messenger" (v. 1) or angel, God's agent, will come to prepare a way for him. God, long expected, will come to "his temple", to the priests. God's "covenant" with Israel was summed up in the priests. His arrival will be sudden, unannounced. V. 2 implies that when God comes, he will judge the people. (The accused stands to hear judgement.) A refiner used the heat of a fire to separate ore into pure metal and slag; a fuller cared for newly shorn wool or woven garments by cleaning them, purifying them, with lye. The messenger will "purify ... and refine", (v. 3) the priests ("the descendants of Levi") until they hold him in proper respect. Their offerings, on behalf of the people, will then again be "pleasing to the Lord" (v. 4). God will judge adversely those who deviate from proper moral behaviour and from his ways (v. 5). 4:5 tells us that the messenger is Elijah; hence the popular belief in Jesus' day that Elijah would return.

### **Psalm 24:7-10**

This psalm is based on a Canaanite myth which tells of the divine conquest of the unruly forces of chaos. It has transformed into a hymn of praise to God, the victorious creator, followed by a liturgy on entering the Temple. In question-and-answer form, it was probably sung antiphonally, as the Ark was borne to the Temple. Vv. 1-2 acknowledge God as creator. V. 3 asks: who will be admitted to the Temple? Vv. 4-6 give the answer: those who are pure, do not worship false gods, and do not harm others with false oaths. They will be blessed by God, with prosperity. In vv. 7-10, the pilgrims identify God in terms traditionally associated with the Ark: he is "King of glory", the "Lord of hosts" (v. 10), the war hero of Israel (v. 8b). The "doors" (v. 7) are those between the outer court and the sanctuary of the Temple, the "heads" (v. 9) their lintels. Perhaps a priest asks: "Who is this king of the glory?" (v. 10) from within, and the people answer from the court. God dwells in the sanctuary.

### **Hebrews 2:14-18**

Hebrews couches the good news in Jewish terms: it sees Jesus as the great high priest. V. 10 says something like It was appropriate that God, the creator, should – in bringing us to share in his glory – make Jesus (the forerunner of our salvation), a priest, but (unlike other priests) a priest who suffers. Why? V. 11 says: because Jesus and we have the same Father. God reveals himself in the Church. There is a close affinity between Jesus and his followers.

In v. 14, "flesh" refers to human nature, considered in its weakness and infidelity. The writer sees the devil as having the power of death – perhaps a reminder of the link between sin and death portrayed in the story of the Garden of Eden. Jesus, through his redemptive act, frees us from the fear of death – death is no longer separation from God. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, the nature of death has changed: it has become the way out of the domain of sin. The "descendants of Abraham" (v. 16) are those who believe in Christ. Old Testament priests were expected to be "faithful" (v. 17), but Christ, the "high priest" is unique in being "merciful", compassionate. Before Christ, when

- one deviated from God's ways (sinned),
- God became angry and separated one from him,
- one offered a sacrifice (thus obtaining purification), and
- regained a right relationship with God.

Christ's "sacrifice", death, ends this cycle: he continually takes sins on himself, keeping us in unity with God. Then v. 18: it is because Christ was "tested" in life and when dying that he is able to help those who are tempted to abandon his ways.

### **Luke 2:22-40**

Jesus has been circumcised, marking him as a member of God's chosen people, Israel, through whom world salvation was to be achieved. After childbirth, it was 40 days before a mother could be purified before a priest in the Temple, so it is at least that long since Jesus' birth. She was expected to offer a lamb, along with a turtledove or a pigeon; if she were poor (as Mary is), two turtledoves or pigeons sufficed. Exodus required that every firstborn boy be consecrated to God. Jesus' presentation in the Temple is like Samuel's. Jesus and his family fulfil the requirements of Mosaic law.

Simeon looks forward to the coming of the Messiah to restore Israel to favour with God ("the consolation of Israel", v. 25). The Spirit has told him that he will see the Christ before he dies (v. 26). Simeon's words in vv. 29-32 are known as the Nunc Dimittis, from the first words in Latin. He begins by saying that God is setting him free, as a slave is granted liberty. He is now free to die (for the Spirit's revelation to him is now fulfilled), and Israel is free of bondage. God has saved Israel, as he promised to "all peoples"; his salvation is for Gentiles too.