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Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Candlemas)

Dear Friends in Christ,

"And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord" (Luke 2:22). Thus begins the Gospel for today's Feast, the last of the Christmas season, in which Holy Mother Church commemorates the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple forty days after His Nativity.

When the Holy Family entered the Temple in Jerusalem, they were greeted by Simeon, a "just and devout" man who "had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord" (Luke 2:26).

Because of his great piety, Simeon was granted the privilege of holding the Divine Infant in his arms, during which he "blessed God, and said: Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace; because mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). It is in honor of this last verse that today's Feast is called Candlemas and features the blessing of candles and a procession.

Our Lord is "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles," according to the prophecy given by God to Isaias concerning the mission of the Messias: "Behold, I have given thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation even to the farthest part of the earth" (Isa. 49:6).

As members of His Mystical Body, we are called to "shine as lights in the world" (Philip. 2:15) and to lead souls to Christ, Who is "the light of the world" (John 8:12) and the only means of salvation. This mission will require us to be signs of contradiction in a fallen world that is often hostile to the truth. As Simeon told Our Lady, "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be contradicted" (Luke 2:34). Like Mary, we must be ready and willing to be pierced with a sword of sorrow, "that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed" (Luke 2:35).

For nearly 30 years, now, *Catholic Family News* has been a light of revelation (revealing the glory of Catholic Tradition) and a sign of contradiction (opposing errors within and outside

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Sincerely in the Holy Family,

Matt Gaspers
Managing Editor

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