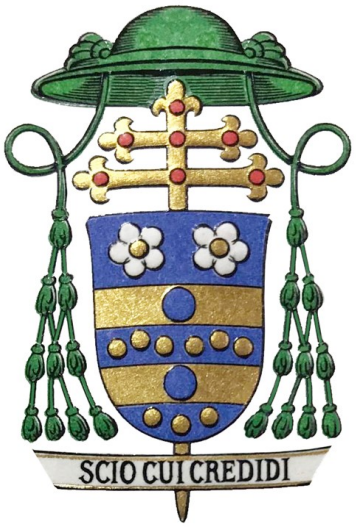


LUMEN AD REVELATIONEM

Homily of Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò
On the Feast of the Purification of Mary Most Holy

Tu es qui restitues hæreditatem meam mihi.
It is You Who will restore my inheritance to me.
Ps 15:5

My eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the sight of every people. With these words, the aged Simeon praises the Lord for having granted him the privilege of being able to witness the fulfillment of the Prophecies, being able to hold in his arms the Infant Messiah, brought to the Temple to be offered to the Lord according to the prescriptions of the Old Law. That short but profound canticle is repeated every night at Compline, because the prayer that the Church recites at the end of each day prepares us for the end of our earthly exile with our faces turned towards Our Lord.

Today’s feast was dedicated, up until the reform of 1962, to the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, and it was therefore a Marian recurrence of a penitential nature, as evidenced by violet-colored vestments; just as the rite of Purification which all Jewish mothers had to undergo forty days after giving birth was penitential (Lev 12:2). Holy Church also preserves in the *Rituale Romanum* the special Blessing for Mothers who have given birth, which has now fallen into disuse but which it would be a pious practice to restore in its spiritual significance. Just as for the rite of the Baptism of Our Lord in the Jordan, so also the rite of

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

Purification did not strictly have sense or utility for Mary Most Holy, since she is Most Pure and without sin in virtue of her Immaculate Conception. By her submission to the Law then in force, Our Lady gives us an example of obedience to religious precepts, so that we may not forget that we are children of wrath and that we merit Grace only because of the infinite merits that Our Savior acquired for us through His Passion and Death on the Cross.

The reform of Roncalli — which was worked on by many of the same experts who worked on the reform of Holy Week under Pius XII and then on the entire *corpus liturgicum* with the Montinian rite — changed the name of the feast from the Purification of the Blessed Virgin to the Presentation in the Temple of Our Lord. The motivation was to set the celebration in a Christocentric light — something in itself licit and which was therefore welcomed by parish priests. In reality, the purpose of the authors of the 1962 reform was to open the conciliar *Overton window*, inaugurated with the *Ordo Hebdomadæ Sanctæ instauratus*. The unmentionable purpose, which for this reason was to be kept strictly concealed so as not to compromise future developments, consisted in weakening the cult of the Virgin and the Saints — as can be seen, for example, from the reclassification of the feasts of the Sanctoral Cycle — in a pro-Protestant mode. We understand then how, under the guise of a harmless and doctrinally acceptable change, the desire was not so much to emphasize the centrality of Our Lord in the liturgical cycle as to use it as a pretext to exclude the Mother of God, who was considered an obstacle to ecumenical dialogue. Thus, by small steps, the innovators succeeded in making the doctrine of the Mediation and Co-redemption of Mary Most Holy be forgotten, without explicitly denying it.

Catholics know well that giving the veneration of *hyperdulia* to the Virgin does not detract from the worship of *latria* owed to the Divine Majesty, but rather favors the Son through His most august Mother, in whom He has worked wonders: *quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est*. Instead, heretics show their horror even at simply naming Our Lady, because her humility and obedience constitute an intolerable affront to the pride and disobedience of Satan, their father. And if in His infinite wisdom the Lord wanted the Immaculate Virgin to trample on the head of the ancient Serpent, why should we pretend — as Protestants do — to deal directly with Him, despising the powerful Mediatrix that He gave us at the foot of the Cross as Mother and Advocate? Would we not offend the Lord by treating with little regard and distrust the *glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, the honor of our people* [Judith 15:10]?

Let us leave aside these observations and meditate on the Mysteries of this feast, in which the true Religion triumphs over superstition, replacing the previous pagan feasts with the Rite of the Blessing of Candles. Pope Saint Gelasius wanted to institute this feast because at the end of the 5th century there were still people in Rome given over to the worship of idols,

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

carrying torches through the city. Christ, *Lux Mundi*, therefore reappropriates the symbol of light which the pagans had usurped from Him. In this sense, it is significant to recall the mystical interpretation of Saint Anselm: the wax, he says, the work of bees, is the flesh of Christ; the wick, which is within, is the soul; and the flame, which shines in the upper part, is the divinity. Flesh, soul, divinity: the union of these elements permitted Our Lord to redeem us as the Head of the human race, expiating the infinite offense of Adam thanks to the infinite value of His Sacrifice, the very Sacrifice of the Man-God, offered to the Majesty of the Father in reparation for Original Sin and for all the faults committed by men until the end of time.

Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum, quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum, says Simeon. Salvation is an event extended to all and, unlike the Chosen People, the Christian people are not distinguished by race, but by adoption. It is in fact by our Baptism that we are constituted children of God, His heirs and joint heirs with Christ, as Saint Paul says (Rom 8:14-19) and as the Psalmist sings: *The Lord is my inheritance and my cup* (Ps 15:5). This is why salvation has been prepared *in the sight all peoples*; this is why all peoples are called to know, worship, and serve the true God. *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* (Ps 116:1), *et adorabunt eum omnes reges terræ; omnes gentes servient ei* (Ps 71:11).

Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis tuæ Israel. The revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of the People of God — which is the Holy Church — are intimately linked: without preaching there is no revelation; and without revelation there is no glory for the heavenly Jerusalem, for the new Israel. But if the infidelities of the Synagogue in recognizing the light of Christ have caused its fall and the dispersion of its children, how much greater will be the dishonor for those who live under the New and Eternal Covenant, are reborn in Christ and resurrected with Him, but do not preach the salvation that God has accomplished through the Passion of His divine Son?

When Our Lord encountered the scribes in the Temple, explaining to them the meaning of the Scriptures and in particular showing them how the prophecies were fulfilled in Him, the Synagogue was still faithful to the Covenant with God. But when He was denounced by the Sanhedrin to Pontius Pilate with the accusation of blasphemy — having proclaimed Himself as God — so that He would be put to death, the High Priests had denied the Faith, blinded by the fear of losing their prestige with the coming of the Messiah, whom the Jews considered not only as a spiritual Savior, but also and above all a temporal and political one. Their apostasy led them to silence those truths contained in the Old Testament which disavowed their attempt to adapt religion to the convenience of time and circumstances, and which so many stern admonitions had merited from the last Prophets of Israel. The Jewish people, held in ignorance by the religious authority of the time, were certainly

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

disoriented and scandalized, since their simple Faith taught them that the time had come for the birth of the Messiah in the city of Bethlehem. This is why an entire priestly caste — the tribe of Levi — was dispersed with the destruction of the Temple by Emperor Titus: even today the children of the Synagogue are scattered throughout the world without a place of worship, and also without being able to reconstruct the genealogy of the Levites to celebrate the sacrifices. A terrible destiny of a people, because of the betrayal of its priests!

And yet, faced with the evidence of the severity with which the Lord judges His Ministers, especially when they fail in their sacred duties and deceive the faithful, the clerics of the New Covenant seem to consider all too lightly their own shortcomings, their own infidelities, and their own silence before those who proclaim error and deny or remain silent about the Truth. In them we find the same *hybris*, the same foolish presumption to defy Heaven, which is irremissibly punished with *nemesis*, the fatal punisher of the abuse of authority and pride. May the tyrants of this world, invested with civil and ecclesiastical offices, and those who pay them servile homage for fear of appearing to go against the tide or of being pointed out as “rigid,” “fundamentalist,” not “inclusive” and “divisive” remember this well, and also those who, fraudulently using an authority for the opposite purpose to that which legitimizes it, believe they can lord it over their subjects: *nil inultum remanebit* [nothing remains unavenged].

Let us therefore approach the Holy Sacrifice with the holy Fear of God, purifying ourselves from sin through frequent recourse to Confession and reciting the Act of Contrition with repentant hearts as soon as we commit any fault. May our spiritual disposition to amend ourselves and make ourselves less unworthy of the Divine Mysteries help us to welcome the Blessed Sacrament with recollection and fervor in Eucharistic Communion: may the Light of Christ illumine our minds in these moments of trial and inflame our hearts with the love of Charity, so that we may in turn be *a light to illuminate the peoples.* May our lives be a daily testimony of being true children of God, so that we may be able to exclaim with the Psalmist: *The Lord is my inheritance and my cup.*

And so may it be.

+Carlo Maria Viganò, *Archbishop*

2 February 2023
In Purificatione Beatæ Mariæ Virginis

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.