

REFLECTION: I remember a time my family helped me... I remember... I remember...

The Presentation of the Lord

Cycle C | February 2, 2025

WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

People surrounded Jesus as he walked carrying his cross. Who are the people that surround me? What do they say to help me move forward?

I remember since I was very young, my family has always been there for me through all the hard times and struggles in my life. The homies were never really there for me. I remember being homeless one time and none of the homies really helped me out other than offer me drugs. I remember other times being jumped and not having anyone to back me up. I've realized that it's through the hard times that you come to realize who your real friends are.

Now the only people I really surround myself with are my family and my girlfriend because for the past three years they are the ones who have been there for me the most. They constantly tell me they love me, which is what keeps me going to this day and helps me change because I know I can do something better with my life. The people I surround myself with are the people I love and the people that motivate me to keep on moving forward.

- Ricardo, who was in juvenile hall.



PENITENTIAL RITE

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**
May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.
R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:
Jesus,
You were presented to the Lord by your blessed parents, Mary and Joseph. Help us to present ourselves to the Lord as you were and give us the grace to live life the way you lived it, showing mercy and compassion to all we meet.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.
This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called to his supper.

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

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:
God,
We thank you for the love and light we receive through those whom we surround ourselves with. May we take you and your love with us everywhere we go.

We ask this through Jesus, our Savior. **R. Amen.**



OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**
R. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

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.
R. Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: Hebrews 2: 14-18

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.
R. Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Luke 2:22-32

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 Gospel of the Lord.
R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION: THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

it was time to go
through the doors of
the temple of jerusalem
i had not wanted to go
but my mother insisted
i go to offer sacrifices

i know that i was
too much for her
ever since
my best friend was
killed by the romans
i have not been the same

she slowly saw
in my face
in my eyes
how the drugs
i was using to
block out the pain
was ruining my life
but i did not want to stop

some times
before i go to bed
at night
i wonder if i just
want to kill myself

noting matters to me
any more

i never thought
i would steal
from my own family
but this drug has
possessed my soul

we pass through into
the place of sacrifice

i pass by
this young couple
who have come to
present their baby
i look at them
did not see the step
and i trip and as i do
the mother of the baby
helps me up
and she notices

the pouch of drugs
that have fallen
to the floor
she looks me in the eyes
i have never seen
such a beautiful mother
i don't know what to do

before we pick it up
she asks me to come over
her husband is
holding the baby
i listen to this one
saying that
this baby will be
for the salvation
of the nation
i look at the baby
it does not seem
to be different
from any others

the father sees me
and asks me
if i would like
to help him
in this presenting
of his baby
he does not
let me answer

he comes over
and places the baby

in my arms
i ask him his name
and the father says
his name is jesus
and my name is joseph
and this is my wife mary
i tell him
my name is samuel
and my mother's name
is veronica

as i said this
i felt this light
coming from
this one named jesus

large hot tears

began to run down my face
i began to shed tears
that i have been holding
inside for a long time
they came faster and faster
falling to the floor

ever since
my life began to change
i had not let out the pain
i was carrying around

somehow with this one
in my arms
i was able to release
all the darkness
i had been carrying within

i began to speak
to this one

jesus
i know there is
some power
some grace
you have unleashed
the hurt in my life
i thank you and
i now want my mother
to feel this power
you contain within

i handed jesus
to my own mother
as i did this
i bent down and took
the pouch of drugs and
stepped to the trash
where i tossed
this devil that
had possessed me
for so long

i could feel being with
these holy people
the damage
my lifestyle had caused
to the ones i love

i saw my mother smiling
thinking of how

she must have smiled
when i was born
and she held me
in her arms
without imagining
that one day
i would steal from her
because of my addiction

i went and put my arms
around my mother
as she held
jesus in her arms

in the presence
of this jesus
i promised my mother
that i would change
the tears that flowed
from her eyes were
signs that she felt
what it was like
to get her son back
as the same time
she held the one
who would free
our people

he had already begun
his saving work

she handed jesus
back to mary

and my mother
thanked them
and we slowly
made our way
out of the temple

giving thanks to god
for being part
of the presentation
of jesus
in the temple

