**THEME:** RENEWAL OF PERSONAL DEDICATION
**READINGS:** Malachi 3:1-4 / Hebrews 2:14-18 / Luke 2:22-40
FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

‘The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "Tell the whole community of Israel that … each man is to take a lambfor his family ….The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. … Slaughter them at twilight. Then … take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses …. "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn …. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt’ (Ex 12:1-13). As a result of this, the Lord commanded the Israelites to consecrate or dedicate every firstborn son to Him, reminding them that every firstborn of the womb belonged to Him (Ex. 13:1-2). It was in obedience to this command that Mother Mary and St. Joseph presented the child Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem (Lk. 2:22-23).

Actually, however, as the sinless Son of God did not need the baptism by St. John the Baptist, so He did not need to be presented in the Temple. Nonetheless, as He accepted the baptism for our sake, so He was presented for our sake. As in the baptism He was revealed as the beloved Son of God, the Messiah (Anointed One) and the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29), so He was presented to fulfill the prophecy of Malachi: ‘the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His Temple’ (Mal. 3:1). Then, Simeon would announce to us that the baby he held in his arms was the fulfilment of another promise: the child was the Messiah that Israel had been waiting for (Lk. 2:26-32).

The Israelites of old were redeemed by the blood of the lambs (sheep and goats), but we have been redeemed by the blood of Someone exceedingly greater: Jesus, our Lord and Saviour (Messiah), was presented in the Temple as the spotless Lamb of God whose most precious blood saves us from the destruction of the evil one. Whereas the Israelites of old marked the wooden doorframes of their houses with the blood of the lambs (animals), God has marked the ‘doorframes’ (hearts and minds) of our souls with the most precious blood of Jesus which flowed down as He hang on the wood of the cross.

Redeemed by the precious blood of the Firstborn of all firstborns, all of us now belong to God. And so, as the firstborns of the Israelites were dedicated to God, so all of us have been dedicated to God by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Many of us were baptized as infants (or many years ago) and that was the initial acceptance of our dedication to God. But that is not the end of it. We should personally renew our dedication, not only at Easter when we renew our baptismal promises, but on a daily basis.

Our daily re-dedication to God should not be a mere repetition of our baptismal promises. Rather, it should involve: prayers, scriptural reading, worship (reception of the sacraments), and good lifestyle. As our conversations on phone with dear ones could be very lively even though we don’t see them while speaking, so our daily (private) prayers should be moments when we lively and consciously re-connect with God, acknowledging that we belong to Him on account of the precious blood of His only begotten Son.

Secondly, as the ever faithful God fulfilled His promise to Simeon (gospel reading), so He will fulfill His promises to us. We, on our part, should fulfill the promises we have made the Lord; and the reading of the Scripture reminds of these promises and inspires us to try to fulfill them: ‘All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man [and woman] of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work’ (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thirdly, as the old prophetess Anna spent over 50 years of her adult life in the Temple (gospel reading), so we should often be at the church to join others to worship the Lord. Fourthly, the gospel reading describes Simeon as a ‘righteous and devout’ man, who was directed by the Holy Spirit. Similarly, we should allow the Holy Spirit to influence our lifestyles.

Finally, as we re-dedicate our lives to the Lord every day, may we, like Simeon, experience with great satisfaction the fulfilment of God’s promises in our lives. Amen!