

## Feast of the Presentation of the Lord February 2, 2018 St. Agnes Church

It has been 40 days since our celebration of Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ.  
The child Jesus is now Presented in the Temple.  
Being the first born, his life is dedicated to the work of the Lord.  
The readings for today's feast have to do with prophecy: what will this child become?  
What will he accomplish?  
What will God do through this child with regards to the salvation of His people?  
This sets up anticipation in those who hear the Good News.  
God is at work in this child. He is destined to be the God's messenger,  
bringing God's presence into the world.  
Now that this child has arrived, how will this work unfold?  
This in turn sets up desires in the hearts of God's people, hopes for the future.  
From our perspective we know, this child redeems humanity.  
He reconciles the world with the Father.

The primary symbol for today's feast is light.  
Jesus is the eternal light of God who overcomes the darkness of sin.  
It is a tradition of the Church to bless all the candles today  
that will be used in the coming year.  
In some places there will a procession with lit candles from the entrance of the church.  
A powerful reminder that we all carry the light of Jesus into the darkness of the world.  
He shows us the way. He reveals what is hidden in the shadows.  
He enlightens our hearts with the love and wisdom of the Father.

We contemplate our very existence by this light.  
It reveals to us the image of God within us  
but also reveals the distortions of this image, the twisted ugliness caused by evil and sin.

But even as we carry this light in our minds and hearts, our foresight is limited.  
We can only see so far. We can see what is right in front of us and maybe a short distance ahead.  
Therefore we must walk the path Jesus reveals to us in faith.

I'm reminded of this story:  
One night, a father decided that his son, was now old enough to go out to the barn  
to feed the horses by himself. The boy, however, said to his father, "I'm afraid of the dark."  
The father stepped onto the porch with the boy, lit a lantern, gave it to his son  
and asked him how far he could see as he held up the lantern.  
"I can see halfway down the path," said the boy.  
The father directed the lad to carry his lantern halfway down the path.  
When the boy reached that point, the father asked, "how far can you see now?"  
"I can see the gate" the boy called back.  
The father urged the boy to walk to the gate, and when his son at the gate  
the father asked once again how far he could see.  
"I can see the barn," came the boy's reply.  
With gentle words, the father encouraged the boy to go to the barn and open the door.  
When the boy finally shouted back that he was at the barn. and could see the horses,  
the father simply called, "Now feed the horses"

The light we carry, the light of Jesus Christ, brings salvation to us and to this world.  
This is what we celebrate today.  
But it is the limitation of our human sight that allows us to see only what is immediately ahead of us.  
Everything beyond that is a matter of faith, trusting in the goodness and providence of God.

Today's prayer: "O Lord, You reveal to us Your Son Jesus Christ. He is the light of the world. Give us  
new courage that we may share this light with those who live in darkness. Amen!"