

# Septuagesima

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Date: 16 February 2025

Preacher: Bishop Chad Jones

[ 0 : 00 ] Today, we celebrate the Feast of Candlemas. This is a feast where candles are blessed and then used throughout the year in concert with our prayers.

It is also a time for many Christians to take down their decorations, officially turning the page on the season of our Lord's Nativity as it marks the end of the 40 days of Christmas.

Although I haven't convinced my family that this tradition should be kept. The Feast of Candlemas is also called the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, which is the name given in our prayer book.

This was a time where Jewish mothers who had given birth were now brought back into the Temple with their children. The words we heard this morning from a prophet named Simeon magnifies why candles are used by Christians.

We heard those words from the nuke Dimittas. We sung those words. The song of Simeon. This light that brings revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel speaks to why the second person of the Holy Trinity came.

[ 1 : 39 ] The reason why he came to this world is that Jesus Christ is the true light who exposes the darkness. He came to illuminate the dark depths of wickedness and to bring us into the light of his eternal kingdom.

But this light causes great irritation, great discomfort to the eyes that have been trapped in darkness.

The light can be unbearable at first. And for many, the eyes never adjust to this light. Many love the darkness and they despise any illumination at all.

And this is why Simeon the prophet goes on to say, Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign which will be spoken against.

Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. This echoes what we read from the gospel according to St. John.

[ 2 : 55 ] In chapter 1, verses 6-11, where it says, There was a man sent from God whose name was John. This man came as a witness to bear witness of the light that all through him might believe.

He was not the light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

He, that is Jesus, was in the world and the world was made through him and the world did not know him. He came to his own and his own did not receive him.

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in his name. Jesus came to be the light of the world where darkness cannot stand.

He is the one who permeates the darkness and he is the one that engages death and comes out victorious, giving us light and himself which is life.

[ 4 : 05 ] He is the one who offers our blind eye sight. And yet many in Israel would reject that light. This rejection would lead to the death of our Savior and it caused much sorrow to his dear mother, Mary.

The words of that prophet Simeon came true. A sword will pierce through your own soul. But many outside of Israel received this light.

Such Gentiles, people from the east and the west and throughout the world, are children of God, not due to blood lineage, nor some type of ethnic status, but because they embraced the light of Christ, turning their backs on darkness.

Therefore, Jesus is the revelation to the Gentiles and he is the glory of Israel. So today, as we celebrate this light, let us do so by seeking to rid the darkness from our lives.

Let us seek to follow Christ, who illuminates our path. As we seek to walk the narrow road that leads to eternal life. Let us put away the darkness.

[ 5 : 27 ] Let us put away the pessimism that seeks to drain us from the joy that we possess as baptized children of the living God, as sons and daughters of the light.

And let us rejoice in our Savior, who has set us free, who has liberated us from the darkness. As St. Paul wrote in Philippians chapter 2, verses 11 through 16.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life.

Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Ghost. Amen.