

## Reflection— It was longing!



They met in the temple, Mary and Joseph, Anna, Simeon, Jesus. How did they get there? What brought them to that place of meeting? What brings us to the temple, the place where God resides?

Mary and Joseph came in obedience to the law, to present Jesus to the Lord and offer a sacrifice according to what was written in the law. Behind the legalities, however, was longing. Anna never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. This is not, however, about a rule of life or asceticism. It is about longing.

Simeon was guided by the Spirit. He was righteous, devout, and looking for the consolation of Israel. But it was more than piety that took him to the temple. It was longing.

Jesus is brought to the temple, not as a passive baby but as the embodiment of his Father's longing for humanity.

The Feast of the Presentation, sometimes called the Feast of Meeting, is, at its core, a feast of longing. This feast reveals the longing between humanity and divinity. Our deepest longings are to know and be known. That can only ever really happen in relationship to God. This is not about gathering information or learning about God. This kind of knowing is of the heart not the intellect. It is about the union that sets us free, the oneness that allows us to depart in peace, and the relationship that is salvation. For this to happen we must live with and offer the fragility, vulnerability, and joy of an open and longing heart. That heart is the temple of meeting, the place where today we find Mary and Joseph, Anna, Simeon, and Jesus.

Longing is not an absence or emptiness waiting to be filled. Longing is a presence and fullness waiting to be expressed, manifested. Two persons do not long for each other because they are apart. They long for each other because they are in love.

We are sometimes too quick to quench the longing, to satisfy the desire. That never takes us to the temple. It keeps life superficial and us moving from one "fix" to another. Longing, however, if trusted and followed always takes us to the temple, the place of meeting, and we discover that we already hold the baby.



## THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

**SATURDAY 1st February**

**Vigil Mass 4.00 pm**

**SUNDAY 2nd February**

**Mass 9.30 am**

Saturday	1st	<b>The Presentation of the Lord Vigil</b>	Mass 4 pm	<b>Peggy &amp; John Clarke RIP</b>
Sunday	2nd	<b>Sunday of Ordinary Time</b>	Mass 9.30 am	Parishioners
Monday	3rd	Feria	<b>NO MASS</b>	
Tuesday	4th	Feria	Mass 10 am	Vocations
Wednesday	5th	St Agatha, Vr, Mr.	Mass 10 am	Our School
Thursday	6th	St Paul Miki & Comp. Mrrs.	Mass 10 am	Christians in Japan
Friday	7th	John Bosco Pr.	Mass 10 am	Salesian Schools
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>Vigil Mass 4 pm</b>	

Joe & Kevin Nally anniv



**Next Week :**

**THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year A):**

**Saturday 8th February 2020 Vigil Mass 4 pm**

**and Sunday 9th February Mass at 9.30am**

**ST. BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
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**THE MASS FOR THE SICK  
AND HOUSEBOUND**

**Saturday 8th February 11 am**

Each week a small number of dedicated Eucharistic Ministers take Holy Communion out to the sick and housebound in our community. There are also some of those who don't want to receive the Lord at home but would love to come to Mass in St. Benedict's every now and then.

This is the opportunity for them to do so. But it needs you who come to tell them about the Mass, encourage them to come and to arrange transport to get them here.

There will also be a light lunch (Soup and a roll) to follow in the hall.

Anyone present at the Mass can be anointed as all of us have something, a shadow hanging over us that the Sacrament of the Sick can help us with.

**MASS ATTENDANCE IN THE MONTH OF  
JANUARYR 20**

4/5	95	11/12	104
18/19	104	25/26	102

A reminder to all who are in the **GIFT AID SCHEME**. Please ensure we have been informed of any change of address or Tax situation. **THANK YOU**.

**If you are not Gift Aiding your church giving why not do it?**



Nagasaki, Japan, is familiar to us as the city on which the second atomic bomb was dropped, immediately killing over 37,000 people. Three and a half centuries before, 26 martyrs of Japan were crucified on a hill, now known as the Holy Mountain, overlooking Nagasaki. Among them were priests, brothers, and laymen, Franciscans, Jesuits, and members of the Secular Franciscan Order. There were catechists, doctors, simple artisans, and servants, old men and innocent children—all united in a common faith and love—for Jesus and his Church.

Brother Paul Miki, a Jesuit and a native of Japan, has become the best known among the martyrs of Japan. While hanging upon a cross, Paul Miki preached to the people gathered for the execution:

**PRAYER FOR THE SICK & HOUSE-  
BOUND**

May the Communion we share today with the members of our parish family who are at home or in hospital, remind us to live for one another and give them a sense of belonging to our family and to this celebration.

“The sentence of judgement says these men came to Japan from the Philippines, but I did not come from any other country. I am a true Japanese. The only reason for my being killed is that I have taught the doctrine of Christ. I certainly did teach the doctrine of Christ. I thank God it is for this reason I die. I believe that I am telling only the truth before I die. I know you believe me and I want to say to you all once again: Ask Christ to help you to become happy. I obey Christ. After Christ's example I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as a fruitful rain.”

When missionaries returned to Japan in the 1860s, at first they found no trace of Christianity, but after establishing themselves they found that thousands of Christians lived around Nagasaki and that they had secretly preserved the faith. Beatified in 1627, the martyrs of Japan were finally canonised in 1862.

**ADVANCE NOTICE**

**SUNDAY 23RD. February 2020**

**At the Parish Mass at 9.30 am we will have a festival to celebrate the diversity of our congregation. We want you to all come in clothes that represent your country. Wear them to mass and also bring food that is special to your country for a bring and share brunch in the Community Hall after Mass. An INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATION AFTER BREXIT. WE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST.**

**Racial justice Sunday 2020**

Next weekend on **Sunday 9th. February 2020** the Catholic Church in England and Wales will celebrate **Racial Justice**. The theme is 'you are at the heart of the Church'. It will be a celebration of the contribution that the **Travelling Communities** make to the Church. It is an opportunity for all Catholics to pray for, reflect on and respond to racial justice matters within the Church and wider society. It should encourage proactive discussion on overt and covert forms of racism experienced by fellow Catholics is from the travelling communities. To support the work of the Church with the Travellers, a second collection will be taken next weekend, your contributions, however great or small will help to make a difference.