

PASTOR'S CORNER



A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.

We are invited, again, to reflect on the themes of Christmas. The decorations may be down but the light of Christ come into the world has not dimmed.

Here in this story is a wonder and a marvel of the incarnation – The prophecy of Malachi, that *suddenly there will come to the temple the LORD whom you seek*, is fulfilled: God himself truly has entered his own Temple. Never has that ancient psalm been so appropriate: *Lift up, O gates, your lintels; reach up, you ancient portals, that the king of glory may come in!* And *Who is this king of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle?* Yes! And yet also a tiny baby.

We find not only this reflection on the incarnation, but also a reflection on the Hope and Joy of Christmas as well: because in this child we see with Simeon *our salvation, . . . prepared in the sight of all the peoples*; with Anna we recognize the answer for all of us awaiting redemption. This infant is the *glory of the people of Israel*; he is the *light of revelation to the gentiles* – and so we bless and light candles this day for Candlemas, at this midpoint of winter, reminding us to keep that light of Christ burning brightly in our hearts.

And yet the day does not only remind us of the beginning of Jesus' earthly life, it also already reminds us of the end: of his mission, his passion, his death, and his resurrection. Though the law suggests that Jesus needs to be redeemed as first-born and that Mary needs to be purified, it is Jesus who has come to redeem us – Jesus who has come to purify us; refining us *like gold or like silver that we may offer due sacrifice to the LORD*. And he will do that through the cross, *a sign that would be contradicted, 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*.

The ultimate sign of defeat becoming the ultimate sign of victory; even the candles we bless are a reminder that the next time we bless a candle in the liturgy it will be a new Easter Candle as we stand waiting in vigil for the resurrection of the Lord.

In Christ, through Mary,

Fr. Dominic David Maichrowicz, OP