

Feast of Entry of our Lord into Temple

In Jewish tradition, a mother of a newborn must go to the temple and offer an animal for a burnt offering and a sin offering after 40 days after a boy is born or 80 days after having a girl ([Leviticus 12](#)). We commemorate the birth of Christ on the 29th of Kiahk, January 7. 40 days later is February 15th, or the 8th of Meshir. Hence, that is the day we commemorate the entry of our Lord into the Temple ([Luke 2:25-39](#)), one of the seven minor feasts of Our Lord.

Upon entering the Temple, St. Mary encounters a man named Simeon ([Luke 2:25](#)). Upon seeing the Child Jesus, St. Simeon exclaims: ““Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel”” ([Luke 2:29-31](#)).

Additionally, Simeon prophesied that ““Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”” ([Luke 2:34-35](#)).

The “sign spoken against” refers to the Cross, while the sword refers to the grief that St. Mary would experience during His crucifixion.

Encountering Christ was a significant moment for Simeon. He was one of the contributors to the Septuagint version of the Bible, an initiative to convert the Hebrew Bible into Greek. He was concerned that the translation of [Isaiah 7:14](#) read as “Behold, *the virgin* shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” instead of “young lady.” The Lord told him that he would not see death until he saw with his own eyes the fulfillment of this prophecy. St. Simeon had been waiting for this moment for many years.

Also present in the Temple was St. Anna the Prophetess. She was telling the Israelites who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem about Christ ([Luke 2:38](#)).

The liturgical rites for the feast reflect the proclamations of St. Simeon and St. Anna. After the Liturgy Gospel is read, the physical Gospel (the Beshara) is wrapped in white linen, held like a baby, and processed around the altar three times. During the procession, the deacons also hold candles (which is why this feast is sometimes called Candlemas). While processing, we sing the seventh part of the Wednesday Theotokia, which begins with: “Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, upon them a great light has shone.” This verse serves as a reminder of how Christ is the true Light of the world.

May God’s light shine upon us so that we may no longer sit in darkness and the shadow of death, but rather be engulfed by the light of His eternal love.

Sources:

- Bible, NKJV
- Catena Bible
- The Presentation of the Lord Christ in the Temple, stvnashville.org
- Feast of the Entry into the Temple, copticheritage.org
- Galilee of the Nations, tasbeha.org
- Synaxarium, Coptic