

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE
FEAST OF THE ENCOUNTER OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
WITH SIMEON AND ANNA
(FEBRUARY 2)

Joseph is shown at left as an elderly man, with the priestess Anna and offering the “poor man’s” sacrifice of two turtle doves. Anna is pointing toward the infant Jesus. Mary is standing with Simeon, who is holding Jesus. Jesus is shown as a child, but is wearing a small dress, not swaddling clothes, and his legs are bare. He appears to be giving a blessing. Forty days after his birth, Mary and Joseph, according to Jewish law and custom, took their first-born son, Jesus, to the Temple in order to offer sacrifice for the purification of the mother (Mary). The Theotokos did not have need for purification since, without defilement, she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity. Nevertheless, Mary and Joseph submitted to the precepts of the Law and, not being wealthy, took two turtle doves to be offered. Arriving at the Temple, they were met by the righteous elder, Simeon. A noted scholar and holy man, Simeon had been promised by God that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah and, by inspiration from above, went to the Temple at the very moment that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus arrived. Simeon took the God-Infant in his arms and, having given thanks to God, uttered: “Now let Thou Thy servant depart, O Lord, with peace according to Thy word, wherefore hath mine eyes beheld Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to the enlightening of Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel” (*Luke 2:29-32*).

Also in the temple was the 84 year old widow, Anna, the Prophetess, “who did not leave the temple, serving God both day and night in fasting and prayer. And she also, at that time, having drawn near, glorified the Lord and spake about Him to all awaiting deliverance at Jerusalem” (*Luke 2:37-38*). About 450 A.D., people began the custom of holding lighted candles during the Divine Liturgy of this feast day and some churches in the West refer to this holy day as Candlemas.

