

30.1.69

Lumen et revelat.
(Greg. Chant R07
side 2 line 5)

"A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people, Israel"
— a verse from the song of Simeon, which is used as a refrain in the liturgy for the blessing and distribution of candles on Feb. 2nd, feast of the Purification of Our Lady. This year, Feb. 2nd falls on Sunday, (next Sunday) — which confuses things a little, for Sunday is also the start of the pre-Lent period, the beginning of the 70 days to Easter and the celebration of the redemption won by Christ for us. However, it is Candlemas we'll be celebrating on Sunday — but the feast itself contains some ambiguity, which causes confusion to many people. It is not, as is often thought — with some justification, a feast of O. Lady, but of Christ. It's really bull, I suppose; but although a stress on Mary as the principal figure in the Candlemas celebration developed over the centuries, recent liturgy-changes have brought the stress back to Christ, making this a feast of Our Lord — though strangely they've left the name unchanged so far, 'For the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary'. But that occasion, 40 days after the birth of her child, in accordance with the ritual law of the clean people, was also the time of the presentation of Christ in the Temple, in dedication to the service of God. So Candlemas is in fact the concluding celebration of the Christmas cycle of liturgical commemoration of the events concerning ^{God's} coming ^{among} men, to live as one of us and to reconcile all mankind ⁱⁿ the friendship of God, in the love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To make some preparation for Sunday, then, let us as we recite our usual prayer today, turn our minds once again towards the birth of Christ in

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gratitude and thanksgiving for His coming to be with us, and showing us the light of His presence and love, and making us able to see who he is and what He wants us to be. PRAYERS.

For a prayer in ~~the~~ ^{song} today, listen to the simple melody of another piece from that collection of old Italian popular religious songs I've often used on the programme — the Presentation in the Temple, from the Nativity Land in a manuscript of the Etruscan Academy Library at Cortona.

MUSIC

As with all Sundays and major festivals of the liturgical year now, there will be 3 scripture readings at Mass on the Feast of the Purification next Sunday. The gospel, from St. Luke, will be as you can find it in your missal, for St. Luke is the only one who recounts the event we'll be celebrating. But the other 2 readings are new, and are worth looking at beforehand, to prepare oneself by prayer and meditation for the liturgy of the word on Sunday. Many of our churches don't provide the best opportunities for being able to hear clearly and exactly the reading of scripture — besides, when the pieces chosen are not familiar, it's difficult for them to have the impact and sink in as much as they should. It's a practical problem about participating as much as possible in the Liturgy. But even with the best conditions, it's still necessary to prepare ourselves by ^{our} own personal prayer if we're to get the most we can from our community worship and celebration of God's word. If you read out beforehand the 3 scripture readings, you'll notice how they complement one another — they've

been specially chosen to do just that, though admittedly at times the links may seem rather tenuous. The point is, scripture is the word of God meant for our instruction and edification, but its meaning isn't always as clear and logical as we might sometimes wish. So, when we celebrate the Purification of Mary 40 days after the birth of Christ, and His Presentation in the Temple, what's far more important than any private devotion of our own, or any 'special' understanding of these events, is what God has to say to us about them.

That's why the Church chooses certain passages of scripture for a feast like Sunday's. And the account is very much ~~of~~ the revelation of Christ. From the O.T. prophet Malachi: Q. (3:1-4)

Then from one of St Paul's letters: Q. (Tim¹ 2-10)

We have seen the salvation God has prepared, in our recent celebration of Christmas and Epiphany. Now we join with holy Simeon, who received Christ into his arms when Mary & Joseph brought him to the temple to present him there in dedication to the service he was to do for His Father & for all of us: "Now Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised: because my eyes have seen the salvation, wh. you have prepared for all nations to see, a light to enlighten the peoples and the glory of your people Israel." Each of us who are baptised, receives - baptised in light of Christ, symbolised in the ^{lighted} candle we hold - Candles etc. be a reminder of our commitment to Christ & being made one with Him.