

Liturgical Living: Celebrate Candlemas

Forty days after Christmas, on February 2nd, we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, also known as Candlemas.

According to the Mosaic law, a mother who had given birth to a male child was considered unclean for seven days; moreover, she was to remain outside the temple for thirty-three days more. When the forty days was over, the parents presented the baby at the temple with an offering.

Forty days after the birth of Christ, Mary complied with this precept of the law. Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple and made an offering of two doves to thank God for the birth of their Son. As they entered the Temple, an old man named Simeon saw them, declaring that the Christ child would become the light of the world (Luke 2:22).

With Candlemas we celebrate the coming of the “Light of the World”, Jesus. But a shadow also passes – a shadow foretelling the suffering that will precede the victory of the Light over darkness. Simeon not only proclaimed that he had seen his salvation, but also told Mary that her share would include a sorrow-pierced heart.

Candlemas is the day the priest brings out all the new candles he’s ordered for the coming year and blesses them before Mass. Those candles represent the fact that the Light of the World is here. It’s a moment of hope and joy, and it’s worth celebrating!

Here are some fun family activities to celebrate Candlemas:

- Make your own beeswax candles [using a beginner’s kit](#)
- Use dollar store candles to make [this easy candle craft](#)
- Print [these figures](#) to retell the story of Jesus’ Presentation in the Temple
- [Make edible candles](#) for a fun snack

The traditional Candlemas food is crepes. Some say the crepes represent a swaddled baby. Others believe the crepes resemble either candles of the procession of old or the Torah scrolls of the Temple. Whichever representation you prefer, consider eating [crepes](#) today!