



THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 16

February 2019

Presentation in the Temple

On Christmas Day we celebrated the coming of the light of the world into our midst. On Epiphany Day, we celebrated the revelation or manifestation of this divine light to the Gentiles. On Candlemas, we have the final celebration of the Light shining in the darkness of the world. Simeon sings: "My eyes have seen thy salvation ... a light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people, Israel."

Although the Presentation of Jesus in the temple is follows closely on the Nativity, its significance concerns the mystery of the Our Lord's mission. It is the first of the events, that clearly reveal the messianic status of the new-born Child. With Him are linked the fall and the rising of many in the old Israel and also the new. His reign begins when the temple-sacrifice is offered in accordance with the Law, and it attains full realization through the Sacrifice of the Cross, offered in accordance with an Eternal Plan of Love.

From the first moment of His Incarnation within Our Lady's womb, Jesus had offered Himself to God the Father as the victim of our salvation; but it was necessary that He should be offered also by His Mother. He belonged to her: she had given to Him her own flesh and blood. He was the fruit of her virginity, humility, and obedience. He was Mary's, and Mary must give him up freely. Candlemas is the feast of Our Lady's public offering of her Son to His divine Father.

In offering her only-begotten Son to God, Our Lady also offered herself along with her Son. There was never a son and a mother so closely united on earth, as were the Mother of God and the Son of God. Our Lady existed and lived for nobody else but Jesus. When, in the temple, she offered up to God the Lamb, Who would bear upon His shoulders the sins of the world, Our Lady committed herself to share in her Son's future immolation.

As Mary offers her precious burden to Simeon, the holy priest takes the Christ child into his arms. By this priestly gesture, Simeon takes possession of the Child

in the name of God and of His chosen people. He then tells Mary that she will also share in her Son's immolation: *Behold, a sword of sorrow will pierce your heart.*

Our Lord's presentation in the Temple reminds us that from the very onset of His earthly life, Jesus is the new and only expiatory victim of the New Testament. But He is not only a victim. He is also the great high priest who will offer Himself for the sins of the world.

In the name of his people, Simeon takes up the Christ child and shows it to the Father as the new mediator and the new and eternal peace offering of mankind to God. The Epistle of the Hebrews tells us: "He had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people."

Candlemas, then, is an Epiphany or manifestation of Christ as Priest. Though He did not fully manifest or exercise His priesthood until after His Pasch (Passion, Resurrection and Ascension), He became priest from the moment of His incarnation. By the act of His becoming man, the Eternal Word, God the Son, was made both a fitting and a pleasing victim and a unique high priest; for he was able, being truly God and truly man, to be a perfect Pontiff (or bridge-maker) between heaven and earth. To share in His Work of making expiation for our sins, we must be made like Him by being presented to our heavenly Father. This takes place at the moment of our baptism.

In offering Jesus to God, Our Lady offered herself; not only did she offer herself, but she offered us as well. She offered us in Him and by Him. Her Son was offered as her first-born, the first-born of many brethren. And they, through the death of her Son, were to become her own sons, handed over to her in the person of St. John at the foot of the Cross: *Woman, behold thy son.* In this way, therefore, we ourselves have been brought into the temple and have

already formed, in the Person of Christ, a part of that offering made by Our Blessed Mother.

Thus the mystery of the Presentation in the Temple concerns every one of us very closely. Yet we do not value sufficiently its liturgical importance. The Church urges us to take part in this mystery, in which Our Lady plays the principal part, when we pray at Holy Mass. *Almighty and Eternal God, we humbly beseech Thy Majesty that as Thine only-begotten Son, having taken flesh like ours, was bodily presented this day in the*

temple, so by Thy doing we may be presented to Thee with souls made clean.

That is why on the very day that Our Savior was offered in the temple, we ought to renew in our own hearts the offering made by Our Lady of our own selves, in the Person of Jesus, her first-born and our Head, praying that we may merit to be presented in the Temple of eternal glory, where He now resides. ☩

Fr. John Brucciani, Prior

Fabricated Feud between Law and Liberty

Fr. Hennick

Why is it that we adults find the child's pioneering spirit charming but the same in the teenager alarming? We think our shift justified, even if we cannot explain exactly why. Perhaps we see in youthful inquisitiveness two distinct phases: whereas the child explores the world, the teenager explores how he relates to the world. Without proper constraints, the second phase is often disastrous—to say the least. The teenager needs rules lest he navigate the world on a whim.

Yet from time immemorial the teenager disdains rules. Seduced by unexplored urges, he construes rules as fetters, obstacles to his authentic desires. He supposes rules to be at odds with freedom. In response, the adult dismisses such juvenile indignation on pragmatic grounds. But does the youth have a point, conceptually speaking? Does law curtail liberty?

In a word, no. To answer in the affirmative is to put the cart before the horse. Our liberty does not preexist law; it results from law. St. Thomas asserts the priority of law, which he calls "eternal law". God the Creator, by His eternal law, moves all things—plants, animals, men, etc.—to their due end; in fact, the eternal law "is nothing other than" Divine Wisdom directing all actions and movements. (I-II, q. 93, a. 1) All things thereby "partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends." (I-II, q. 91, a. 2) A creature's freedom, then, is its power to move according to its nature, or its "respective inclinations".

We men are no exception. Our freedom functions within our constitutional confines, within the

laws of our nature. For example: "A man who jumps from a ten-story building to break the law of gravity does not break the law, but himself gets broken. The man's fall simply demonstrates the law of gravity. A man who breaks God's law does not break God, but himself gets broken." (Dauphinais & Levering, *Knowing the Love of Christ*)

Attentive though we are to our physical limitations, we fallen creatures do our utmost to contradict—or at least ignore—the moral legislation of our nature. Except to behave immorally is to waive our very freedom!

We are rational animals. Rationality is the defining element of our nature. By the honest exercise of reason, we attain a certain moral awareness and its attendant obligations. Furthermore, by the honest exercise of reason *enlightened by faith*, we attain morality's full explication in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. The degree to which we refuse these obligations, to that degree do we brutalize ourselves, enslave ourselves to our purely animal drives; the degree to which we embrace these obligations, to that degree do we ennoble ourselves, liberate ourselves to pursue the good.

The moral law undoubtedly lessens what we may *physically* do: it prohibits, for instance, our robbing, molesting, or stabbing another. Yet only in this contrived sense does law curtail liberty. In reality, our physical freedom is but a mere abstraction. It does not exist in itself but is rather subsumed into our rational existence; our physical abilities function within the moral dimension, always. So, if we be morally prohibited a certain action, we do not retain—in any meaningful way—the physical freedom to carry out the same.

Both the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment contributed their fair share to the above error. The former, to facilitate its investigation into matter, de-emphasized formal and final causation, i.e., it abstracted from the natures of the objects under investigation. The latter then interpreted such methodology as absolute, which paved the way for the outright denial of natures. In today's philosophical wasteland, many a man accepts this extreme.

With nature out of focus, the human implementation of law gets messy. A given superior can easily disregard the true inclinations of his subjects by permitting/prescribing the irrational and proscribing the rational. At present, for example, we citizens impotently watch our nations legalising sexual deviancy, forcibly indoctrinating youth as to its legitimacy, and forbidding sound criticism of said legislation. These falsely so-called "laws" are immoral and, as such, must not be obeyed.

Discerning true from false law can be a subtle business—something typically beyond the competence of the teenager. If we fail to immediately grasp the rationale behind particular natural or supernatural laws, this does not invalidate them *ipso facto*. Stubbornly breaking them will surely harm us. Discerning the eternal law in its many gradations requires discipline, a willingness to submit to a legislator wiser than ourselves. Appreciation comes with maturity.

True Story

In the last moments of his life, Msgr. Phillips Brooks, an American bishop, refused to welcome visitors, even his closest friends. Robert Ingersoll, an agnostic lawyer and free-thinker, was astonished to learn that Monsignor Brooks had agreed to see him.

"Why me?" inquired Ingersoll.

"Because I will have a chance to see my friends in the next life, whereas now is most certainly the last chance I have to see you!"



Napoleon's Secretary

In order to encourage his secretary, Bourrienne, under the arduous labor that he continually imposed upon him, Bonaparte would sometimes say, "Bourrienne ! we shall go down to posterity together!" The vanity of this hope was shown in the answer — "Can you tell me who was the secretary of Alexander?"

"None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free", writes Goethe. The rebellious teenager is the enduring victim of this delusion. By enforcing the law, however, we may still recall him to his senses. "[T]hrough fear of some unwanted suffering," writes Augustine, the deluded "may either lose his spirit of prejudice, or be compelled to acquaint himself with previously unknown truth...and now hold willingly what once he did not wish to hold...". (*epistola* 93.16)

God's law serves an educational purpose: by submitting to it, we learn virtue. And, as it turns out, virtue and freedom are coextensive realities. Learning lessons in virtue imparts to us a matching freedom. Without the skill of virtue, we lack the freedom to choose the good, just as without "the skill of playing the piano, a person lacks the freedom to play." (Dauphinais & Levering) Ultimately, virtue and freedom are one and the same: a skill for greatness.

To youthful incredulity, we now confidently retort: freedom is the skill to fulfil God's law! It is a natural skill acquired by a life of discipline, but even more so a supernatural skill gifted from above. Freedom is reserved for excellence, and there exists within us no higher and more excellent calling than to love God and do all for love of Him. "Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law." (Rm. 13:10) ♡

Words of Wisdom

Once a notoriously tough businessman told Mark Twain,

"Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and read the Ten Commandments aloud at the top." Disgusted, Twain replied, "I have a better idea. You could stay at home in Boston and try to keep them."

Communion and Heaven

"Communion is the shortest and surest way to heaven. Certainly there are other ways: innocence, for example, but let us leave that for the little children; penance, but that frightens us; to hunger and thirst, to mortify oneself, all that makes us suffer; the trials of life, but no sooner do they start than we make haste to pray, to implore, that they might leave us. Once again, my beloved children, the most assured, easiest and shortest way is the Holy Eucharist. To approach the Holy Table all that is necessary is a movement, a moment, and then you may truly taste the delights of heaven." -St . Pius X

WEEKLY CONFESSIONS

- Saturday: 11:00
- 1st Friday during Holy Hour
- Sunday before Masses

BENEDICTION & ROSARY

Sunday 18:00

CHAPEL CLEANING - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.**SATURDAYS - 2:30 PM**

PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO HELP CLEAN FROM TIME TO TIME. IT IS ALWAYS THE SAME PERSONS WHO DO IT, AND THEY NEED HELP. GOD'S HOUSE IS WORTH OUR BEST EFFORTS.

**CAKE SALE**

Every 2nd Sunday of the month
For St. Michael's School
No need to bake dessert!

**NOTICE TO PARENTS**

Please do not let your children run unsupervised about the property on Sunday mornings. Hefty sticks and fist-size stones soon adorn the lawns, which then choke and damage the mowers. Much time spent fixing machinery and clearing lawn areas. Our 89 year old groundsman is pushed for time.



He tells me that he "ain't got much time left, so needs to crack on" with his heavy charge. Please talk to your children about his workload.

**STOLE FEES**

Stole fees (also called stipends) are offerings in consideration of expenses incurred by a chapel or priest in the course of ministering to the faithful. The stole fees are waived at the discretion of the priest in cases of hardship.

Mass: £10 - Novena of Masses: £100**Gregorian of Masses: £400****Weddings £100 - Funerals £100 - Baptisms: £40**

	Liturgical Calendar February 2019	Masses
1	St. Ignatius of Antioch - 1st Fri - H. Hour 6PM	7:15 / 19:00
2	Purification of the BVM 1st Sat.	7:30 / 12:00 (sung)
3	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	7:30 Low
		9:00 Low
		17:30 Vespers/Benediction
4	St. Andrew Corsini, Bishop & Confessor	7:15
5	St. Agatha, Virgin & Martyr	7:15
6	St. Titus, Bishop & Confessor	7:15
7	St. Romuald, Abbot	7:15
8	St. John of Matha, Confessor	7:15
9	St. Cyril of Alexandria, Bishop, Confessor & Docto	7:30 / 12:00
10	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	7:30 Low
	Cake Sale	9:00 Sung
		17:30 Vespers/Benediction
11	Our Lady of Lourdes	7:15
12	Seven Holy Servite Founders, Confessors	7:15
13	Feria	7:15
14	Feria	7:15
15	Feria	7:15
16	Of our Lady	7:30 / 12:00
17	Septuagesima Sunday	7:30 Low
	Priests absent (on retreat) from 18th - 23rd Feb.	9:00 Low
		18:00 Benediction
18	Feria	8:00
19	Feria	18:00
20	Feria	8:00
21	Feria	18:00
22	Chair of St. Peter	8:00
23	St. Peter Damian, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor	18:00
24	Sexagesima Sunday	7:30 Low
		9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction
25	Feria	8:00
26	Feria	6:30
27	St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, Confessor	8:00
28	Feria	8:00
1	Feria - 1st Fri - H. Hour 6PM	8:00/19:00
2	Our Lady on Saturday - 1st Sat.	7:30 / 12:00

**Rosary for St. Michael's School**

Thanks to parents' initiative, the holy rosary will be recited between Masses each Sunday for the protection and welfare of St. Michael's School. This extra spiritual help comes at a time when State intervention seeks to erode the fundamental parental right to their children's education.

Evening benediction and rosary will continue as usual.