

Dear Friends,

Tuesday the 2nd of February is the Feast of the Presentation of Our Blessed Lord in the Temple and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This commemoration is commonly called Candlemass, because the aged Simeon on seeing the child Jesus recognised and proclaimed Him as the Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of Israel. It is customary to light candles during Mass in Christ's honour, hence the name.

The 17th is Ash Wednesday. As you know, it is called Ash Wednesday because of the ancient and biblical practice of the imposition of ashes as a symbol of repentance. Lent calls us to surrender our life to God, and having confessed where we have gone astray from His love and His commandments, seek His forgiveness and with His help and grace grow in holiness. Lent prepares the Serious Christian to enter into the true meaning of the Passion of Christ, His Crucifixion and Resurrection.

It is the duty and requirement of every Christian to use the season of Lent to draw closer to Jesus Christ in humility and love, and to join in the liturgical worship of Christ's Holy Church. Let us take this duty seriously and make proper use of this holy season.

Every morning pray for strength to resist temptation through the day, and in your evening prayer humbly confess any fault committed during the day and ask for forgiveness. True repentance is shown by earnestly fighting against sin in your daily life. Do not, however, dwell too much upon past failure, but rather look away from yourself to the Lord Jesus and pray for His help to become like Him.

Remember, though, that the person who cannot forgive another who has offended him, will never have his sins forgiven by God. It is a two way process, as we pray in the prayer Jesus Himself taught us 'Forgive us as we forgive ....'

Lent ends with Holy Week, and the Crucifixion of Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, which is followed by His glorious Resurrection. Christ's death on the Cross was a selfless Sacrifice for the redemption of all mankind, and holds out the sure and certain hope of Eternal life to all who believe in Him and try, with His promised, help to follow Him in love, service and worship.

Our Blessed Lord, the eternal Word of God, came to earth, born of the Virgin Mary, as an historical human being in Palestine, to reveal the love of God for man, made in His own image, and for all His creation. He established His One Holy Catholic Church as His abiding Body, into which we are born again and made members through Baptism, and through which the Holy Spirit could continue His redemptive work by reminding her Members of the teachings of Christ and continue the revelation of Truth.

This is no hollow and empty hope, because Jesus is God, the Word and Son of the Father, and through His Resurrection from the dead destroyed the power of death AND is alive today. Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the One God, the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Spirit). He taught that all who belong to His Body, the Church, and try to follow Him, nourished with His Body and Blood in Holy Communion, will grow in holiness, and will share in His Resurrection to enjoy the fulfilment and bliss of Eternal Life with God, His Mother Mary, the Saints and the Angels in heaven.

As members of the Traditional Anglican Communion, we accept the Catholic teaching of the Book of Common Prayer which is summed up in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and believe, as stated in the Creed of St. Athanasius, or as the Prayer Book calls it, *Quicumque Vult*, "Whosoever will be saved before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith".

This *Quicumque Vult* at Morning Prayer is an exposition of the Being of God, The Most Holy and undivided Trinity, around which the other two Creeds are built and which every true Christian is required to believe, for his soul's health and salvation. Both the Apostles' Creed, said at Morning Prayer, and the fuller Nicene Creed, said at Holy Communion, proclaim our belief in the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

If we are truly Christian, mean what we say and wish to follow our Blessed Lord, surely we must be obedient to Him who prayed before His Crucifixion that all His followers be united as one in His one Body the Church. Because of the selfishness of man, which caused His Crucifixion, Christians though united in Baptism have betrayed Him and divided Him for hundred of years. There is now the desire among many Christians be re-united in His one Church. Recently we have witnessed this in the response of the ancient Church of Rome to our letter of request for guidance. We must take their response seriously and pray and work at it. We must look carefully at ourselves and see whether our response is based on prejudice, personal ambition or the guidance of the Holy Spirit to unite His Church in order give glory to God, convert the world and save our souls.

May Christ Jesus richly bless us as we seek to do His will and experience His closer Presence.

Your Priest and Friend

Fr. Brian