



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2022

CANDLEMAS: THE FEAST OF LIGHT AND HOPE AN EXCERPT

*By Jennifer Gregory Miller | January 29, 2019
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THE EDITORS OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER'S 1ST SATURDAY NEWSLETTER ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THE CONSISTENT QUALITY AND ACCURACY OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER'S 1ST SATURDAY NEWSLETTER AND AS SUCH RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REJECT OR EDIT THE CONTENT OF ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR PUBLICATION. EDITING MAY INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, CHANGES TO GRAMMAR, SYNTAX AND STYLES, REMOVAL OF OFFENSIVE CONTENT AND REMOVAL OF PERSONAL NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION. SUBMISSION OF YOUR ARTICLE SIGNIFIES YOUR AGREEMENT TO THE TERMS AFOREMENTIONED.

On February 2, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, forty days after Christmas. This feast is also the "Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary" and commonly referred to as Candlemas.

This is considered a "Christmas feast," even though it is not part of the Christmas season. This the last feast of the liturgical calendar that we commemorate Christ still as an infant child.

Candlemas is an ancient feast that has developed over the centuries. In the early Church's liturgy, January 6 was a combined feast with Christmas, Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord, with February 14 being the date for forty days after January 6. The famous pilgrim Egeria who traveled to the Holy Land between 381 and 384 A.D. recorded the feast of the Presentation on the 14th. I do wonder if our modern St. Valentine's Day might have originally been an offshoot of Candlemas falling on this date?

Another development is the color of vestments. In both forms the priests wear white, but before 1960 the priest would wear black, and then later violet vestments for the Candle blessing and lighting procession. Pope Benedict (then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger) explains in his *Seek That Which is Above: Meditations Through the Year*:

In Rome, this candle-lit procession supplanted a rowdy, dissolute carnival, the so-called Amburbale, which had survived from paganism right into Christian times. The pagan procession had magical features: it was supposed to effect the purification of the city and the repelling of evil powers.... Thus, the element of encounter, again, was evident in this procession: the pagan world's wild cry for purification, liberation, deliverance from dark powers, meets the "light to enlighten the Gentiles," the mild and humble light of Jesus Christ. The failing (and yet still active) aeon of a foul, chaotic enslaved and enslaving world encounters the purifying power of the Christian message (pp. 26-27).

The liturgy of Candlemas focuses on the meeting of Christ with the elderly Simeon. With Simeon we rest our hope in the Lord. The Gospel includes the beautiful Canticle of Simeon, *Nunc Dimittis*, which is said at the Church's Night Prayer or Compline. It the shortest of the canticles of the Breviary, but my personal favorite:

*Lord, now you let your servant go in peace;
your word has been fulfilled:
my own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.*

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FEASTS FOR FEBRUARY

The feasts on the General Roman Calendar celebrated during the month of February are:

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| 2 | Feast of Presentation of the Lord, Feast | 20 | Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday |
| 3 | Blaise; Ansgar, Opt. Mem. | 21 | Peter Damian, Opt. Mem. |
| 5 | Agatha, Memorial | 22 | Feast of Chair of St. Peter, Feast |
| 6 | Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday | 23 | Polycarp of Smyrna, Memorial |
| 8 | Jerome Emiliani; Josephine Bakhita, Opt. Mem. | 27 | Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday |
| 10 | Scholastica, Memorial | | |
| 11 | Our Lady of Lourdes, Opt. Mem. | | |
| 13 | Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday | | |
| 14 | Cyril and Methodius, Memorial | | |
| 17 | Seven Founders of the Orders of Servites, Opt. Mem. | | |

The feast of St. Paul Miki & Companions (February 6) is superseded by the Sunday Liturgy. ☐

THANK YOU

... a small and simple phrase that comes from a grateful heart!

Psalm 106:2

Note of Encouragement and Gratefulness:

Year 2021 ended with a time of reflection. Great sadness was experienced by many with the loss of loved ones. On the other hand, we have had greater joy knowing those who faced health challenges overcame them with the help from healing hands, the Lord, Jesus at their side and the power of prayer sent to those in need.

One thing learned this year was the monumental strength required by those who face the unknown outcome of surgeries and the importance of family and friends to stay connected with each person in adverse situations. If sharing this little note of caring will encourage another to pause a moment and write to those who might have gone through troubled waters, then I am humbled for your acknowledgment.

Happy New Year.

Ever in the name of Jesus,

Marie Simons

OUR CENACLE CORNER

Seeking a deeper relationship with God
through meditation of passages from Holy Scriptures

**WHAT GOD IS REALLY LIKE
AS STATED IN
THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS**

GOD TOUCHED ME

*Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. — 1 Chronicles 16:24*

GOD'S MIRACLE OF GRACE

By Betty Sy Ormiston

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5)*

To our dear family and friends: Thank you!

My phone rang at 10:11 a.m. today, January 21, 2022, 10 days after our family received news that our unborn granddaughter was diagnosed with Dandy Walker Malformation, a neurological disorder.

I was sitting at my prayer desk in front of the Blessed Sacrament live streaming from the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd in Singapore.

I was in prayer with you while waiting for the results of the baby's brain MRI done yesterday. The doctor said we will hear from him today or by Monday.

It was my son, John. "Mom, the doctor just called. He said

*Revelation 21:5
"Behold, I will make all things new."*

the baby's brain MRI showed **NORMAL VARIANTS, IT'S NOT Dandy Walker Malformation. EVERYTHING IS NORMAL!!!**

My family and I come to you with hearts overflowing with gratitude for your prayers and support during our time of uncertainty and hope.

The other day while in prayer I was reminded that we are all formed and molded in the hollow of God's hands. And that despite the doctor's diagnosis, the fact is my granddaughter is continually being formed by God in her mother's womb. And when we all gathered in prayer, our Lord God heard, like he promised, "where there are two or more gathered in my name there I will be."

God transformed and molded my granddaughter in the womb of Genesis and made her "whole," the cerebellum is normal!!!

God Almighty, You are real. You are alive, and You are so close!!! Together with our family and friends who continue to stand by our side, in unison: We praise and thank you Our Lord and Our God for reversing our granddaughter's initial diagnosis, as we trust and continue to pray for a normal baby at birth.

Thank you, dear family, and friends, as we continue to pray for your personal intentions. □

Betty Ormiston is a friend of The Spiritual Army of God the Father ministry. She has joined two pilgrimages of the ministry: the very first one in 2005 to Our Lady of Fatima and Our Lady of Lourdes, and the 2016 Holy Land & Jordan Pilgrimage. Over the years, she has had requested the ministry for prayers for her husband, her son, and for herself, for various reasons, such as surgery, illnesses, challenges, etc. When we asked Betty permission to publish her thank you text to us in our newsletter, she responded without hesitation: "Of course, let's shout to the whole world how good God is!"

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

GOD OF ABRAHAM AND OF JESUS OUR LORD

BY VICTOR H. ARANETA

A lot of times, we are perplexed who Eternal Father really is. God in the Old Testament is so strict and so feisty in His relationship with His creation. Understandable is His anger with the fallen Angels headed by Lucifer. Angels are perfect beings and their decisions in their hearts are perfect too.



In addition, God treated the Old Testament characters sternly with no inch of leeway, while our Lord Jesus presents God as "loving and forgiving slow to anger and rich in kindness" (John 3:24).

As we traverse our lives here on earth, the personality of Eternal Father is yet to be understood. As one mystic in 16th Century says "God is an open book, if your heart is open to His letters of mercy and love ". It may be difficult to express the feeling when you are near God's Heart.

Like you are in the interior castle that is opened wide for His Majesty, our Lord, to accept you as a royalty ".... St Teresa De Avila.

God in the Old Testament, on the other hand, is more vetting and scrutinizing, but loving to forgive on selective cases like David, Solomon, Ahas and others.

That is the God we love, unrevealing but unraveling His character in your own self when you love others as you love yourself. Isn't this wonderful? We will only know God when we get to meet Him in the country of PURE LOVE - HEAVEN.

Prayer: Lord God Almighty, help me understand your relationship with me by understanding the people I encounter every day. Help me to open my heart of understanding for those people who need it and let me extend my hands to accept them like your hands of loving embrace, in Jesus' name I pray. AMEN. ☐

Upcoming Events

1ST FRIDAY DEVOTION

FEBRUARY 4, 2022

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM
DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS
BEGIN AT 9:30 PM

IN LAS VEGAS: DEVOTIONAL
PRAYERS AT 2:30 PM
AT THE CENACLE HOUSE

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION

FEBRUARY 5, 2022

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM
MASS BEGINS AT 10:00 AM

IN LAS VEGAS:
CENACLE VIA ZOOM AT 11:00 AM
DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT 1:00 PM
AT THE CENACLE HOUSE

1ST SUNDAY DEVOTION

IN LOS ANGELES:

THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS
DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS BEGIN
AT 10:30 AM

IN LAS VEGAS:
ST. SHARBEL CATHOLIC CHURCH
MASS AT 9:30 AM
FOLLOWED BY DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS
AT THE CHAPEL

800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

FEBRUARY 19, 2022

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM
MASS AT 10:00 AM

IN LAS VEGAS:
AT 8:00 AM
AT THE CENACLE HOUSE

CANDLEMAS: THE FEAST OF LIGHT AND HOPE

Although I prayed it for many years, the Canticle took a deeper meaning after I married. My husband's father died on this date in 1996, and I think of him whenever I pray this Canticle. It is a prayer of acceptance and resignation. It is almost as if this could have been my father-in-law's prayer on his lips when he died.

When I pray it at night I am thanking God for all His goodness and fulfillment in His providential care for me. I accept His Will; I accept my death. I am personally repeating Simeon's words and trying to prepare for my death. This is also a prayer of self-examination. Where have I failed to embrace His Will or serve Him? Do I accept Christ our Light in my life and carry that Light to others? Do I place my hope in Christ? It's a personal reflection, but it has made this feast and Canticle more poignant for me.

Although this is considered a Christmas feast, it also is clearly connected to the upcoming Lenten and Easter seasons. Mary and Joseph offering Jesus to God is the beginning of His earthly ministry for His Heavenly Father. This is the first of Our Lady's Seven Sorrows, and a foreshadowing of the Cross.

Even the popular name Candlemas hints at the "light to reveal you to the nations" that we celebrate at Easter, the ultimate feast of Light. The blessing and procession of candles is more than a strong indicator of the upcoming Paschal Candle. There is also a link to the bees—candles for church use were traditionally required to be at least 51% beeswax, and the new Roman missal translation brings back the honor of bees in the Exultet in the Easter Vigil:

On this, your night of grace, O holy Father, accept this candle, a solemn offering, the work of bees and of your servants' hands, an evening sacrifice of praise, this gift from your most holy Church. But now we know the praises of this pillar, which glowing fire ignites for God's honor, a fire into many flames divided, yet never dimmed by sharing of its light, for it is fed by melting wax, drawn out by mother bees to build a torch so precious.

Not every parish will have blessing of candles, but this is my favorite highlight of this feast. Unless your parish makes the requirement, it is not necessary to have only beeswax taper candles to be blessed for home use. Candles designated for religious use in the home can be any style: votive, tealight, or taper. I have a few blessed beeswax candles from previous Candlemas feasts. This past year during my heart health problems I used the

candles when I received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick twice and Communion in my home.

With His grace may we continue to recognize the Light revealed to all nations and wholeheartedly be able to pray every day "Lord, now you let your servant go in peace." □

Jennifer Gregory Miller is an experienced homemaker, mother, CGS catechist and authority on living the liturgical year. She is the primary developer of CatholicCulture.org's liturgical year section.



"I am your Mother Mary.

My children, pray unceasingly for your country. The Powers and Dominions are hovering over the people in power, to control your beliefs and relationship with God. Spend time in the presence of the Holy Eucharist for this will strengthen your faith and relationship with my Son Jesus. Be always merciful for God is mercy and forgiveness.

Mary, Your Lady of Mercy

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