

COLLECT

Almighty and ever-living God,
 clothed in majesty,
 whose beloved Son was this day
 presented in the Temple,
 in substance of our flesh:
 grant that we may be presented to you
 with pure and clean hearts,
 by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Malachi 3:1-5

A reading from the book of the prophet Malachi.

Thus says the LORD God: See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

PSALM

Either Psalm 24:[1-6] 7-end

R *The Lord of hosts,
 he is the king of glory.*

or

R *The Lord whom you seek
 will suddenly come.*

[The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
 the world and all who dwell therein.
 For it is he who founded it upon the seas
 and made it firm upon the rivers of
 the deep. **R**

"Who can ascend the hill of the Lord?
 and who can stand in his holy place?"

"Those who have clean hands and a pure heart,
 who have not pledged themselves to falsehood,
 nor sworn by what is a fraud. **R**

They shall receive a blessing from the Lord
 and a just reward from the God of their salvation."

Such is the generation of those who seek him,
 of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob. **R]**

Lift up your heads, O gates;
 lift them high, O everlasting doors;
 and the King of glory shall come in.
 "Who is this King of glory?"
 "The Lord, strong and mighty,
 the Lord, mighty in battle." **R**

Lift up your heads, O gates;
 lift them high, O everlasting doors;
 and the King of glory shall come in.
 "Who is he, this King of glory?"
 "The Lord of hosts,
 he is the King of glory." **R**

Or **Psalm 84** (RCL only)

SECOND READING Hebrews 2:14-end
A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Since the children share flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

GOSPEL Luke 2:22-40

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and

they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too." There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

POST COMMUNION

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna,
 who lived to welcome the Messiah:
 may we, who have received these gifts
 beyond words,
 prepare to meet Christ Jesus
 when he comes to bring us to eternal life;
 for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.