

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

February 2, 2020

Candlemas 2020

“The spiritual man who has been thus illumined does not limp or leave the path, but bears all things. Glimpsing our true country from afar, he puts up with adversities; he is not saddened by the things of time, but finds his strength in God. He lowers his pride and endures, possessing patience through humility. That true light which enlightens every man who comes into the world bestows itself on those who reverence it, shining where it wills, on whom it wills, and revealing itself according to the will of God the Son (John the Serene).” This weekend the Catholic Church recalls the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary also known as the Presentation of the Lord or Candlemas. By undergoing the ceremony of ritual purification required of all Jewish women after childbirth, Mary who needed no purification (because she was without sin) gives an example of obedience to God’s law and humility to God’s will. This Feast of Candlemas is traditionally the day when the Church blesses her candles for the coming year, recognizing that in blessed candles there is the symbol of Christ the Light of the World. As the Light of the World, Jesus enters into the Temple at Jerusalem to be presented by Mary and Joseph to God the Father according to Jewish law. The price of this ceremony was the sacrifice of two young pigeons, according to the law of the Lord. An interesting person of mention was in the temple that day, his name was Simeon. We are told by Sacred Scripture that he was a holy man and was waiting for the lasting peace promised to Israel. He was a man filled with the Holy Spirit and he had received some key information, “It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit the he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord (Luke 2:26).” As Jesus was brought into the Temple at Jerusalem by Mary and Joseph, it was there that the light of truth shown upon the eyes and mind of Simeon. We read that he held the child Jesus in his arms and praised the Lord using these words, “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel (Luke 2:29-32).” Simeon held the promise of Israel in his arms and what joy and elation must have flooded his presence. These words of Simeon and his heartfelt praise of God are quite familiar to me. It is this song that priests, religious and laity pray each night before sleep hoping with the same hope as Simeon to



gaze upon the face of Jesus and be found with Him one day bathed in the light of eternal glory. Take time this day to offer your heartfelt praise for Jesus Christ the light of the world!

Blessing of Throats

February 3rd, 2020 is the Feast of St. Blaise bishop and martyr. He was an Armenian Bishop who was reputed to help free a fishbone from the throat of a boy who was choking on it. The blessing of throats is usually given to those who desire it on the Feast Day or on another day close to the feast. The tradition for this blessing sees a bishop, priest or deacon extending a blessing through the placing of blessed candles in the form of a cross upon the throat of the person and praying the following blessing, “Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

World Day of Consecrated Life

We remember the lives and dedication of all of our religious and consecrated men and women who serve in the Church. We are thankful for all the religious sisters who taught in our area schools, for the religious order priests who served in our parishes and for the consecrated virgins who pray and fast for our intentions right here in our area. The purpose of the World Day of Consecrated Life is to help the entire Church to appreciate the witness of these consecrated men and women who have been called to follow Christ and to live the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. They are called to the highest vocation in Christian life and that is to always point to heaven with their lives of prayer, service and attire.

God bless you!

Fr. Tom Niehaus