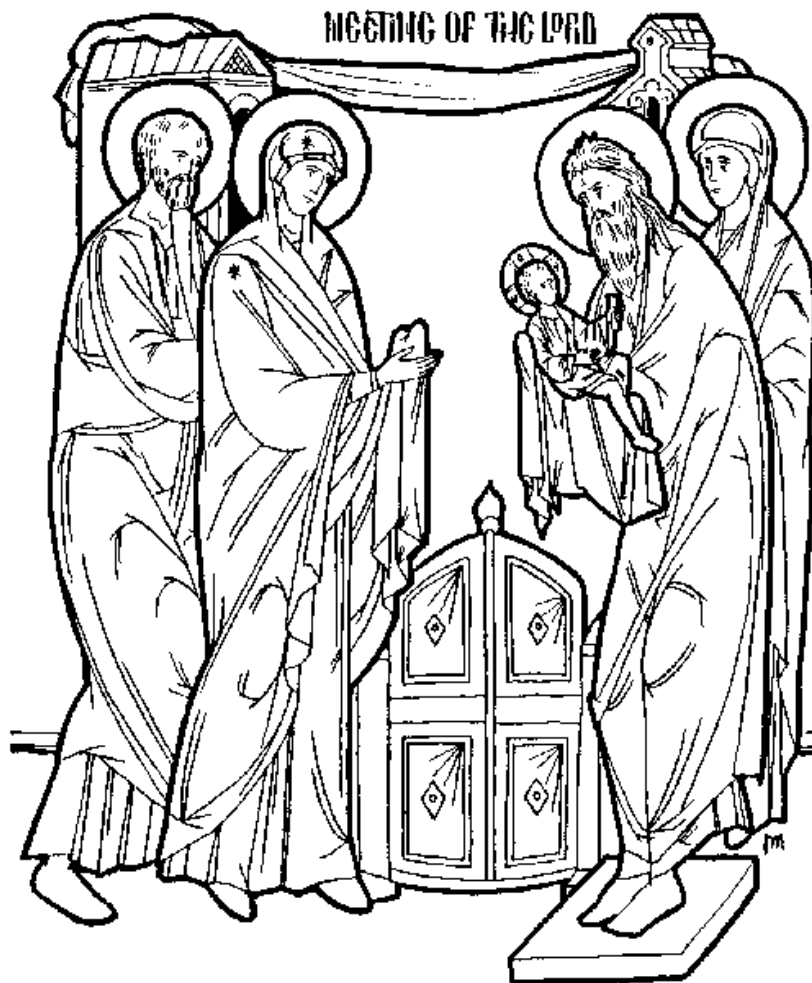


February 2nd - Feast Day of The Presentation of Our Lord at the Temple

Luke 2:22-40

Many years before the coming of Christ there lived a very pious and saintly man called Simeon. He was one of the most intelligent Jewish scholars of his day. Simeon found himself praying for the day that the Saviour would come and deliver all Israel (and the world) from sin. Simeon waited for many years, and finally one evening as he knelt in prayer, he heard the voice of God saying to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Simeon was filled with great joy and fervently prayed each day that the Messiah would come into the world. Holy Tradition tells us that Simeon was over 150 years old when the Promise of God was fulfilled. The Bible tells us that finally on February 2nd, 40 days after the birth of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary brought the Christ child to the Temple for Presentation. It was



common Jewish practice to bring the first-born male child to the Temple and offer him to the service of the Lord. It was here that Simeon waited patiently that day as he had done for so many years. The Virgin Mary presented the Christ child to Simeon, who took the infant child in his trembling hands and recited the following beautiful prayer which is recited in the Orthodox Church every evening during the Vesper services:

Lord now let Your Servant go in peace according to your promise, because my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared in the presence of all people, a light to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel.

This Jewish tradition of presenting children at the Temple is still practiced in the Orthodox Church. In fact, you too were presented by your parents to the Church on the 40th day after your birth. We call this presentation "being Churched."

Here's a question for you: Who is the woman standing behind Simeon in the icon of the Presentation? Read the scripture passage for this Feast (Luke 2:22-40) to find out!

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Luke 2:22-40

A very old and good man named Simeon was told by God that he would not die until he had seen the Savior. It was 40 days after Jesus' birth when the Virgin Mary presented the baby Jesus at the Temple to Simeon, who was then over 150 years old. God kept His promise to Simeon. Just as the Virgin Mary did with Jesus, we still present each baby to the Church on the 40th day after birth.