

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Because of the winter storm we were unable to celebrate the beautiful Feast of Candlemas. In last week's bulletin (which you may have missed because of the Mass cancellations) I wrote about the history and significance of Candlemas—celebrating the Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple.

I did not have room to write further about how the New Testament stories echo and fulfill the various stories in the Old Testament. The relationship of the two testaments—old and new is summed up by the saying attributed to St. Augustine of Hippo: **Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus in Novo patet**", which translates as "The New Testament is hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is made manifest in the New."

If we have eyes to see, the whole Bible is a marvelous unity that sheds light on the mystery of Our Lord's incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension.

Some of you will know that in addition to writing a blog and authoring some books, I have also written the words to some hymns, a couple of stage plays, and some poetry. To illustrate what I've said about the Old and New Testaments working in harmony, here is a poem I have written to help us meditate on the full meaning of the Feast of the Presentation.

Presentation

See the father with two turtledoves.
Fluttering in his heart are fear and joy,
and by his side, two unexpected loves,
the sudden mother and her infant boy.

Going up the mountain, he stops to rest
Remembering Isaac and Abraham—
the cruel command and the terrible test,
the knife, the boy's throat and the thorn crowned lamb.

In the distance he sees the temple's towers,
smells the smoke and hears the animals' cry,
and wonders how and why the ancient powers
Demanded blood to reconcile earth and sky.

We like to see here a homely family sight,
but this feels barbaric, not sweet and nice.
It is the memory of some obscene rite—
of blood and fire and human sacrifice.

Then on this hill another father looks on
As another son is lifted up, and another dove descends.
For here a more tremendous love is shown
on which all history and the world depends.

Your Pastor,
Fr. Longenecker