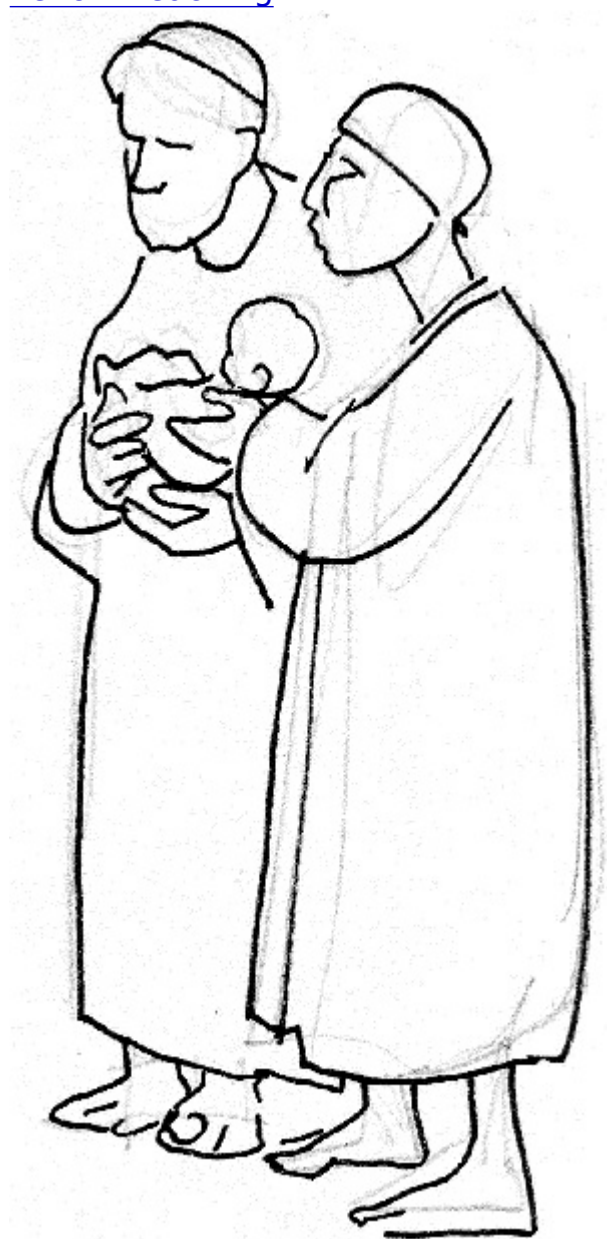


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“Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord” (Luke 2:22).

### **Presentation of the Lord**

*Mal 3:1-4; Heb 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40*

The readings for today's Feast of the Presentation of the Lord remind us that Jesus was born under the Law, and he and his parents observed the Law, fulfilled its ritual requirements and celebrated its annual liturgical feasts. Jesus attended synagogue on the sabbath, knew the Scriptures and recited the prayers familiar to all Jews.

Spiritual author and teacher Richard Rohr has described Catholic formation as consisting of both the container and the contents of the faith. The container is membership and participation in the religious life of the community, including worship and reception of the sacraments. People formed from childhood in Catholic parishes and schools often retain an identity that survives even if they drift away from the church. But, of course, the container cannot suffice if the contents are not nurtured.

Jesus apparently fulfilled his membership in the religious community but also developed the contents of his faith to a degree that astonished his contemporaries.

By living the radical richness of grace and the Holy Spirit he showed the maturity of faith available to everyone yet pursued by so few. The scribes and Pharisees had the container but not the spiritual content, the dynamic life of God that was the core of Jewish faith and practice. Jesus' genuine holiness challenged the empty religiosity of the official leaders.

In today's Gospel, we glimpse the young couple from Nazareth taking their child to the temple in Jerusalem to offer him to God according to the Law. Their offering of two turtledoves indicates that they were poor, and they would have remained anonymous if the two elderly, resident prophets had not called them out for attention and praise. Simeon and Anna identify Jesus as the fulfillment of the promise made to the nation by God to send a savior. They foretell his glory and the cost of his witness in suffering.

Today's feast invites each of us to present ourselves to God as servants of the Gospel and available to perform whatever roles God has for us each day. Like Jesus, we are called to grow in stature, filled with wisdom and grace.

If we are already old like Simeon and Anna, we still stand ready, not knowing who or what might enter the temple of our lives in need of our attention and praise. Simeon waited a lifetime but was not disappointed.

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