

## Rituals for relationship

Everyone has a ritual: what time they get up, shower, eat, what they eat. These are rituals. People need rituals. Without rituals, life is chaos! People don't see them as rituals because they know why they are doing them.

Many people turn away from the Catholic church because they perceive it as being too ritualistic. Today, Mary presents Jesus in the temple for a ritual. However, there is spiritual meaning this in the temple ritual. Jn 2:19-21, Jesus answered the Jews, ““Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” ... But the temple he had spoken of was his body’. Jesus’ body is the true temple where people worship “in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:24). However, 1 Cor. 6:19 says ‘\*your\* bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit’. Through the intercession of Mary and St. Joseph, Jesus comes to you today in a **ritual for a relationship** with him.

Jesus comes into you to: **purify, prepare, praise, and proclaim.**

**Purify** - According to Leviticus 12:1-8, after giving birth, a woman was considered ritually impure for a time. She had to receive ritual purification in the Temple. Mary and Joseph came to the Temple for purification. Maybe someone here feels impure, shame, unclean, or unworthy. Jesus **purifies** you. Through faith, and in the sacraments of baptism, reconciliation (confession), and the Eucharist, Jesus **purifies** you ritually. Take sin seriously. But once you say sorry, let go of shame or guilt. Have faith that when you confess your sins, and receive Jesus into your heart, and receive the sacraments, he **purifies** you.

**Prepares** - Simeon “wouldn't see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ”, and when he saw Jesus he said ‘Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace... for my eyes have seen your salvation...’ Assisted suicide may be legalised, because people want a “good death”. Simeon **prepared** for \*the\* “good death” - to see Jesus as a saviour. Don't fear

death. **Prepare** for a good death. Invite Jesus into your/their heart as a saviour. Depart in peace.

**Praise** – The prophetess Anna gave “thanks to God ...” Your life may be extremely challenging right now. You could be in a difficult relationship, not reconciled with family, heart-broken, struggling with mental health. Don't grumble and complain to God. **Praise God** for what Jesus has done for you.

**Proclaim**– Anna “[spoke] of [Jesus] to all who were waiting for redemption”. Redemption means to ‘buy back’. In Jesus, God has bought us back, free of charge. Nothing can separate you from God in Christ Jesus. Many in our work places, schools, and in our daily lives, feel far from God. Love them. Tell them how Jesus has redeemed them, paid the price of forgiveness and salvation for them. Like Anna, **proclaim** Jesus.

Mary had to be ritually purified within 40 days of giving birth to Jesus (2<sup>nd</sup> Feb is 40 days after Christmas). There is a time limit to our response of faith. Faith is not a just label we receive when we are young. You and I have to constantly \*accept\* Jesus into our temple. Do not wait! Invite Jesus in at this Mass. He will **purify, prepare**, give you power to **praise**, and **proclaim** him.

As a parish and a whole Catholic church, our job is to present Jesus to others. People in your work, your school, family, friends, and strangers can become “temples”. Win their trust through your love. Bring that love to fulfilment by helping them meet Jesus.

Let's pray: Mary and St Joseph, present Jesus to my heart now. Jesus, make me your temple of the Holy Spirit.

**Purify** me from sin, guilt, and shame. **Prepare** me to meet you and give me peace. Give me power and joy in **praising** you. Help me **proclaim** your power to redeem all people. In Jesus' name. Amen!