

THE RITES OF CANDLEMAS

At some suitable place (ideally separate from the church) the community gathers. If held within the church building, simply proceed in silence to the Altar and begin the Rite there. Altar candles and others within the church should already be lit but artificial lighting should be off or kept to bare minimum. Congregational candles are not yet lit. Candles to be blessed are arranged on a suitable table...the congregation may already be holding theirs.

The Liturgy begins as follows:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Grace and peace to you, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And also with you.

Forty days ago we celebrated the joyful feast of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we recall the holy day on which he was presented in the temple, fulfilling the law of Moses and at the same time going to meet his faithful people.

Led by the Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the temple, recognized Christ as their Lord, and proclaimed him with joy.

United by the Spirit, may we now go to the house of God to welcome Christ the Lord. There we shall recognize him in the breaking of bread until he comes again in glory.

Let us pray.

God our Father, source of all light,

today you revealed to Simeon and Anna your Light of revelation to the nations.

Bless + these candles and make them holy.

May we who carry them to praise your glory

walk in the path of goodness and come to that Light that shines forever.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

(Intro and blessing adapted from the Roman Rite)

The candles are then aspersed and censed (if desired).

As the candles are distributed and/or lit the Nunc Dimittis is sung or said:

A light to enlighten the Nations, *

and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, *
according to thy word;

A light to enlighten the Nations, *

and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, *
which thou hast prepared before the face of all people,

A light to enlighten the Nations, *

and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, *
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

A light to enlighten the Nations, *

and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Ghost:

**A light to enlighten the Nations, *
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.**

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be *
world without end. Amen.

**A light to enlighten the Nations, *
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.**

When the candles are all lighted, the following it sung or said:

Let us go forth in peace.

In the Name of Christ. Amen.

A candle lit procession then moves through the church singing appropriate hymns.

Such as:

Hymn: All Prophets Hail Thee

All prophets hail thee, from of old announcing,
by the inbreathed Spirit of the Father,
God's Mother, bringing prophecies to fullness,
Mary the maiden.

Thou the true Virgin Mother of the Highest,
Bearing incarnate God in awed obedience,
meekly acceptest for a sinless offspring
purification.

In the high temple Simeon receives thee,
takes to his bent arms with a holy rapture
that promised Saviour, vision of redemption,
Christ long awaited.

Now the fair realm of Paradise attaining,
and to thy Son's throne, Mother of the Eternal,
raised all glorious, yet in earth's devotion
join with us always.

Glory and worship to the Lord of all things
pay we unresting, who alone adored,
Father and Son and Spirit, in the highest
reigneth eternal.

Or

O Zion, Open Wide

O Zion, open wide thy gates,
let symbols disappear;
a priest and victim, both in one,
the Truth himself, is here.

Aware of hidden deity,
the lowly Virgin brings
her newborn babe, with two young doves,
her humble offerings.

The aged Simeon sees at last
his Lord, so long desired,
and Anna welcomes Israel's hope,
with holy rapture fired.

But silent knelt the mother blest
of the yet silent Word,
and pondering all things in her heart,
with speechless praise adored.

All glory to the Father be,
all glory to the Son,
all glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,
while endless ages run. Amen

Stations might be made at a Shrine of our Lady and/or the Baptismal Font with appropriate responses and prayers being offered such as:

At Our Lady's Shrine:

We have waited on your loving-kindness, O Lord.

In the midst of your temple.

Let us pray:

O God, you have made this day holy
by the presentation of your Son in the Temple,
and by the purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary:
Mercifully grant that we,
who delight in her humble readiness to be
the birth-giver of your Only-begotten,
may rejoice forever in our adoption as his sisters and brothers;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

At the Font:

This is the day which the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Let us pray:

God our Saviour,
when your kindness and generosity dawned upon the world,
you saved us in your mercy through the water of rebirth and the
renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

Grant that all who have been presented to you at this font
and have been justified by your grace
may in hope become heirs to eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen. *(Adapted from the Scottish Baptismal Rite)*

The procession continues its way back to the Altar where, when the hymn(s) conclude and Eucharist continues with the Kyrie, Gloria, Collect, etc.

The celebration may continue by candle light but, if not, it is tradition that the hand candles be re-lighted for the Gospel.

CANDLEMAS PROPERS : COLLECT, PREFACE, ETC

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, we humbly implore your majesty that, just as your Only Begotten Son was presented on this day in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so, by your grace, we may be presented to you with minds made pure.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. (Trad)
OR

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
for you have sent us your salvation.
Inspire us by your Holy Spirit
to recognize him who is the glory of Israel
and the light for all nations,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. (1982 Rite)

Prayer over the gifts

Almighty God,
accept the joyful offering of your Church,
and grant that your Son may shine in us
as the light that lightens every nation.
We ask this in the name of the same Jesus Christ our Lord (BAS Can)

PROPER PREFACE *(Adapted from the 1982 Rite)*

Worship and praise belong to you, Father,
in every place and at all times.
All power is yours.

You created the heavens and established the earth;
you sustain in being all that is.

In Christ your Son our life and yours
are brought together in a wonderful exchange.

He made his home among us
that we might for ever dwell in you.

Through your Holy Spirit
you call us to new birth
in a creation restored by love.

As children of your redeeming purpose
we mark the day when your co-eternal Son
was presented in the Temple
and revealed by the Spirit as the glory of Israel
and Light of the nations.

Empowered, we too go forth,
rejoicing in having encountered your Salvation,
and we offer you our praise,
with angels and archangels
and the whole company of heaven,
singing the hymn of your unending glory: **SANCTUS**

Prayer after Communion

God for whom we wait,
you fulfilled the hope of Simeon,
who did not die till he had welcomed the Messiah.
Complete in us your perfect will,
that we in Christ may share in your eternal kingdom;
for he is Lord for ever and ever.