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## *Light from Light, Love from Love!*

**A sermon by the Rev. Salmoon Bashir**  
**The Feast of the Presentation**

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen!

When I was a young boy, both of my parents were quite strict about education. Their primary goal was to ensure that their children received the best possible education. Like most parents here, my parents—especially my mother—would wake up much earlier than us to make sure everything was ready and packed for school before my siblings and I got up. They did everything within their limited means to provide us with the essentials needed to study well.

However, around the same time, Pakistan was experiencing a severe energy crisis, and power outages lasted for hours each day. This was particularly challenging at night when our parents expected us to complete our schoolwork and excel in our studies—yet there was no electricity. And when I say homework, for my parents, it meant not just completing that day's assignments but also anticipating and finishing the next day's work in advance. In those moments, the kerosene oil lantern became our only source of light and a friend.

I remember that almost every night, when the power went out, we would light the lantern, and I would finish my schoolwork by its light. The light came from a single source—one lantern was enough to illuminate the entire room as we all sat around, each absorbed in our own tasks. Our family of seven gathered, each drawing from the same small flame to complete our work. That single lantern was more than just a light; it was a source of learning, opportunity, and hope in the darkness. One lamp to brighten the entire space, providing enough light for everyone to see.

Today we celebrate the feast of light! The feast that brings light from the heart of Jesus to enlighten us all. The light of Christ to enlighten the nations, Jews and Gentiles, Romans and Greeks, us and them. The light, a fire, a flame to enlighten all the nations, and all the ethnicities. Light is one of the most prevalent themes of Christian theology and throughout the Bible it has a strong imagery, a thread that starts from Genesis "Let there be light" to the closing out of a promise of God, in the book of Revelation "for the Lord God will give them light and they will reign for ever and ever."

In the gospel today we read about Simeon and Anna who for decades were waiting to see the glory of God, the source of all light. Simeon, though his age is not specified, is often assumed to be a very old man who had faithfully waited for the moment when he would see the light of God's glory for all people. Having waited a lifetime, he took the child in his arms and praised God, saying that he had finally seen the salvation promised to all nations. In that moment, Simeon expressed his fulfillment and readiness to depart, knowing that the light of Christ had come into the world to shine for everyone.

You probably recall that many other Biblical stories have a theme of waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled, waiting to see the glory of God to be revealed. In the time of waiting, Abraham's night sky is filled with the promise of stars yet unseen and eventually, he becomes "the father of many nations." In the time of waiting, Moses leads a long journey through the wilderness guided by a pillar of fire at night, but it takes decades for the Israelites to reach God's promised land. In today's Gospel, Simeon and Anna both waited faithfully to witness the glory of God, not only for the people of Israel but for all nations. At last, they held the Prince of Peace, the Light of the World, in their arms. The light of Christ shone upon them. Christ's Light and Love filled them with joy, and that joy today extends to all of us!

Each of their and our own stories of waiting serves as a testament to the unwavering presence of God's light. Though at times it may seem dim or obscured by the weight of hardship, grief, or uncertainty, it is never truly absent. Even when the path ahead feels shrouded in darkness, when hope seems distant, and when the light is hidden from our sight, it continues to shine—steadfast, unyielding, and waiting to be revealed. There is always a light, a quiet and persistent flame, guiding, sustaining, and reminding us that we are never alone. If only we have the faith and patience, like Abraham and Moses, like Simeon and Anna, to wait for the glory of God to be revealed to us. For Simeon, Anna and for us the feast of light is also a feast of believers and feast of non-believers. Feast of light for all nations. There is a promise that this light of Jesus will be there for those who think they don't belong and also for those who think they belong. Feast of old and young. Feast of all ethnicities. Feast of forgotten and ignored and feast of those who are remembered. Simeon and Anna represent all of us, recognizing and receiving the light.

And friends, whatever is true of Jesus is also true for us! As Jesus is the light that brings revelation to all nations, we, too, drawing our light from the heart of Jesus, bring light to all nations. As Jesus is Love to all nations, we, too, drawing that Love from the heart of Jesus, bring love to all nations. Light from Light! Love from Love!

As imperfect humans, our light may not shine with the brilliance and purity of Christ's light, which brightens and illuminates the whole world. We may struggle to be a source of light even within our own families and communities, faltering in our attempts to bring warmth, hope, and clarity to those around us. Likewise, our love—though sincere—falls short of the perfect, self-giving, and boundless love of Jesus. Our love carries the weight of our limitations, our failings, and our brokenness. Yet, even in its imperfection, our light still has meaning, and our love still has power. For it is through our striving, our willingness to reflect even a small portion of Christ's radiance, that His presence is made known. Though we may not love perfectly, we can still love truly. Though our light may flicker, it can still shine in the darkness, bearing witness to the One who is the source of all light and all love.

Our love, kindled by fire—a flame sparked by the Christ's love who first loved us. Our love that flickers in moments of doubt yet refuses to be extinguished. A love that is tested in the fires of hardship yet strengthened by endurance. Our love though imperfect coming from the true source of perfect love, burns with a sacred persistence, reflecting in small ways the eternal fire of God's love. When one candle lights another the light of the first candle is not diminished. Fire kindles fire, and light generates light. As we continue drawing the flame and the light from the source of true light, it is not reduced. When God sets the world on fire with His love—through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—He does not become less but is made known even more fully. Love is never used up, and the light that enlightens the nations never fades but only grows. In a few moments you will see our acolytes help us light our candles, from one to two, to tens, to hundreds. Love coming from the heart of Jesus is never used up! Light coming from true light never fades but it grows.

The same light, the same flame of hope is with us in our time of anticipation and waiting. The waiting can be different for everyone but remember, the light which enlightens all nations is here and now with you today, tomorrow and always. Keep looking for this light in your waiting. Keep drawing your flames of hope from the source of true flame. Keep seeking, keep looking, keep lighting from the light. And keep going... Keep sharing whatever light you have, keep drawing the love from Jesus, even though sometimes it is messy and hard, so we and the whole world can see the glory of God through His love and light, and through one another's love and light.

My prayer for all of us today is that may we always draw light from the radiant heart of Jesus, the inexhaustible source of love and truth, to illuminate all nations with His grace. May we draw Love from the Heart of Jesus, who is perfect love Himself, so that our hearts may be set aflame with the fire of His love. Like this kerosene oil lantern in my home during childhood, though small, helped to light the whole house, so too may the love and light we share—however imperfect—become a beacon of hope for our community and for the world. May our love, though fragile, bear witness to unfailing love of Christ. Light from Light - love from Love. Amen!