

## **THE SIGNIFICANT MESSAGE OF THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD**

The second book of Maccabees 2:5-8 told us that the prophet Jeremiah hid the tent, the Ark, and the altar of incense in an unidentified location that is still a mystery to this day. Quoting Jeremiah the prophet, the author of this book wrote, "The place will remain unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows them mercy." The curious question will then be, if the Ark is absent from the temple, what keeps it holy and glorious? The Presentation of the Lord is a fulfillment of a prophecy that every devoted Jew longs to witness so you can imagine the joy of two Jewish devotees, Simeon and Anna (cf. Luke 2:22-25), when they saw the Lord of the temple suddenly enter his abode during his presentation. Similarly, the purification of Mary, which according to Jewish tradition takes place this same day, is also a fulfillment of the divine plan. If it is not, one would ask the complex question, why does a woman who bore and nursed the Lord of the temple need a purification to make her worthy to worship in the temple when she is already carrying the one who makes the temple holy? Mary is a temple within a temple because she accommodates and guards the Lord of the temple. Do you now understand why she is viewed as the symbol of the Church? She is the first fulfillment of the divine plan for all humanity – she became the first temple and we followed suit! As temples, the Holy Spirit makes us sons and daughters of God in Christ by living in us through our baptism. Through the reception of the holy communion, our hearts become the tabernacle where the Eucharistic Jesus dwells. While the presentation of Jesus marks the fulfillment of God's promise to be present with us forever, the purification of Mary signifies the true human response to the divine presence. Let us all be like Mary and avail ourselves to be the living temple where the Lord dwells.

Deacon Matthew Nwafor