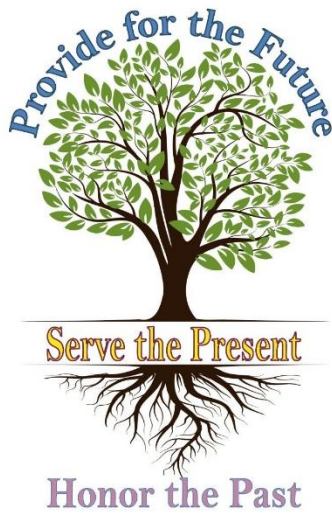


Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple

February 2, 2020: Initiation of Blessed Trinity Capital Campaign

Malachi 3:1-4; Psalm 24:7, 8,9, 10 (8); Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40

Homily – Fr. Ed Hislop



As we get ready to HONOR THE PAST, SERVE THE PRESENT AND PROVIDE FOR THE FUTURE; as we move forward now to meet needs, fulfill visions and share gifts, it is good, necessary and important to remember what we believe about the House for the Church, this Place of Worship and sending forth.

We have just heard these words: *“And suddenly there will come to the temple the Lord whom you seek.”* The temple, the house, the place.

The temple, the house for the church, does not contain or confine God, but is an icon, an avenue of approach to God, to the many ways God is present in human perception, in human touch, needs and gifts, in the work and art of human hands. ^{EA #1} The Lord comes to the temple, to a house bearing the best of what human believers can shape, design and enter, a place filled with the beauty of the human spirit, the warmth of human gathering, the sound of the human voice in music, song and

speech, the warmth of the human heart, the joy of holy communion and the care of the lost and forgotten.

God is forever lovingly present, but the temple, the house for the church, is made for people to feel that presence more deeply, to see God’s face more clearly, touch God’s heart more gently, and to encounter God’s beauty and wonder in the work of human hands.

God’s word has become flesh; God’s word is becoming flesh, God’s word will become flesh: flesh and blood in the hopes and dream, struggles and challenges of human persons. Becoming flesh in work of human hands and in the beauty of human art and in the wonder of the human spirit.

In the holy temple, into which the Lord enters and in which the church gathers, *“every word, gesture, movement, object, appointment must be real in the sense that it is our own. It must come from the deepest understanding of ourselves, not careless, phony, counterfeit, pretentious, exaggerated.”* ^{EA 14}

“Authentic art is integral to the Church at prayer,” for it evokes wonder at its beauty, leading beyond itself to the invisible God. ^{BLS#148} The house for the church, the holy Temple of the Lord, the building itself, must itself be a sign of the dwelling of God among us now reconciled and united in Christ. The building must be the Gospel itself proclaimed to the neighborhood, the city and the world, ^{BLS17} a house of

welcome and genuine hospitality. The building, and the art that beautifies it, are forms of worship themselves; and both inspire and reflect the prayer of the community and the inner life of grace.

BLS18

The best Catholic Worship Space is the place which reveals and honors the mystery of Christ in those who assemble there.

It is house, as well, which honors those who bear the great dignity of being the Body of Christ. It is no ordinary place, not just any house will do-it must be the best place we can shape; for it is a house which must bear the mystery of birth and life, of promise and brokenness, of sin and forgiveness, of sickness and healing, of service and ministry, of justice and peace, of death and grief and the glory of eternity.

A temple where the body of Christ is washed and anointed, fed and nourished, loved and given, healed and embraced, forgiven and transformed, shaped and brought to holy order, blest and sent forth in service.

It is the gathering place, the house in which the Church is made, the temple in which Christ speaks the Word of God, and where the world is remembered and prayed for, the place sin and evil is named and confronted, the house the mystery of Christ is entered, the temple of the holy table around which the world gathers, the place we become what we eat and drink!

Indeed, in the words of St. Augustine, *"It is our own mystery that is placed upon the table, it is to who we are that we acclaim 'Amen.' Be then who you say you are. Be the Body of Christ!"*

It is the house in which the lost are to find a welcome home, a place the excluded are to be included, the weary find rest, the poor find justice and a dwelling, *for the poor we are to have always with us*; a temple from which the hungry are fed and the soul is nourished.

It is to be a house of hope, where the beauty of God's mercy, Christ's love and the Spirit's vision is both felt and seen. A temple, house, and place from which, the people of God participate in the work of God, ^(BLS18) becoming the hands and feet, eyes and ears and the very heart of Christ himself.

A place, a house, in which to see God's salvation made ready in the sight of all the people: a place where *"suddenly there will come the Lord whom you seek,"* a house, a vehicle to meet the Lord and to encounter one another. EA #107

The House for the Church: "a home to make ready until the Lord returns in glory." EA #107

This is our hope, this is our vision, this must be our work as we HONOR THE PAST, SERVE THE PRESENT AND PROVIDE FOR THE FUTURE.

EA: Environment and Art in Catholic Worship
BLS: Built of Living Stones

