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Today's Feast Day is known under four different names;

1. The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord
2. The Feast of the Purification of Mother Mary
3. The Feast of Encounter
4. The Feast of Candlemas

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord offers a rich reflection on the themes of obedience, fulfillment of the law, and light. It's a powerful moment in the liturgical calendar, where the culmination of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament meet in the person of Jesus. For those of us who celebrate it, the feast is a reminder that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, and that he is the light that shines in the darkness, guiding us to salvation.

Imagine that scene in the Temple - an elderly Simeon, waiting for the promised Messiah, and Anna, a prophetess who had dedicated her life to prayer and fasting. They encounter the infant Jesus, and in that moment, everything changes. The old promises are fulfilled, and the new dawns. The presence of Christ in the Temple symbolizes the beginning of a new era, where God's law will be written on the hearts of believers rather than just on tablets of stone.

The light of Christ, symbolized by the candles, illuminates that moment and our own lives, inviting us to reflect on our own encounters with the Divine. As Pope Benedict XVI suggested, it's a time to revisit the earliest days of our own vocation, whether we are lay people or consecrated. When did we first feel the light of Christ calling us into something deeper, into a relationship with God that would transform us and others?

This feast also gives us a beautiful opportunity to think about the intersections of the old and new in our own lives—how do we honor the traditions of our faith, while also making space for the new things God is doing in our world? How does the light of Christ transform our daily lives, making us witnesses to that light in the world?

It's a day to pause and reflect, to give thanks for the moments of encounter with Christ, and to renew our commitment to follow Him as the light that guides our way.