

demonstrated; that she might not be stoned by the Jews as an adulteress; that, fleeing into Egypt, she might have the comfort and protection of a spouse. A fourth reason, says Saint Jerome, is added by the martyr Ignatius: that the birth of the Son of God might be concealed from the devil. The words of that apostolic father are: "Three mysteries wrought by God in silence were concealed from the prince of this world: the Virginity of Mary, the bringing forth of her son, and the death of the Lord." Not that God could fear any impediment to his designs from the devil; but he was pleased to effect these mysteries in silence and without worldly show and noise, that pride and hell might, by his all-wise and sweet providence, be more meetly triumphed over, whilst the devil himself hastened his own overthrow by concurring to the mystery of the cross. From the marriage of the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, Saint Austin shows that marriage requires no more than the mutual consent of the will between parties who lie under no impediment or inability to an indissoluble individual society of life. In this holy marriage we admire the incomparable chastity of Mary and Joseph; and the sanctity and honour, as well as the patronage and example, which that holy state receives from this mystery. In certain particular churches the espousals of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph are honoured with an office on the 23rd of January.

*(excerpted from: www.ewtn.com)

More on the Presentation

******Mary's presentation was celebrated in Jerusalem in the sixth century. A church was built there in honor of this mystery. The Eastern church was more interested in the feast, but it does appear in the West in the eleventh century. Although the feast at times disappeared from the calendar, in the sixteenth century it became a feast of the universal Church.

As with Mary's birth, we read of Mary's presentation in the temple only in apocryphal literature. In what is recognized as an unhistorical account, the *Protoevangelium of James* tells us that Anna and Joachim offered Mary to God in the temple when she was three years old. This was to carry out a promise made to God when Anna was still childless.

Though unhistorical, Mary's presentation has an important theological purpose. It continues the impact of the feasts of the Immaculate Conception and of the birth of Mary. It emphasizes that the holiness conferred on Mary from the beginning of her life on earth continued through her early childhood and beyond.

** (excerpted from: *Saint of the Day*)

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The Presentation of The Blessed Virgin Mary

Feast Day: November 21st



**O God, Who didst will that on this day the blessed ever Virgin Mary,
the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost,
should be presented in the temple:
grant, we beseech thee, that through her intercession,
we may be made worthy to be presented in the temple of Thy glory.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son,
Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost,
one God, world without end.
Amen.**

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

*Religious parents never fail by devout prayer to consecrate their children to the divine service and love, both before and after birth. Some amongst the Jews, not content with this general consecration of their children, offered them to God in their infancy, by the hands of the priests in the temple, to be lodged in apartments belonging to the temple, and brought up in attending the priests and Levites in the sacred ministry. It is an ancient tradition, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was thus solemnly offered to God in the temple in her infancy. This festival of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, or, as it is often called by the Greeks, the entrance of the Blessed Virgin into the Temple, is mentioned in the most ancient Greek Menologies extant.

By the consecration which the Blessed Virgin made of herself to God in the first use which she made of her reason, we are admonished of the most important and strict obligation which all persons lie under, of an early dedication of themselves to the divine love and service. It is agreed amongst all masters of Christian morality, that everyone is bound in the first moral instant of the use of reason to convert his heart to God by love; and if divine faith be then duly proposed to him (which is the case of Christian children) by a supernatural assent to it, he is bound then to make an act of faith; also an act of hope in God as a supernatural rewarder and helper, and an act of divine charity. Who can be secure that in the very moment in which he entered into his moral life and was capable of living for God, did not stain his innocence by a capital omission of this duty? How diligent and solicitous are parents bound to be in instructing their children in the first fundamental mysteries of faith, and in the duty of prayer, and in impressing upon their tender minds a sense of spiritual things in a manner in which their age may be capable of receiving it. These first fruits of the heart are a sacrifice of which God is infinitely jealous, an emblem of which were all the sacrifices of first fruits prescribed in the old law, in token that he is our beginning and last end. Such a heart, adorned with the baptismal grace of innocence, has particular charms. Grace recovered by penance is not like that of innocence which has never been defiled; nor is it the same happiness for a soul to return to God from the slavery of sin, as for one to give him her first affections, and to open her understanding and will to his love before the world has found any entrance there. The tender soul of Mary was then adorned with the most precious graces, an object of astonishment and praise to the angels, and of the highest complacency to the adorable Trinity, the Father looking upon her

as his beloved daughter, the Son, as one chosen and prepared to become his mother, and the Holy Ghost as his darling spouse.

Her first presentation to God, made by the hands of her parents and by her own devotion, was then an offering most acceptable in his sight. Let our consecration of ourselves to God be made under her patronage, and assisted by her powerful intercession and the union of her merits. If we have reason to fear that we criminally neglected this duty at the first dawning of our reason, or, if we have since been unfaithful to our sacred baptismal engagements, such is the mercy and goodness of our gracious God, that he disdains not our late offerings. But that these may be accepted by him, we must first prepare the present he requires of us, that is, our hearts. They must be washed and cleansed in the sacred laver of Christ's adorable blood, by means of sincere compunction and penance; and all inordinate affections must be pared away by our perfectly renouncing in spirit, honors, riches, and pleasures, and being perfectly disengaged from creatures, and ready to do and suffer all for God, that we may be entirely his, and that neither the world nor pride, nor any irregular passion may have any place in us. What secret affections to this or that creature lurk in our souls, which hinder us from being altogether his, unless they are perfectly cut off or reformed! This Mary did by spending her youth in holy retirement, at a distance from the commerce and corruption of the world, and by the most assiduous application to all the duties and exercises of a religious and interior life. Mary was the first who set up the standard of virginity; and, by consecrating it by a perpetual vow to our Lord, she opened the way to all virgins who have since followed her example. They, in particular, ought to take her for their special patroness, and, as her life was the most perfect model of their state, they ought always to have her example before their eyes, and imitate her in prayer, humility, modesty, silence, and retirement.

Mary lived retired until she was introduced into the world and espoused to Saint Joseph. Some think her espousals were at first only a promise or betrothing: but the ends assigned by the fathers, seem rather to show them to have been a marriage. These are summed by Saint Jerome as follows: that by the pedigree of Joseph, the descent of Mary from the tribe of Juda, might be