

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



The month of February presents two feast days with important aspects for the discernment process: the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (February 2) and the Memorial of St. Blaise (February 3).

It is 40 days after the solemnity of the Lord's Nativity. Mary and Joseph present themselves in the Temple to offer the sacrifice for their purification in fulfillment of the Law found in Leviticus 12. Likewise, in fulfillment of the Law in Exodus 12, the new parents present their first, newborn son to the Lord. It is a moment of profound connection with the Lord as these rituals

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Vocation Newsletter

reaffirm Joseph and Mary's participation in the covenant between God and His people of Israel. On a deeper level, the Christ, the light of world, fills the Temple and the world with His divine light of love and mercy. God comes to His people. Among the people awaiting the revelation of the light of the Divine One is the prophetic

Anna. A woman of advanced age, Anna spent her day in the Temple studying the Law, God's Word, worshipping God and awaiting the revelation of God among his people. Her spirit stirs when the holy couple bring the long-awaited Light of the World into the Temple. 'He is here and I need to see Him' she says to herself. She follows holy Simeon's voice who praises God for letting him see the Christ. As Anna happens upon this scene of the profound meeting of God with His people, Anna's soul stirs. Her study of God's Word has prepared her for this moment. Her intense worship of God awakened her soul when God arrived in Christ. Her love of God led her to God in the Christ-child. Now she met her God and her life's purpose was fulfilled. God met her and she met God that moment in the Temple. Upon meeting God, she goes and announces Him to "all who awaited the consolation of Israel." Because of the meeting of God and His people, the Church blesses candles on February 2.



St. Blaise was the bishop of the city of Sebaste in Armenia in the fourth century. It was a time of persecution for the Christian church, so the saint lived in a cave in



nearby mountains. According to legend, St. Blaise was a physician who healed people and animals. St. Blaise's holiness was well known throughout the region. The saint was tortured before being martyred for the faith. As St. Blaise was being taken to prison for being a Christian, a mother brought her son, with a fish bone lodged in his throat, to the saint for healing. At

nurtures and sustains us. In discernment, this realization is key to understanding that we are called because we are loved by the Lord.

We live in a time when people are in constant, instant contact with others, all the time. We are accustomed to instantly receiving information and communication.

For Reflection:

I. Read and Pray Luke 2:22-38. How can Anna's example inspire your discernment?

the command of St. Blaise, the child coughed up the fish bone and was cured. In commemoration of this miracle, the Church blesses throats and petitions God for the healing of His people through the intercessor of St. Blaise on February 3, the saint's feast day.

The important aspects for the discernment process that we learn from the celebration of these two feasts are: the necessity of the study of God's Word, the need to worship God, the importance of awaiting the Lord's arrival and the need for healing.

One of the significant gifts of the Second Vatican Council was the wide promulgation of the Sacred Scriptures in the modern languages. Catholics around the world began reading, studying and praying the scriptures with enthusiasm and joy. The word of God was heard in the liturgy and read at home. God's Word strengthened and enlivened the faith of Catholics. Studying and praying the scriptures open one's heart to a deeper encounter with God through the sacred Word which gives life. Discernment needs the scriptures to assist the discerner in clarifying God's call. Likewise, the discerner learns who God is and how to respond to the divine call through the words of the scriptures. The scriptures are the necessary roadmap of the discernment process.

The worship of God is the realization that God is the center of life from which all things in life flow. To worship God is to invite the glory of God into one's life. Worshipping God is the realization that we need God, for His love and mercy

For many, waiting for anyone and anything is not easy. That's why waiting on the Lord in discernment can be a struggle or seem nearly impossible to do. Yet, awaiting the Lord is key to discernment. The Lord comes to meet us. He brings peace, love and mercy. To be vigilant for the Lord's arrival is to be prepared for the gift that the Lord will bring to the discernment. He brings the assurance that we are loved and that if we trust Him, we can serve as He invites us to. The Lord always breaks into our lives. We will meet Him if we await Him with expected hope and steadfast faith.

As we move deeper into the discernment process, we may wonder if we are worthy of the Lord's call. Past mistakes and poor decisions, hurts and sins can rise to the forefront of our prayer which make us question our goodness and worthiness to serve the Lord. When such moments happen in discernment, we need to pray for healing. The Good News is that Jesus' death and resurrection is our healing from these. We pray for healing to better hear the Lord without any emotional or spiritual obstructions. God loves us no matter what. Knowing this is the courage to trust the Lord as we discern. God's unconditional love moves us through discernment and life with hope-filled joy and confidence.

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