



Diocese of Northampton

YEAR of PRAYER
and **VOCATION**
2017/2018



Prayer for February*

“When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

Luke 2:22

Let us give thanks to God for the prayer and witness of those in our Diocese living a consecrated life - a witness which has been salt and light for us all. Let there be a joy in their consecration and in the community life which enriches them and all whom they serve. Amen

(* adapted from Bishop Peter's Homily, 2 Feb 2016)

Forty is a number that is significant in the liturgical year. For example, there are the forty days of Lent. The Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord falls forty days after Easter. However, there is another forty-day period that sometimes escapes our attention. Forty days after Christmas - on February 2 - is the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple of Jerusalem. This is one of the most ancient feasts of the Church. It recalls the time when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple, as was required in the Law of Moses. In the picture, Simeon holds the child Jesus aloft. At the bottom of the steps is Anna, the prophetess.



Simeon and Anna spent their days dedicated to the Lord in prayer, fasting and waiting for the Messiah.

Simeon and Anna remind us of the men and women called to dedicate their lives to Jesus in a special way as consecrated religious persons. Taking religious vows, they are a distinctive sign to the world. They point us to the Kingdom that is not of this world, to a life beyond earthly life and to the Christ who will come again in glory. As people for God and for others,

they offer themselves in prayer, worship and many forms of service. In this month, we thank God for blessing us through them and we pray for all who are called to the consecrated life.

A Practical Suggestion

The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord is often known as *Candlemas*. Find out why. Talk with your teacher and others about the results of your research.

School Feast Days

Please pray for Thornton College, Milton Keynes and St Ethelbert's Primary School, Slough who celebrate their feast days this month.