

**Lumen Gentium Awards  
Vespers Homily  
February 3, 2020**

**“My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel” (Luke 2:30-32) These are the words of the Prophet Simeon, who stood with the Prophetess Anna in the Temple of Jerusalem for years, waiting for the coming of the Messiah. God had promised them that they would behold the salvation of the world. When Simeon and Anna saw Mary and Joseph present the child Jesus, they rejoiced and lifted their voices. Simeon proclaimed his canticle and Anna “spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38). This was the amazing scene at the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. As it was then, it is again today. We have not been waiting for Jesus in the courtyard of the Temple, but we have been waiting and working to hear his word and follow it for the glory of the Kingdom. My dear honorees, you are here because like Anna and Simeon, you were ready to respond when the Lord came to you.**

**The Feast of the Presentation is also called Candlemas, because of the tradition of blessing candles and sending light into the world. This is a ritual reminding us of how Jesus the Light was presented to the world so many years ago in Jerusalem. We are here to renew our commitment to the light. Pope Francis reminded us a couple of years ago that: “We are not the sun of humanity. We are the moon that, despite its shadows, reflects the true light, which is the Lord” (6 Jan 2018). Simeon and Anna, Mary and Joseph, they**

understood this. They received the light of Christ and reflected it to all those around them. This is the life of a follower of the light. You my friends are being honored tonight because you have done the same. You stand as a “moon” in your communities, reflecting the light of Christ to the people of your parishes, to those you serve, to those who visit, and to those on the peripheries who are so often forgotten in darkness. This is why we will light candles tonight from this paschal candle. I urge you to remember your baptism, when you were presented to the Lord, and first received the light of Christ, which you now reflect to the world.

We trust in the light my dear friends. There are so many voices shouting out from the darkness. We are not hushed or frightened by this. No, we shine the light of Christ to help those people see, so that they too can receive the light of Christ. There are many painful deeds done by leaders and peers that cast shadows on the world and on the Church, but still we have no need to be afraid. Our own eyes have seen the salvation which God has prepared for every people, and it is in the light of salvation which we put our trust. The light shines in the darkness, and the light shall not be overcome.

Thank you, dear honorees Michael and Carol Stehling, for reflecting the light of Christ. We honor you and send you forth today with love for every member of your parish communities. Continue to live out your missionary discipleship, in unity with your priests and parish staffs, without fear and with great hope and faith. As the letter to the Hebrews urges us: “Let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.”