



**Feast of the Presentation of the Lord
Perth Catholic Chinese Community**

Homily

**Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth**

**Sunday 2 February 2020
St Pius X Church, Manning Parish, Como**

Today the Church throughout the world celebrates the feast of the Presentation of the infant Jesus in the temple. It is a feast which reminds us of many things, including the fact that Jesus, Mary and Joseph belonged to the Jewish faith. Throughout today's gospel story Saint Luke reminds us continuously that Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple in order to fulfil the Jewish law. Both Joseph and Mary were faithful Jews, fully committed to the religious traditions in which they had been raised. And of course at the heart of their tradition was the belief that God is the creator and giver of life and that God must be at the centre of the life of every Jewish person and every Jewish family. Mary and Joseph's determination to present Jesus to the Lord in the Temple points powerfully to their own deep sense of fidelity to God.

As we gather here this morning to celebrate the lunar New Year and also to celebrate the feast of the Presentation we are reminded both by our religious celebration and by the celebration of the New Year that fidelity to God, fidelity to God's Church, fidelity to our families and fidelity to our ancient traditions is very important.

It is possible to learn a great deal from our own Jewish origins as Christians. One of the great beauties of the Jewish faith is the way their religion is very much at the centre of their family lives. Much of their religious practice takes place in the family home rather than in the Synagogue. This used to be true of our Catholic faith as well, but it is less true today, especially in our modern secular culture. As the importance of the family has declined so has the link between family and faith. This is a great loss.

For you as Chinese Catholics, of course, it is a little different. In common with many other Asian cultures, you have a deep reverence and respect for the family. It is one of the special gifts you offer to the wider Australian society and to our Catholic Church. Sometimes in our highly secularised western society, the importance of the family can be forgotten. We are inclined to speak of individual rights and personal autonomy and forget that we belong to families and to communities from whom we receive so much and to whom we have many responsibilities. The coming together of the Chinese New Year and the feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the



Temple provides us with a wonderful opportunity to remember that when God created us he created us as members of a family, he created us with a mother and a father, he created us with a history which stands behind us, and he created us in such a way that we can become most fully who we are meant to be only by living our lives in community with others. In God's plan we belong to each other, we are responsible for each other, we are meant to be able to depend on each other. I am personally grateful to you for your witness to the importance of family life and to your witness to our common Catholic faith.

Today, then, as you celebrate the lunar New Year and as you draw on your ancient traditions to celebrate this wonderful annual event, allow your celebrations on this special feast of the Lord's Presentation in the Temple to draw you closer to your families, closer to your friends, closer to the community of the Church. Today in a special way thank God for the gift of life, thank God for the gift of your Catholic faith, thank God for the family to which you belong, thank God for the Church which is your spiritual home. I wish you all a very happy celebration today and a wonderful year ahead. May God bless you all, keep you safe, and draw you closer to each other and to him.