

## FIND OUT ABOUT... CANDLEMAS

### ANSWERS

#### 1) Why is the Feast of the Presentation in the Temple also called Candlemas?

On February 2<sup>nd</sup> each year, the Christian Church marks the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, also known as Candlemas, although many churches celebrate Candlemas on the Sunday closest to this date. In the Church year, the season of celebration that begins at Christmas actually ends with the Feast of the Presentation, Candlemas.

By the middle of the 5th century **the custom of observing the festival with lighted candles** had been introduced, and it also became the customary **day in the year when all the candles in the church for the coming year were blessed**. The name **Candlemas** developed from this.

#### 2) Why is Candlemas celebrated on February 2<sup>nd</sup> each year?

As Mary and Joseph presented Jesus in the temple **40 days after his birth**, **Candlemas is celebrated 40 days after Christians celebrate Christmas**.

#### 3) What well-known flower is also known by the name “Candlemas bells”?

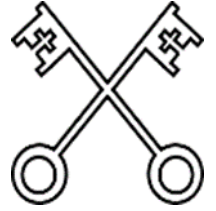
Candlemas bells is another name for **snowdrops**, on account of the fact that they often bloom early in the year. There was an old superstition that they shouldn't be brought into a house before Candlemas.

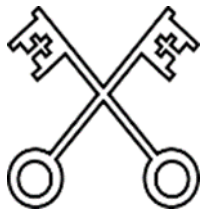
#### 4) Where would you find Anna and Simeon?

**The Bible**. (The Story of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple: Luke's Gospel, Chapter 2)

#### 5) In former times, why did people take down their Christmas decorations on Candlemas eve? (By the way: Some people still do).

**The feast of Candlemas marks the end of the Church's joyful season that starts at Christmas-**so in former times **Candlemas eve was the date upon which all Christmas decorations and greenery were taken down**. Some people still celebrate this tradition and some people would like to bring it back as a tradition.





## 6) When is Pancake Day celebrated in France?

In France, **Candlemas (February 2<sup>nd</sup>)** is linked to eating crepes and is called Pancake Day. When the family gathers to eat the crepes, it is also traditional that all the candles in the house are lit.

## 7) In which country is Candlemas a public holiday?

Candlemas is a public holiday in **Liechtenstein**.

## 8) How is Candlemas related to Groundhog Day, which is celebrated in the USA and Canada?

**Groundhog Day is celebrated in the USA and Canada on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Candlemas Day.**

**Groundhog Day developed out of a Candlemas tradition.** For centuries, people watched for hibernating animals coming out of the ground on this day as a sign of winter's end. In the 1880s some friends in Pennsylvania went into the woods on Candlemas Day to look for groundhogs- and this outing turned into a tradition and gave rise to the annual Groundhog Day.

## 9) In Mexico, who hosts the Candlemas Day party?

In Mexico, Candlemas is a follow-up to festivities begun on the Feast of the Epiphany. It is traditional that on that day, **whoever finds a doll representing the baby Jesus baked inside a sweet circular cake hosts the forthcoming celebration of "Candelaria" or Candlemas.**

