



The Catholic roots of Groundhog Day...

Did you know that this fun American observance actually has Catholic origins?

Every year, the world watches as Punxsutawney Phil proclaims a long winter or a newly-arrived spring. If it's a sunny day and he sees his shadow, bad luck for us; if he doesn't see his shadow, spring has come.



"Looks like more winter to me!"

Where did this entertaining annual event start?

It actually has its origins in today's feast of Candlemas and European traditions about weather on this day.

An old English poem goes like this:

*If Candlemas be fair and bright,
Come winter, have another flight.
If Candlemas bring clouds and rain,
Go winter, and come not again.*

In Germany, ground-dwelling animals such as badgers were the traditional harbingers of winter or spring on Candlemas. German immigrants imported the idea to Pennsylvania, adopted the local groundhog as the weatherman, and the rest is history.

But what is Candlemas?

The feast of Candlemas is also called the Purification of Our Lady or the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple. It commemorates the coming of the Holy Family to the Temple in Jerusalem forty days after Our Lord's birth. There Our Lady completed the sacrifices the Mosaic Law required of new mothers. Firstborn sons being traditionally dedicated to God's service, she and St. Joseph presented the infant Jesus to His Father—a beautiful image of Christ taking on His mission in the world.

We read about this event in the second chapter of Luke. The holy elder Simeon, to whom the Holy Spirit revealed that he would see the Christ, recognizes the Child and prophesies about His future.

Because Jesus is the Light of the World Who, with His coming to earth, dispelled the darkness of sin, the Church blesses candles on this day for use in the liturgy and for home prayer. A candlelit procession is often included in the liturgy, recalling the entrance of this Light into His Temple.

You can recall the Light of the World in your own home with beautiful candles available from The Catholic Company. [This bestselling candle](#), adorned with images of the stunning stained glass of Chartres Cathedral, is scented with refreshing Fir Balsam. It's sure to assist you in your prayer and bring a peaceful atmosphere to your everyday tasks. [Available now at The Catholic Company!](#)