

Pylypiwka - The Pre Christmas Fast Week #5

Journey of Expectation, Preparation and Fulfilment

The Master's Hospitality

The Master's hospitality is the banquet of our Lord, the Divine Liturgy, where we receive the Eucharist and connect our lives with one another and the Lord. This act of communion is given to us by our Saviour on the very night that he died. Once again, we connect this event from Holy week to the feast of our Lord's birth. We understand that the Nativity is the beginning of our journey with Christ. We share in the hospitality of the Holy Family this season of the birth, but we see the shadow of the hospitality to come. We know the intimate communion with one another and our Lord is on the horizon.



The incarnation is an icon of communion, or rather, communion is the continuation of the incarnation. In Mary, Christ becomes flesh; He is both fully God and fully man. The two natures are in one person. In the Eucharist we have the continuation of this marvellous mystery. The bread and wine are real bread and wine. In the consecration they remain fully bread and wine, but they also become the Divine Body and Blood of our Lord. Every Divine Liturgy we participate in is an aspect of the incarnation. The human elements fuse with the Divine by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

When we partake of the Eucharist we partake of the Divine nature. We unite ourselves to all Christians, past and present, and with the Lord Himself. Christ became man so that we might become God. He demonstrates that the human and divine natures can co-exist in a single person. We are called to share that same Divine Nature and become deified. We can accomplish this through living the example of Christ and joining that example to the Eucharist. The Eucharist allows us to experience the connection to all the community of faith.

Taken from The Winter Pascha bulletin series week 3 by Steve Puluka

Old Testament Prophecies

The expectation that a Messiah was coming to restore Israel's fortunes was very much alive among Jesus' contemporaries. No one however imagined a Messiah who would die and rise. No one was looking for God to become man. No text in the Old Testament clearly promised any of these things. It was only after Jesus' resurrection and really only after the Holy Spirit poured out onto the newborn Church, that Jesus' followers came to understand clearly how the Old Testament had made promises that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The early Church naturally turned to the Old Testament. They needed to demonstrate how the Incarnation of His Son had been part of God’s plan all along. Certain texts from the Law of Moses, from the Prophets, the Psalms and the other Old Testament writings were quickly singled out as the clearest expressions of how Jesus’ life, death and resurrection marked the climax of God’s plan of salvation for all people.

The Fathers treat the entire Old Testament as “prophecy” but in fact they find Jesus proclaimed there in several different ways:

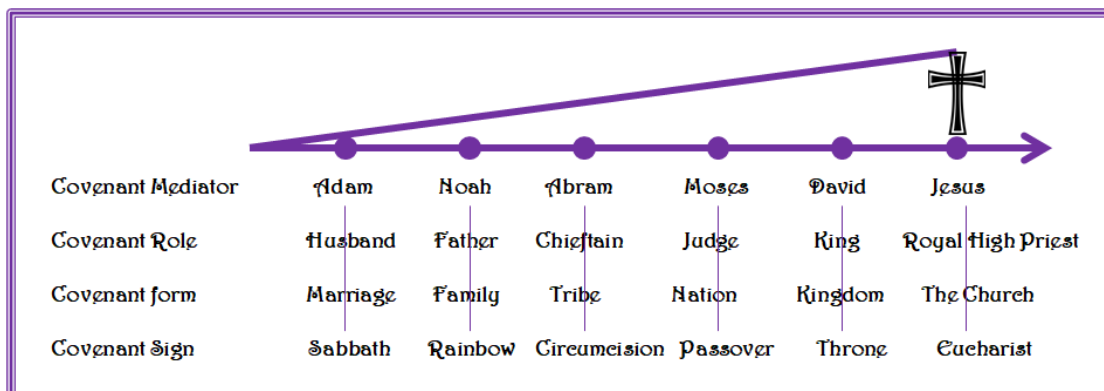
- **“prophecy”** – as properly understood. The Old Testament prophet makes a statement about the future, which is later acted out in the life of our Lord. The most famous is of course the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14: “Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call His name Emmanuel.”
- **“typology”** – This points to recurring patterns in God’s plan and shows real continuity between the Old and New Testaments. An event during the Exodus from Egypt describes a pattern that is repeated in a definitive way – in Jesus’ life. The Old Testament “type” is a bronze snake raised on a wooden staff as a cure for snakebites sent by God to punish the Israelites for their sinful grumbling. The “type” is fulfilled in Jesus who was raised on the saving wood of the Cross.
- **“allegory”** - This approach finds isolated details, words or images, which can point symbolically to an aspect of Jesus’ life. Allegories do not operate with the same degree of natural or historical correspondence as typologies do. Byzantine liturgical hymns are full of allegories of Mary’s virginal motherhood.
- **“personification”** – Old testament characters (like Isaac who was nearly sacrificed by his father) can be said to personify the incarnate Christ. Old Testament statements (like Ps 22) can be interpreted as if said by Jesus.

Any of these four approaches may be key to interpreting what our Liturgy calls “prophecies” about God becoming man. We can group the most important prophecies around four themes: the Son of David, the Son of the Virgin, the Son of Man, and Word Incarnate.

Adapted from Christ is Born: A Journey of Expectation, Preparation, and Fulfillment; Office of Religious Education, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, 2005: pages 44-46

<http://search.coolclips.com/m/vector/vc065603/Chalice/>

Salvation History



On the two Sundays prior to the Nativity of Christ, we remember all of salvation history. On the first Sunday, we recall all the faithful ones who God called and promised salvation.

Next, we remember the specific family line where Jesus takes his place in humanity. God created humanity as a reflection of the Divine nature. By disobedience, Adam and Eve rejected God's plan and followed their own way. But even as they were expelled from paradise God began to reach out to restore our fallen nature.

Little by little over the centuries God touched individuals and called them to witness the greatness of God's plan. God witnessed the great faith of Abraham and the patriarchs. They experienced the power of God and obeyed His instructions. Moses gave the people the law, a concrete expression of God's will. The people however had difficulty trusting the Lord.

All the while, God continued to teach the people, by chastising and rewarding them. Finally, in the fullness of time, God brought us back to paradise.

“When the Creator saw the one whom He had created with His own hands perishing. He lowered the heavens and came down; He took upon himself human nature from the most holy and pure Virgin, truly becoming flesh; for this reason we glorify Him. “

Taken from The Winter Pascha bulletin series week 3 by Steve Puluka

Resources:

The Winter Pascha bulletin series by Steve Puluka: [Phil-Fast week three \(puluka.com\)](http://puluka.com)
[Christ is Born: A Journey of Expectation, Preparation, and Fulfillment](#); Office of Religious Education, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, 2005 Copies of the book are available from:

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