



Catechist Connection

***Christ is Born!
Glorify Him!***

Dear Catechists:



The last pre Great Fast Sunday is on February 15, 2015. It is Cheese Fare Sunday. The Gospel for this Sunday, Matthew 6: 14 - 21, is short but poignant. *"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

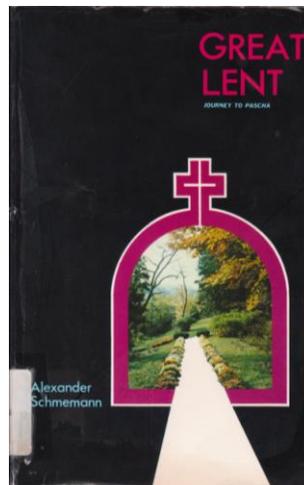
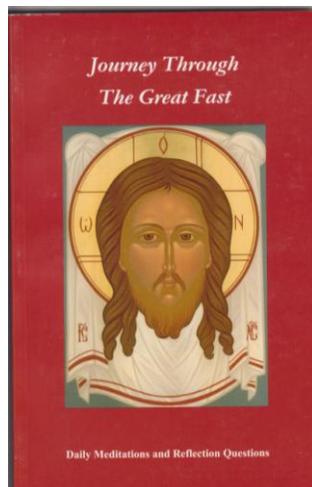
The Journey to through the Great Fast is based on Forgiveness. That is why we begin in most cases with a Service called Forgiveness Vespers where we offer mutual Forgiveness. Alexander Schmemmann in his book Great Lent writes that 'lent is the liberation of our enslavement to sin.' p. 28. This Gospel teaches us how to begin the path toward the liberation: Forgiveness, Fasting and Almsgiving.

The Icon chosen for the day is the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise. Through sin, we are like Adam and have been expelled from Paradise because of our sin. Christ the Saviour of the World opens the gates of Paradise to everyone who follows him. At the beginning of the Great Fast we are like Adam, but we are called to journey on the pilgrimage to our heavenly homeland.

The Great Fast has a certain 'feeling' or tone that isn't quite like any other season in the Church. It is described as Bright Sadness in our Liturgical Texts. On one hand we are journeying to heaven so we are 'Bright' and our feelings are hopeful. On the other hand we are more aware than ever of our distance from God because of the services and prayers that we pray, like the Prayer of St. Ephrem (Schmemmann, p.33).

In your classroom, you may speak about Forgiveness and Fasting in their lives. Children are also very good at almsgiving if you have a project like an orphanage in Ukraine or helping children overseas.

The Great Fast begins on Monday February 16, 2015. If you would like a book for yourself to pray with we have some available at our office. You can contact us by email: rel.ed@sasktel.net or phone: (306) 652-1718.



Blessings,
Sr. Bonnie