



Catechist Connection

Liturgically the Church re-creates the expectation of the Saviour in the history of Salvation by means of the Fast that begins on November 15/28, the day after the feast of the apostle Philip. This Fast lasts until the Nativity of Christ, and is appropriately called the Nativity Fast or popularly St. Philip's Fast (in Ukrainian **Pilipivka**).



The reading of the holy Gospel on the feast of the apostle Philip is full of hope for salvation (see Jn 1:43-51).

Philip invites Nathaniel to become better acquainted with Jesus of Nazareth. However, Nathaniel has one reservation: "Can anything *good* come from Nazareth?" To this Philip replies: "Come and see", (Jn 1:45-46, emphasis added). Having met Christ, Nathaniel's reservation dissipates. Herein is the task for every Christian: to "come and see," in other words, to draw near to Christ in order to know him. COP #175 & 176.

How do we draw near to Christ during these 40 days of the Fast? Prayer, Almsgiving and Fasting.

Prayer: We increase our Prayer life by reading Scripture everyday and setting aside quiet time to listen to God in our hearts. Pray the Antiphon of St. Philip's Fast as a way to prepare for the Nativity:

O Bethlehem, be prepared; Eden is opened to all; O Ephratha, be made ready; for in the cave the tree of life has blossomed forth from the Virgin; for her womb has been shown to be a spiritual paradise, in which is the divine plant, from which having eaten, we will live and not die as Adam did. Christ is born to raise the image that had fallen.

Almsgiving: Not just for the Great Fast but for St. Philip's Fast too. Give to the poor and needy out of your bounty. If you are buying presents for your family buy something for the poor.

Fasting: Fasting is a physical metaphor for the spiritual life. When we fast from food, we subject our body to physical hunger. This should remind us of the spiritual hunger our soul experiences for God.

Lord Jesus, You have come so many times to us and found no resting place, forgive us for our overcrowded lives, our vain haste and our preoccupation with self. Come again, O Lord, and though our hearts are a jumble of voices, and our minds overlaid with many fears, find a place however humble, where You can begin to work Your wonder as you create peace and joy within us. If in some hidden corner, in some out-of-the-way spot, we can clear away the clutter, and shut out the noise and darkness, come be born again in us, and we shall kneel in perfect peace with the wisest and humblest of men.

Help us to enter into this Christmas Fast with humility, yet with joy. And finally Lord, give us Christmas from within, that we may share it from without, on all sides, all around us, wherever there is need. God help us, every one, to share the blessing of Jesus, in whose name we keep Christmas holy. Amen.

*taken from Daily Meditations and Prayers
for Christmas Advent Fast and Epiphany*

If you are looking for a good prayer resource for yourself for the St. Philip's Fast google: St.Philip's Fast for the Family. The top site should come up from the Eparchy of Saskatoon Family Life Office Resources. Print it off and use it for prayer for the Fast. It was put together by Dobrodika Iryna Galadza in Brampton, ON.