

Messiah would not only bring the New Covenant, he would also be its personal incarnation.

171 Through the prophet Micah, the Holy Spirit discloses the place where the Saviour is to be born: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days" (Mi 5:2). Born in Bethlehem as a man, the Messiah is at the same time also eternally begotten of the Father: "You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession" (Ps 2:7-8). The anointing of the Messiah will also be from God:

The spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favour" (Is 61:1-2).

172 In addition to the signs of his power, greatness, and glory, the ministry of the Messiah will also include suffering and death, in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah:

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; and the bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he establishes justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. (Is 42:1-4).

On the path of justice, sufferings shall await him:

He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows ... Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ... he was bruised for our iniquities; and upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we have been healed ... and the LORD has laid upon him the iniquity of us all (Is 53:2-6).

The image of a suffering Messiah did not correspond to human expectations: "God forbid it, Lord! this must never happen to you" (Mt 16:22). This is how the apostle Peter reacted to the words of Christ about his coming suffering.

173 Christ applies to himself the messianic title Son of Man from the prophecies of Daniel. The prophet Daniel describes the glory of the Son of Man, to whom "was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed" (Dn 7:14).

174 As the time of its fulfilment approached, the word of God's promise became progressively clearer and more pronounced, in order to finally become the incarnate Word of God:

In these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs (Heb 1:2-4).

4) The Expectation of the Saviour

175 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 last until the Nativity of Christ, and is appropriately called the Nativity Fast, or popularly, Saint Philip's Fast (in Ukrainian, Pilipivka). During the course of this Fast, the Church prepares us for the luminous feast of the Nativity of Christ, reminding us of the consequences of Adam's sinful lack of self-control: "Refusing to fast, the first Adam tastes of the death-bearing tree."¹³⁷

176 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.

177 This expectation of the Messiah and the drawing near to him are fulfilled in the person of the Virgin Mary from Nazareth. Before all ages she was chosen by God. Mary, who in accordance with Tradition was introduced into the temple as a young child, spiritually grew into the

¹³⁷ Octoechos, Tone 2, Sunday Matins: Canon of the Cross-Resurrection, Ode 5.