

Kidane-Mehret

Ge'ez Rite Catholic Church



December 2017

Rev. Abayneh Gebremichael, M.A., B.C.C., Pastor

Divine Liturgy 9:30 am at St. Vincent de Paul, (Ethiopian Community)

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Important Parish Information

Newcomers to the parish: Please fill out your full names and addresses on the Registration Form. The Catholic Church requires that each member of a parish, to the extent allowed by his income, support the day-to-day running of the parish's pastoral activities.

Sacraments and Pastoral Care

Baptisms: Please telephone your pastor at the office to make an appointment to fill out the form and make the necessary arrangements. **Marriages:** It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Washington that couples proposing to marry must first contact, or see, a priest or deacon at least six months prior to the date on which they intend to marry for Marriage Preparation classes. All Catholics are bound to observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage. **Confessions:** are heard before the start of the Divine Liturgy, and any other times by appointment. **Funerals:** Contact your pastor at the parish office to make arrangements. **Hospital Visits:** Notify the pastor if a family member is hospitalized. **Mass Intentions (Stipend):** \$25.00. This is for Memorial Masses, thanksgivings, or petitions.

From the Pastor's Desk

Are we listening to God in our hearts?

My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. (Jn 10:27-28)

These words of Jesus are most comforting but they also confront each of us with the question: "Do I indeed recognize the voice of Jesus?" Learning to know Jesus, to love Jesus and to live Jesus is the obligation of all who claim to be His followers. Jesus gave us the Church "as dwelling for [His] holy and chosen people." Just as in our family life, we learn how to be good members of society in our homes, so it is in the Church that we learn to be followers of Jesus. Each Sunday we attend the Divine Liturgy. It is here that we learn more and more about our God Who not only created all things but also teaches us how to listen to Him so we can live in the most fruitful way possible.

The Divine Liturgy includes readings from Scripture. It is here that we encounter Jesus as the Word of God. In our Rite these are all from the New Testament but they are filled with references to the Old Testament. In fact, the Meswate Quedasie (or anaphora), in which we are present at the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, is the last of a long line of sacrifices from the very beginning of time.

We find these stories mainly in the first five books of the Old Testament books which comprise the Torah and also in the Historical Books of Judges and Kings, the Wisdom books, the Psalms and the poetry, and the prophets.

These early father figures and prophets offered sacrifice to the LORD because they had come to know Him through listening to Him in their innermost being or heart. As they became closer to Him they learned to trust God and to obey Him without question. The sacrifice of first fruits that Abel offered pleased the Lord. Noah obeyed the Lord by following His instructions to build Ark to save humanity. That Abraham set out up Mount Morea to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac is a testimony of faith in the Lord. It is here that we first encounter the "Lamb of God" Who replaced Isaac on the altar of sacrifice.

The Prophet Elijah met with the king, the priests of Baal and all the people of Israel on Mount Carmel to prove the might of the Lord God and the total inadequacy of the pagan idolatry. In the Psalms, God called David a man after God's own heart because he listened and when He fell into sin, he repented and

turned to God for forgiveness and the grace to keep him from sin.

These men offered all these different sacrifices because of the certainty of their belief and faith in God. Their obedience pleased God Who accepted their sacrifices. We learn from them that faith and action work hand in hand. We need to listen to God's commands to carry out the sacrifice or work that He wants from us.

During Mass it is very important that we listen. Listening comes from the Greek word that means to obey. In Hebrew it is Shema (Hear Israel the Lord is your God shall love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might and teach your children always (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Jesus added Love your God in your heart, in your soul, and in your might and love your neighbors as yourself (Lk 10:27). Each Sunday as we listen to Holy Scripture, we should be most attentive, allowing the words to take root in our hearts. In our Rite, the readings, or Liturgy of the Word, is taken from the New Testament books only and includes the homily. Two readings are from the Epistles, one reading from the Acts of the Apostles, and the Gospel Reading. The Word of God is our light and guide to walking in the world. As we listen, God speaks to us and calls to each one of us to follow Him in thought, word, and deed.

Sunday Readings for December, 2017

Dec 3: Heb 12:25-29; James 3:4-12; Matthew 8:23-34
Dec 10: 1Cor 2:1-16; 1 John 5:1-5; John 9:1-41
Dec 17: Heb 1:1-14; 2Pet 3: 1-9; John 15 1:44-51
Dec 24: Rom 13:11-14; 1 John 1:1-10; John 1:1-18
Dec 31: Heb 13:16-25; 1Pet 2 21-25; John 10:1-21

Psalm 8: 1,2, 4,5.

O LORD, our Lord,
how awesome is your name through all the earth!
I will sing of your majesty above the heavens
When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and stars that you set in place—
What is man that you are mindful of him,
and a son of man that you care for him?

Prayer of Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits and blessings which you have given to me, for all the pains and insults which you have borne for me. O most merciful Friend, Brother and Redeemer, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly. Amen.

Let us pray for: The newly baptised:

Micah, son of Abiy Tedla and Julia Allen

Dominic, son of Abiy Tedla and Mother: Julia Allen

Gabrielle, daughter of Abiy Tedla and Julia Allen.

All baptized Christians throughout the world that we will show the world that we are Christians by our love for Christ and one another.

The Parish of Kidane-Mehret: for Peace, Unity, Harmony and Charity in the Parish.

For the World: That the King of Peace will reign in every nation and in every heart.



Who is Jesus?

By the end of this month we will be in the Advent Season, preparing for our celebration of the Incarnation in the first days of January. The answer to the question “Who is Jesus?” may seem obvious, but if we look at the world and the Church today we will see that many people are just as muddled in their thinking as when the Church Fathers were trying to delineate the answer centuries ago. From the earliest days of the Church in Ethiopia, the Anaphora of Dioscorus has been used for the Christmas and Easter celebrations of the Divine Liturgy because it deals with precisely that question.

From the beginning the Church has been through great turmoil as, first the Apostles, then the Fathers struggled to articulate the Truth about Jesus and why we should obey His teaching. Dioscorus lived at a time of turmoil in the Church as it fought to come to grips with the humanity and divinity of Jesus. Catholics do not consider him a saint but he is considered one by the Orthodox Oriental Churches. At the time of the Council of Ephesus Dioscorus was secretary to the great Cyril of Alexandria and accompanied him to the Council. Finally, at that council the Church came up with a decisive understanding about the humanity and divinity of Jesus. Jesus was true God and true man—One person with two distinct but inseparable natures.

Then along came Nestorius who repudiated the title Mother of God given St. Mary at the Council of Ephesus. He said that She was Mother of Christ only in respect to his humanity and that Jesus is two distinct persons. No sooner did this get sorted out when Eutyches came up with yet another variant to the problem. He is considered the father of monophysitism which maintained that Christ had only one nature which is a mixture of the divine and the human. This was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.



And if you are muddled by all this, it is obvious that Dioscorus was too. When confronted

with the views of Eutyches, he is reputed to have said, “If Eutyches holds opinions contrary to the doctrines of the church, he deserves not only punishment but hell fire. For my concern is for the catholic and apostolic faith and not for any human being.”



However, he still got conned by close associates of the Emperor into presiding over the second Council of Ephesus at which St. Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople, was condemned as a heretic, under fake charges and Eutyches’s monophysite view seems to have been okayed. That council was condemned by the Pope, Leo the Great. Finally, the Emperor convened the Council of Chalcedon at which all true teaching about Christ was firmly established and real and fake charges of heresy sorted out. Dioscorus was at the first part of the Council but opted to sit out the rest of it on the grounds of ill health. This angered everyone and he was found guilty of breaking the canon law and exiled to the Granga, Paphlagonia on the Black Sea where he died, never having the chance to exonerate himself.

Dioscorus wrote the anaphora which has been used by the Ethiopian Church for Christmas and Easter since those early days in the midst of all this turmoil in his own life and the life of the Church. In it we learn who Jesus is, we learn about Him as God and as man, and we see Him at work in His Church through the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist.

The anaphora opens with the usual dialog but immediately after the people declares “We have lifted them to the Lord our God,” the priest takes us back to the very beginning of the Book of Genesis. He explains that the true God is indeed the all-powerful Creator of everything. It is a ringing declaration of the transcendence of the Judeo-Christian God who created all things out of nothing. This first part of the anaphora ends with this powerful exhortation. “Let heaven hear, let the earth listen, and the foundations of the earth tremble.”

This all-powerful God has now done something totally extraordinary to help mankind find its way back to Him. And everyone needs to take note. “The Lord came down through the will of His Father, sojourned in Mary and was born while she was a pure virgin.” With this amazing declaration, Dioscorus shows us that God, though still the transcendent Creator, has now become immanent by making Himself easily available to aid those He created. From that initial statement, that shows the parentage of Jesus, Dioscorus goes on to proclaim the Life of Christ Jesus, showing how God had planned everything in minute detail, especially the Church and the Sacraments. This is done in the prayer of the priest about Wisdom. In a direct quote from Proverbs 9, he talks of Wisdom’s House, built on seven pillars, and shows Wisdom, whom he identifies as Our Lord, actually going out to bring people into the Marriage Feast, just as Jesus described in one of His parables. Despite all the confusion both then and now, we can rely on the Anaphora of Dioscorus to Dioscorus unerringly point us in the right direction, leaving us filled with gratitude to our loving and merciful God:

“Blessed is He who has given us His Holy Body and Precious Blood.”

News from around the world



The Pope visits Myanmar (Burma)...

Pope Francis landed in Yangon Nov. 27 for the first phase of his third tour of Asia, which will take him to both Burma — also called Myanmar — and Bangladesh.

While in Burma Pope Francis met with 17 different religious leaders at the Archbishop's House in Yangon. During the meeting with Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Catholic and other Christian leaders, the pope stressed the message of universality in diversity.

His visit to Burma, in particular, is significant, not only because the country has a small Christian minority, but also due to a contentious political situation that has roots in both a recent regime change and an ongoing crisis over the minority Rohingya Muslim population.

Francis' visit comes amid a spike in state-supported violence against the Rohingya, the largely Muslim ethnic group who reside in Burma's Rakhine state. The staggering scope of the crisis has prompted the United Nations to declare the situation "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing." The Burmese government refuses to recognize the Rohingya and considers them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. They have been denied citizenship since Burma gained independence in 1948. Facing heightened persecution in their home country, many Rohingya have fled to neighboring Bangladesh, with millions camping along the border as refugees. More than 600,000 Rohingya have fled Burma for Bangladesh in the past few months alone.

And in Bangladesh...

Pope Francis arrived in Bangladesh with words of praise for the humanitarian assistance the nation has given to Rohingya Muslim refugees and urged greater action on their behalf from the international community.

Arriving at the airport around 3pm local time, the Pope Francis was greeted by President Abdul Hamid. Two children in traditional dress then brought flowers and a jar of soil to the Pope, who blessed them. Also present at the airport were political and civil authorities, 10 Bangladeshi bishops, a group of faithful and 40 children, who performed traditional dances for Francis. Ninety percent of the 156-million population of the republic is Muslim. There are 375,000 Catholics, 12 bishops and 372 total priests, both religious and diocesan....

Speaking to President Hamid and the nation's authorities and diplomatic corps, the Pope said that, in recent months, "the spirit of generosity and solidarity" the country is known for "has been seen most vividly in its humanitarian outreach to a massive influx of refugees from Rakhine state."

He noted how Bangladesh "at no little sacrifice" has provided shelter and basic necessities for the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims at its border. (National Catholic Register)



Pope recognizes a Consolata Sister recognized as a martyr

Vatican City, (CNA/EWTN News).- An Italian nun killed in Somalia in 2006 has been officially recognized as a martyr, as Pope Francis moved her cause for beatification forward this week. Sister Leonella Sgorbati and her Muslim bodyguard, Mohamed Osman Mahamud, were ambushed outside of a hospital in Mogadishu, Somalia. Sister Sgorbati was a Consolata Missionary and spent most of her time in Africa, where she taught nursing and aided the sick.

Pakistan to have Year of the Eucharist in 2018



Lahore, Pakistan, (CNA/EWTN News).- Amid national challenges, the Pakistani Catholic Bishops' Conference has announced a "Year of the Eucharist," to focus on renewal and service. The year will begin on the Solemnity of Christ the King, Nov. 26, 2017. It will end on the same feast day next year, Nov. 25, 2018.

"The 'Year of the Eucharist' is meant to be a time of spiritual growth and inner renewal and to share the love of Christ with all humanity by our dedicated service to our country," the bishops said in a statement published by the Pakistan Christian Post. "As our country is going through difficult times we urge all people in Pakistan to pray more fervently for peace, harmony, progress and prosperity of our beloved country."