

Kidane-Mehret

Ge'ez Rite Ethiopian Catholic Church



December 2018

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

Divine Liturgy 9:30 am at St. Vincent de Paul, 14M Street SE Washington, DC 20003.

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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

Advent, the Arrival of Christ our Liberator

In the Old Testament the people misunderstood the prophet's teaching of the Messiah. They understood he was coming to liberate the people of Israelites from the captivity of their enemies and the bondage of the Romans.

In the New Testament we get a better understanding of Jesus's mission. His main objective wasn't to liberate the Jewish people from political domination but to liberate people from the dominion of darkness and bring them into the freedom of light, to rescue them from slavery of sin to the freedom to live as sons and daughters of God, if that is what they choose.

"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope." (Mt 12:18-21)



Advent for Catholics is the short period time before we celebrate the birth of Christ, or the first step in God's long-time promise to restore mankind to original justice. It is not only a time of waiting for the first coming of Christ. Advent also focuses us on the Parousia, the second coming of Christ in glory, at the end of the world.

In the Latin and Eastern churches Advent liturgical practices are very different. In the Latin Rite, Advent is a time of waiting and focuses more on the birth of Christ. The priest vests in a purple chasuble for the Mass. Also, each Sunday of Advent, there is the ceremony of lighting the Advent Wreath.

Each week, with special prayers and Scripture readings such as those from the Book of Isaiah or from the Gospel of Luke, a candle is lit. There are three purple and one rose-colored (bright pink) candles. One is lit each week until all four are shining brightly on the last Sunday before Christmas. The lighting of the rose-colored candle marks the third Sunday of Advent also known as Gaudete Sunday, when the priest wears rose vestments. Gaudete is a Latin word that means rejoice.

In the Ethiopian Ge'ez Liturgy, Advent means waiting for the Parousia the end of time. We are eagerly awaiting the Messiah in fervent prayer and by doing charitable work. Also practicing Tsome Nebeiat (the fasting of the prophet) before the celebration of the Christmas (Ledet-Gena). So, in this season let us await the infant Jesus Who will fill us with His grace. Let us await the birth of Jesus filled with kindness, full of hope, and showing our charity to the poor and our neighbors.

Prayer during Advent

Heavenly Father, your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us, a great sign of your love. Guide us as we strive to walk in that love together as a family this Advent. As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, bring us closer to each other and to Your Son. Give us the grace and strength we need every day. Help us to always trust in You. Come, Lord Jesus, lead all people closer to You. Come and dispel the darkness of our world with the light of Your love. Amen.

Psalms 16: 7-10

I bless the LORD who counsels me;
even at night my heart exhorts me.
I keep the LORD always before me;
with him at my right hand,
I shall never be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad, my soul rejoices;
my body also dwells secure,
For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
nor let your devout one see the pit.

Let us pray for:

The newly baptized:

Ezana Petros son of Michael Petros and Fekra Tekeste was baptized on Nov 4, 2018

Tyiamae daughter of Aaron Naji and Rahel Wendemu was baptized on Nov 10, 2018

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. And for a church to call home.

For the Church: That the Church will shine with the glory of God.

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

What is Advent?

Already the stores are filled with tempting Christmas gifts at discount prices. With our Christmas falling early in January, even the decorations in the stores will be gone by then, but we do have a little longer to ponder the Christmas story. For Christians the Christmas story is one found in the Gospel of St. Luke as well as St. John's Gospel with his deeply mystical identification of Jesus as the Word of God who has always existed, and not just as the tiny baby in a manger.

For us, Advent means getting ready for Christmas, something we do every year. For us who hear the story of Jesus and the beginning of the Church year after year, it can become merely the opening chapter of God's plan that will unfold liturgically over the next few months, culminating with the death and resurrection of Jesus, with His ascension to Heaven, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.



Throughout His ministry, Jesus used key words to identify Himself as the promised Messiah spoken of from the earliest times of the Old Testament. Also, after His resurrection, Jesus Himself gave the disciples on the Road to Emmaus a 'bible study.' What they learned from Him left them stunned, excited, with their minds blown away.

What did Jesus teach those disciples that changed them from sad and disheartened runaways, who were leaving Jerusalem, leaving a crucified rabbi behind, to being filled with life and fire, ready to face the world and all its challenges? We do not know precisely what Jesus said to them.

Maybe He explained to them the story of Abraham, Isaac and the ram, representing Him, that was slain instead of Isaac on Mount Moriah. No doubt He taught them about Passover and the covenant which God made with His people and showed them how it was the precursor of the covenant Jesus inaugurated at the Last Supper. Maybe He talked about King David and the murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, as an example of God's mercy and forgiveness in the face of true repentance. Or perhaps it was about the wise

Solomon who nevertheless built temples to pagan gods to make his concubines happy and set in motion events that eventually brought down punishment upon his own family and the people of Israel for generations because of his sin

The whole Old Testament story leads up to the birth of Christ. It took God thousands of years to bring the peoples of the world to the point where evil could be acknowledged. It is the story of how God prepared His people for the coming of Christ. It is a story of preparation. So, what does He have to teach us that will make this Christmas more than just a cultural event for us? As He walked them through the Old Testament, they would have come to understand the immensity of God's love and patience, but also His transcendence and how His goodness that repulses sin.

Advent is a season of pondering and repentance. John the Baptist cried out to all who would listen to, "Prepare the way of the Lord" by repentance and the washing away of sin. When a priest "absolves" us from sin, that is exactly what he is doing. Each year we are given a fleeting moment by the Church to look at our country, at our homes, and ourselves and then ask ourselves what we are doing to further God's kingdom on earth. Maybe we have done some things well and are able to give thanks to God for His grace. But maybe we also need to face up to the times when we have transgressed the moral codes that govern our everyday relationships with each other and have forgotten about God. Maybe we need to ask for the grace to persevere in our endeavors to become like Jesus Christ.

Advent then becomes a season of strengthening our relationship with God through Confession, through kindness to others, and by being joyful. Even a smile to stranger can make a difference. It becomes a season of joy. The colored lights remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World, the gifts remind us of the great gift God has given us through Jesus, that of Eternal life. And the special food we prepare and share with family and friends becomes an extension and reminder of the greatest of God's gifts, Himself in the Eucharist.

"Now, O Lord, our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, send upon us Your Light and Your truth.

Enlighten the eyes of our hearts and conscience.

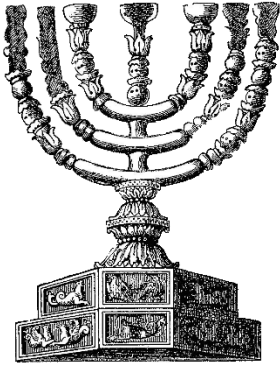
Prepare us to hear and put in practice the words of Your Holy Gospel." (Ordinary of the Divine Liturgy)

For our Younger Parishioners ...

Hanukkah and Advent

As we approach the end of the year, it seems that everything is waiting for something. God, throughout the Old Testament, was preparing people for something new and special. Then, suddenly, God did not send them any prophets for several hundred years. It was a terrible time for the ancient Jews. They lived under pagan domination and struggled to keep their faith.

Finally, we read in the two Books of the Macabees, they rebelled and defied the pagans who at sword point tried to make them eat pork and bow down to idols. Once they had ousted the pagans from their land, they went to their holiest place, the Temple in Jerusalem which had been turned by the Greek pagans into a temple for the worship of the pagan god Zeus. They needed to burn special oil for eight days to make the Temple holy again. When they reached the Temple they found there was only enough oil for one day. They lit the menorah anyway and, to their amazement, the small amount of oil lasted the eight days it took to prepare fresh purified oil. This is the miracle of the Hanukkah oil that is celebrated every year when Jews light a special menorah known as a hanukkiyah for eight days. One candle is lit on the first night of Hanukkah, two on the second, and so on, until eight candles are lit.



Nearly two hundred years after this, suddenly, a prophet, St John the Baptist, appeared in Israel calling on people to “*prepare the way of the Lord.*” Our season of Advent comes more or less at the same time as the Jews celebrate Hanukah. But we know that Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world.*” (John 8:12). Jesus Himself taught us on the road to Emmaus to read the Old Testament to understand Who He is (Lk 34:13-35): Someone who will purify us from sin and be a light for us as we live out our earthly lives.

In the different Old Testament prophets we read about a coming Messiah. Probably the most famous prophecy is in Isaiah 7 :14 *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel.* Isaiah 53 that reads like a biography of Jesus. It is in this going back and forward between the Old and the New Testaments that the Church understands the plan of God for “making all things new.” The remarkable thing is that God is not giving us ideas to believe in. He is giving us a Person, Jesus Christ Who is the Light and Who is someone we can actually become friends with (Jn15:15) and actually talk to (Jn 1:1).

News from Around the World

From the Vatican Hannah Brockhaus reports for CNA News that Pope Francis told members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher that “There is the bloody martyrdom of Christians killed for their faith, but also another “martyrdom which takes place when religious freedom is unjustly limited. It is in front of the whole world – which too often turns its gaze to the other side – the dramatic situation of Christians who are persecuted and killed in ever-increasing numbers,” the pope said Nov. 16 in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican's Apostolic Palace. “In addition to their martyrdom in their blood,” he said, “there is also their ‘white martyrdom,’ such as that which occurs in democratic countries when freedom of religion is restricted.”



Disturbing News from Pakistan

Last month we read that Asia Bibi, the Catholic woman jailed in Pakistan since 2010 had been acquitted of blasphemy and was a free woman. However, she and her family are now in hiding in Pakistan for fear of their lives while extremist Muslims are going door-to-door trying to find her. Asia and her family are seeking asylum but so far no country has had the courage to offer them asylum for fear of outraging their Muslim citizens.

Buildings illuminated in red

Meanwhile, in an event sponsored by Aid for the Church in Need, important buildings in cities throughout the world in red to express solidarity with persecuted Christians, including Asia Bibi. In a message of support for the initiative, Pope Francis said the event “will draw the due attention of all to the serious problem of discrimination that Christians suffer in many parts of the world. “There are countries where a religion is imposed, others where there is violent persecution or systematic cultural mockery towards the disciples of Jesus!” he said.

Two American miraculous healings further the cause of British Blessed

Blessed John Henry Newman, a prominent Englishman who converted to Catholicism in the 19th century, could be canonized next year, pending the approval of Pope Francis, according to Bishop Philip Egan, Bishop of Birmingham. Both the healings that have now been approved as miracles happened to Americans. The first was the inexplicable healing of Deacon Jack Sullivan, an American who recovered from a crippling spinal condition and the second the inexplicable healing of a woman who prayed for Newman’s intercession after suffering with a “life-threatening pregnancy”. Doctors who treated her reported that they had no explanation for her sudden recovery.