

Kidane-Mehret

Ge'ez Rite Catholic Church



August 2017

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

Divine Liturgy 9:30 am at St. Vincent de Paul,

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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

Filseta

Mehlela Mariam and Fasting : August 7- 21
Celebration: August 27



This month we give honor the special way to the Blessed Mother Mary in a special way. We remember the honor God bestowed on Her by assuming Her into Heaven to be with Him always, and crowning Her Queen of Heaven and earth.

At this time, as individual Christians who love and honor Her, we are called to fast and pray. As a Church, we also put aside time each day to come together to remember Her Assumption and the special place She holds not only in our hearts but in the Heart of Her Son. We ask Mary to help us to intercede for us to God.

Many of us remember what it was like growing up back home when our elders set us the example of waking up at 4:00 a.m. to walk to the Church in the dark and rainy time to get together in the Church for Mehlela tselot prayer.

Every year, without fail, we would dedicate this time of prayer to the blessed mother Mary. Our elders were fervent in expressing their love for the blessed Mary. They didn't have the language to describe her directly so they tried to figure out poetic ways comparing Her to things they were familiar with. In some prayers they compare her with a shining vessel that gives birth to a star. In another simile, She is the Mother of the New Covenant giving birth on the altar. Mary is like a cloud giving birth to Holy Communion.

Now we are older and away from the mountains of our birth, but we still try to keep this tradition and offer our time to participate prayer with Mary.

Mary is a special human person. She is completely obedient to God, accepting only his plan for her life and doing whatever He tells Her. At the end God honored her by assuming Her body and soul into heaven without being contaminated by sin. She is honored to live with God in Heaven.

So our human nature is living with God through the blessed Mary. As a pilgrim people we beseech Mary our mother to intercede for us to God so that we may inherit eternal joy when we depart from this earthly life.

We follow the example of Mary to be patient, waiting in joy and in the hope that we are always ready to fulfill the command of God. Mary calls us to pray unceasingly that God's will be done. The catechism teaches us to know God, to serve God, and to love God. One way we do this is by doing good to our brothers and sisters.

May the Blessed Mother Mary help us in all our needs.

Prayer on the Feast of the Assumption

Father in heaven,

all [creation](#) rightly gives you praise,

for all [life](#) and all [holiness](#) come from you.

In the plan of your wisdom she who bore the [Christ](#) in her womb was raised body and [soul](#) in [glory](#) to be with him in heaven.

May we follow her example in reflecting your holiness and join in her [hymn](#) of endless love and praise.

We ask this through [Christ](#) our Lord. Amen.

Sunday Readings for August 2017

Aug 6 : Tit 3:1-15 ; 1Pet 4:6-11 ; Mk 6:47-56

Aug 13 : 1Cor 8:1-13 ; 1Pet 4:1-5 ; Mt 12:38-50

Aug 20 : Rom 6: 12-23 ; James 4:1-17 ; Jn 7:32-52

Aug 27 : Rom 8:31-39 ; 2Jn 1:1-13 ; Lk 1:39-56

Psalms 45: 14-15

All glorious is the king's daughter as she enters,
her raiment threaded with gold;

In embroidered apparel she is led to the king. The
maids of her train are presented to the king.

Let us pray for:

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.



We Offer Sacrifice

Background

When we open the Ge'ez/English booklet of the Divine Liturgy that we use at Kidane-Merhret parish, we see strange words such as Anaphora, Epiklesis, Anamesis, Trisagion, etc. They are not English, nor are they Ge'ez. Rather, they are Greek. In the first few hundred years of Christianity, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in Greek because that was the commonly spoken language of the Roman Empire. One of the hold-overs of the Greek origins is the

“Kyrie Eleison” which is found in our Liturgy as well as the Latin Rite Liturgy and many others.

St. Frumentius was given the Divine Liturgy for the Ethiopian Church by St. Athanasius, the famed head of the Alexandrian Church. Tradition tells us that this version of the Divine Liturgy is the way St. Mark and the other Apostles celebrated the “breaking of the Bread.” It is also the basis for the Egyptian Coptic Divine Liturgy. While it is obvious that the two versions are related, they have been subject to inculturation. Equally, it is possible to see the relationship and similarities between other Eastern and Oriental Rite Liturgies and that which we use. Today any changes to the Liturgy can only be made by the Holy See. However, in the Early Church there were far fewer restrictions on the wording of the Divine Liturgy. In fact, bishops were encouraged to mold the Divine Liturgy in the most effective ways to suit their particular churches.

The first part of the Divine Liturgy, which is the Ordinary, never changes its format, yet reflects the different Church Seasons in the readings. Historically, catechumens left the church at the end of the Ordinary. The second part is the Anaphora which means offering or sacrifice. This is the part of the Divine Liturgy that in early times was reserved for those who were already baptized. All told, the Ge'ez Rite now has 18 anaphoras listed in the Metsehafe Qeddassie, each looking at the Life and Sacrifice of Christ and His identity from a different perspective, although only three tend to be used—Holy Apostles, Dioscorus, and the Anaphora of St. Mary by Abba Heryacos, bishop of the Province of Behnesa in Upper Egypt. Tradition teaches us that Abba Heryacos was told by St. Mary to give it to St. Yared who then added it to the 13 anaphoras that were in use in the Ethiopian Church at that time.

In all the different rites (and in the Orthodox Churches) this most sacred part of the Divine Liturgy begins with the same ‘conversation’ when the priests says, “Lift up your hearts.” In Jewish belief, the heart was the seat of the emotional and intellectual life so that when we are exhorted to “Lift up your hearts,” we are offering up to God everything that makes us who we are. After that, the Anaphora takes us step by step through the Institution of the New Covenant to the Final Blessing.

God’s relationship with His people is documented in the Bible. The Bible tells us that God made seven covenants with the people He created. “By His covenants, God is taking the ‘creatures’ He made and raising them to the status of divine offspring, divine children. By His covenants, the Creator is fathering a family. The human race is being transformed from something physical and natural into something spiritual and supernatural. Humans are being changed from merely a species sharing common traits and characteristics into a divine brotherhood and sisterhood, a family of God.” (The Master key that unlocks the Bible. St. Paul Center for biblical studies.)

The very first covenant God entered into was with Adam and it assured mankind’s innocence as long as they were obedient to God. This was followed by covenants made with Noah, Abraham, Moses (Passover and Mt. Sinai) and David. Finally, there is the New Covenant. It is not a covenant with specific people but with the whole human race. In this New Covenant we see what God wants from us is what He originally established with Adam. He intended us to be friends who would honor God by obedience. In return, God would protect us, provide for us, love us, and bring us peace.



Eventually, we would be provided an everlasting home in the presence of the Almighty God. Jesus offers His Death and Resurrection as the sacrifice to establish this covenant and assures us that He is going to prepare a room for us in His Father's house. We ratify it by our love and obedience and in receiving Holy Communion, we receive the grace to keep the conditions of the Covenant.

In both the Didascalia Apostolorum (The teaching of the Apostles, written in the second century) and the Apostolic Constitutions (a 4th century version), the early Church writers spend a lot of time discussing the Golden calf and the effects it had on the relationship between the Israelites and God. God gave the Ten Commandments which the Israelites accepted but within days when Moses returned up the mountain to be with God, they turned to pagan worship and made the golden calf. This evoked a huge crisis in the relationship between the Eternal God and His Chosen People. Eventually, God's great mercy and love for His people kicked in. God then instituted what Didascalia calls the Second Legislation which contained many sacrifices and duties and rules for daily living. Jesus bypassed these in the New Covenant and went back to the Ten Commandments, which He summed up in the Golden Rule of *"Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets."* (Mt. 7:12) This Jesus explained in the Gospels and by His own example showed us how to live them. He also switched back to the priesthood according to Melchizedek, bypassing the Aaronic priesthood that was instituted at the time of the Second Legislation. Another thing that we find in these early Church writings is long prayers that begin with the many attributes of God, so we are left in no doubt about Who our God is. Much of this is echoed in our Divine Liturgy.

The Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy is a living encounter with the Living God Who re-establishes His covenant with us each time we gather to celebrate His love for us, reassuring us time and again that He is indeed the "Lover of mankind."

As we enter into the heart of the anaphora, the deacon exhorts us: "You who sit, arise." Prior to the Protestant Revolution, standing up was the established way for those attending the Sacred Mysteries. In fact, the rubrics of the Divine Liturgy follow the tradition of the early Church Fathers.

Immediately, the priest, as "another Christ," begins to explain the terms of the Sacrifice of the New Covenant to the Father by telling Him that Jesus "was made flesh, was carried in the womb, and His birth was proclaimed by the Holy Spirit." It is Jesus who is the Sacrificial Lamb. It is this final and everlasting Sacrifice on the Cross that establishes the New Covenant, and enables us to offer obedience and praise to the Almighty God along with all the ranks of angels. So, we respond with our Sacrifice of Praise: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of hosts, the heavens and the earth are full of the holiness of Your glory." The priest, just before the consecration, describes Jesus' passion and once again sets forth the terms of the Covenant that He might "lead forth the saints, establish the covenant and reveal His resurrection."

Now the big question is how can Jesus's sacrifice 2000 plus years ago have any effect on my relationship with God now? For us it is a mystery but as St. Gabriel explained to St. Mary about the Incarnation, "Nothing is impossible for God." Through ordination to the priesthood God provides "another Christ" wherever there is a Church community to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. It is the priest who stands in for Jesus and makes the Sacrifice of the anaphora present for us today.

The Consecration prayer that follows is the same for all Rites in the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. What is different is the role of the laity. In the Ge'ez Rite we affirm our belief in all the events of the Last Supper. We say that what is happening on the altar is "the reality" which in itself is a remarkable statement because reality is something that can be experienced through the five senses. For us, now, the reality is the Upper Room. The reality is being so close to God that we can see and touch Him, taste and smell Him. He has become for us the reality. No longer are the ways of the world paramount in our lives. In this word alone we attest to the change in the bread and wine. That They are now the Body and Blood of Jesus. Then we give thanks and praise, again affirming our belief in the reality of Bread being the Body of Christ. The same is true for the Wine. The final prayer of this sequence is a type of creed. What else can we do but offer Him praise and trust?



Then follows the Anamesis, or Paschal mystery, in which the priest does what Jesus asked when He said, “Do this in memory of me.” This prayer is followed quickly by the epiclesis which brings us to the present time and the priest prays for the Holy Spirit to change the Bread and wine on the altar into the Body and Blood of Christ. Once that is done the Body of Christ is broken and the first words of the Divine Liturgy become reality: “How wondrous is this day and how marvelous this hour in which the Holy Spirit will come down from the high Heaven and overshadow this offering and sanctify it.” The priest with the people echoing his words prays, “Through Your Holy Spirit...Pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us.”

It is as if a sigh of relief echoes throughout Heaven and earth. The Holy Spirit is here. The deacon then ushers us into the presence of the Lord with the prayer, “The host of angels of the Savior of the World...” He exhorts us to bow our heads. By this action, we acknowledge the Lordship of the Almighty God. We no longer desire to give in to Satan, and we no longer place ourselves at the center of the universe.

The priest then says, “O Eternal God...Your people have bowed their heads and to you they have subdued the obstinacy of heart and flesh ...bless all men and women; incline your ear to them and hear their prayer...” etc. The sacrifice has been offered. We are now in the merciful hands of our Redeemer. With the Holy Spirit directing us, we have the courage to plead for mercy: “Egzeo Maharrana Christos.”

Further reading: Cardinal Tsadua’s paper on the *Anaphoras*. (See the Kidane-Mehret website.)
Introduction: Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church, translated by Marcos Daoud, rev. by H.E. Blatta Masié Haazen. . *Didascalia Apostolorum. Deuteronomy :9-10.*