

Kidane-Mehret

Ge'ez Rite Catholic Church



November 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

Reflection about confession

The history of penance: In the early Christian period penance was permitted only once in the entire life of a person. That is limited to the grave sins of murder, adultery, and apostasy. This form of penance was not private. In the Eastern Church, penitents were classified according to their progress in penance beginning with those called *flentes* (weeping). They were not permitted even into the Church. Rather, they would sit in the gateway of the church carrying a big stone and asking forgiveness from the congregation and begging for their prayers. As they progressed in their penance, the penitent was allowed into the Church, kneeling at the entrance. Later, they were allowed into the church but could only stay until after the sermon. They call them, hearers, kneelers, Neuse Christian. The next stage was when they were allowed to remain in the church for the entire Mass but were not allowed to receive Holy Communion. Finally, after a long period the person would receive full forgiveness of his sin and allowed into full communion with the Church. It was only in 1551, at the Council of Trent that confession became private for the forgiveness of both mortal (grave sins) and venial (less serious sins).



The Sacrament of penance has many different names. The term sacrament of penance applies since it absolves the Christian sinners personally and ecclesially through their confession, the absolution of a priest and satisfaction made by the penitent. The term "sacrament of conversion" shows how it sacramentally presents Jesus's call to conversion. The first step is returning to the father. The Sacrament of forgiveness refers to the priest's sacramental absolution and God's granting the penitent pardon and peace. The sacrament of reconciliation shows it imparts to the sinner the love of God, reconciling him to God by understanding and acting on the Lord's call to go first and be reconciled to your brother.

Jesus came to save everyone's soul and he permits Confession to clean our soul from every sin and guilt. Whenever we have sinned let us humbly approach the priest and receive God's pardon and peace. Not only does the Sacrament of Penance free us from our sins but it also challenges us to have the same kind

of compassion and forgiveness for those who sin against us. We are liberated to be forgivers. We obtain new insight into the words of the Prayer of St. Francis: "It is in pardoning that we are pardoned."

Jesus entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Church. The Sacrament of Penance is God's gift to us so that any sin committed after Baptism can be forgiven. In confession we have the opportunity to repent and recover the grace of friendship with God. It is a holy moment in which we place ourselves in his presence and honestly acknowledge our sins, especially mortal sins. With absolution, we are reconciled to God and the Church. The Sacrament helps us stay close to the truth that we cannot live without God. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Sunday Readings for November 2017

Nov 5 Col 1:1-11; James 1:1-12; Mt 6:25-34
Nov 12 Rm 11:13-24; Rev 12:13-18; Mt 21:33-46
Nov 19 Rm 5:10-21; I Jn 2:1-17; Mt 6:5-15
Nov 26 Col 1:12-29; 1Pet 1:13-20; Jn 5:16-27

Psalm 8: 14-15

Be gracious to me, LORD;
see how my foes afflict me!
You alone can raise me from the gates of death.
Then I will declare all your praises,
sing joyously of your salvation
in the gates of daughter Zion.

Prayer

Grant, O God, that my heart which was made for you alone,
may ever be wholly yours; that free from all undue affection
to creatures, it may refer all to you and seek you alone
in all things. Amen.

Let us pray for: The newly baptised: Yohanan Kebede, The Son of Hailegebriel Kebede and Hiwot Haile.

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.

Sin and Penance

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
(Rom.6:23)

How would you like to be buried alive because you sinned by grumbling against God? There is a fearful story about a group of Levites and Reubenites who contested Moses’ authority to lead them. Even after being warned by Moses and given the chance to repent they continued in their revolt. Then Moses told all the Israelites to stand back and not even touch anything that belonged to the rebels and as he finished speaking *“the ground beneath them split open, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their families and all of Korah’s people with all their possessions. They went down alive to Sheol with all belonging to them; the earth closed over them, and they disappeared from the assembly.”* (Numbers 16:31-33)



If you think back on all the times the LORD reacted against sin with great anger and strength, it has to make us rethink our idea of who God is and who we are. Just think of the Flood, then Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot’s wife being turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back, in direct disobedience to the LORD’s command. Then there was the Golden Calf that the Israelites made while Moses was up on Mount Sinai. Another incident is when Aaron and Miriam grumbled, saying they were as important as Moses. The LORD burned with anger against them. When He finished

speaking to them, Miriam was left with a skin disease. God agreed to heal her but she had to be confined for seven days outside the camp. (Numbers 12:10)

In all these cases there was someone to plead with God for them or the community. In the case of the Korah rebellion, the LORD would have annihilated the entire Israelite people but when Moses interceded, He told him to warn the rest of the Israelites to keep away so they would not be swallowed up. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham interceded and Lot and his family were allowed to escape. Finally with Miriam, Aaron the priest interceded with Moses, a Christlike figure, who interceded with the LORD, showing us the pattern of Catholic confession.

Since the Fall of Man, which left man struggling against his inclination to sin (concupiscence) and failing miserably, God has worked to bring mankind back to their original state. He did this by showing them the evil of sin and the beauty of righteousness. Sin does not just affect the person who commits it; it affects all mankind and greatly offends God Who is all good.

By the time of Jesus, the Temple in Jerusalem was well established. It had been the center of Jewish life and religion for at least a thousand years. The laws that we read about in Deuteronomy (which means the second law) were established and penitents had to go to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice. This in itself was a dangerous and uncomfortable journey. Once at the Temple, the penitent would have to buy the animal prescribed for the particular sin committed and then get the animal to the altar to be sacrificed. Whatever the animal, this would not have been fun. Everyone who saw you would know what you had done and the animal, whether sheep, goat or bull, would recognize the smell of death and would have to be dragged to the already bloodied altar. There, the penitent would make a sacrifice by killing and butchering the animal.

Then, while the priest burned the offering, the penitent would stand there singing penitential psalms.

As St. Paul said, *“the wages of sin is death.”* But God in His love and mercy came up with a way to help us battle concupiscence and forgo the immediate wages of sin. St. John writes, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”* (Jn 3:16)

Like the Korah rebels or the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, even today when we sin, we face death. That is what mortal sin means. Like those ancient sinners we have *“an advocate with the Father”*, Jesus, Who gives us a chance to repent. It is up to us to make the choice. However, we do not face immediate death, but death after the Final Judgement – Jesus calls it the *‘second death’*. With His death on the Cross, Jesus bought us. This is called redemption. Now we have to *“work out our salvation with fear and trembling.”* (Phil. 2:12) All our sins were paid for by His Death. Our forgiveness is a certainty if we sincerely repent and understand how ugly any sin is to God. Even the smallest sin precludes us from seeing God face to face. He is so holy that only that which is holy can survive in His Presence.

Like the Ancient Israelites, we do need to understand that we have sinned and offended God. We do need to make that ‘pilgrimage’ to the parish Church where the priest, sitting in for Jesus, is waiting to absolve us from our sins—Jesus did breathe on His disciples and say, *“Whose sins you forgive are forgiven and whose sins you retain are retained.”* As Catholics, we can be absolutely sure that the sanctifying grace we receive at Confession will weaken the concupiscence that we inherited from Adam and Eve. What matters most is that we can be absolutely sure that once we have completed our penance, our sins are forgiven. Like the Father of the Prodigal Son, our Father in Heaven is waiting to embrace us lovingly.

News from around the world

She returned from Death to write about it

From an interview with *Kylie Mohr*.



Not everyone can say they’ve died and come back to life. Dr. Mary Neal’s life changed forever in 1999, when she drowned on a kayaking expedition. She and her kayak became trapped in boulders under 8 to 10 feet of water when she dropped over a waterfall.

The force of the current and the weight of the water were too strong for her to free herself. Thirty minutes without oxygen later she says she had died, gone to heaven and returned. She published *“To Heaven and Back”* in 2011 and on Sept. 19 this year she released a follow-up, *“7 Lessons From Heaven.”*

Neal said it’s her mandate to share her experiences and to let people know they need to trust that God’s promises are true. *“Trust in God will give you an absolute sense of joy, even on the smallest day,”* she said. *“Trust radically changes the experiences of daily life. I assumed I was going to die. It was a very active choice that God’s will be done. I’ve often said that was the moment my life changed, because for the first time I meant it.”*

“I discovered that where God’s love is present there is no room for destructive emotion. It doesn’t exist. Trust radically changes your experience of life. Because if I trust that God has grace for me because of understanding, then I don’t have to be emotionally tied to my past. I don’t have to feel guilt, shame or remorse. I don’t have to be defined today by my past. If I

believe that God has a plan for each and every one of us and God has a plan for me of hope, I don't have to worry about the future. I still plan. I'm a planner, but I hang onto plans very loosely. If something doesn't come to fruition it's because God has greater plans for me. That allows me to be fully present right now, which is a radically different way of living my life. I can feel love for people I don't like because I know that God loves them as intensely as God loves me.

“I live in a continual state of prayer, and my prayer is listening. Listening and willing to say yes to wherever I'm led”.

The one teaching of John Paul II that will change your life

From an article by [Fr. Michael Rennie](#)



Pope St. John Paul II led an extraordinary life. From his time as a young priest in 1950s Poland surviving the brutalities of Communism to becoming a beloved pope who regularly drew crowds in the hundreds of thousands, he was one of most famous and influential people of his generation.

It's telling that he was devoted to maintaining individual relationships, even while burdened with the growing responsibilities of serving the Church.

This is why John Paul II is so fascinating. Because of how smart and busy he was, you would think he'd only have a few

close friends or that he would struggle to remain connected to people. But that doesn't seem to be the case, and people who met him always felt he had given them his full attention. He was clearly intentional in reaching out and made a point of getting to know people. Underneath the genius and in all his many books and teachings, this great man was making one, simple life-changing point: every person deserves to be loved.

In his book *Love and Responsibility*, he writes, “A person's rightful due is to be treated as an object of love, not as an object for use.” This holds true for every encounter we have with another person, whether it's a family member, a co-worker, a friend, a stranger, or an enemy.

The way John Paul II lived his own life is an example of this time and time again. For him, the problem with the rise of technology, politicizing everything, or investing too much time in work is not that they cross some philosophical boundary, but that they objectify people.

To really know a person, we need to pause and take the time to personally connect. The life of St John Paul II shows that a happy life is not about adhering to any ideology or proving ourselves to be right or successful – it's about people. Every person matters. Every person is valuable. Connection and friendship are the ways we honor that.