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The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith and Order

The Fourth Sunday of ሠላሳ ልደት /The Savior is born) - The Church
*focuses on the **proclamations** and **prophecies** about the coming of the Messiah.)*

Liturgical Readings:

Roman 11:25– end; 1John 4: 1 - 9; Acts 7:17—23

Psalm 89:27

Mat 2: 1 – 13

The Anaphora of Dioscorus

The Saviour Is Born

Beloved in Christ, today we contemplate the glorious mystery proclaimed in the Gospel of Saint Matthew: “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea... behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem” (Matthew 2:1). The birth of our Lord is not merely an event in history; it is the decisive intervention of God in the story of humanity, the radiant fulfilment of promises spoken through prophets and sealed in eternity. In Bethlehem, the Eternal Word becomes flesh, and the Saviour enters the world to restore, deliver, and sanctify. This is the dawn of redemption, the advent of divine light in a darkened world.

The psalmist, beholding the mystery from afar, proclaims of the Messiah: “I will make Him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth” (Psalm 89:27). The one born in a humble manger is the exalted Son, the heir of all creation, the King whose reign is righteousness and peace. His appearance in Bethlehem fulfils the longing of generations, for as Saint Paul teaches, “A hardening has come upon part of Israel until the full number of the Gentiles comes in; and so all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:25–26). The birth of Christ unveils God’s mercy to Jew and Gentile alike, gathering all nations into the one household of salvation.

Yet the Incarnation also summons discernment, for as Saint John warns, “Test the spirits to see whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1). The true Spirit confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh—born, manifested, and revealed for the life of the world. This heavenly birth is the dawn of truth, the fulfilment of prophetic vision. Saint Peter affirms, “We have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to attend, as to a light shining in a dark place” (2 Peter 1:19). This light shines now in Bethlehem’s cave, the Light that no darkness shall overcome.

The salvation heralded by Christ’s birth stands within the great arc of divine providence. Saint Stephen in the Acts recounts how God delivered His people through Moses when “the time of the promise drew near” (Acts 7:17). In Christ, the fullness of that promise arrives—not merely a deliverance from earthly oppression, but from sin, death, and the dominion of darkness. Thus Saint John declares, “The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). Jesus Himself affirms His mission, saying, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10) and “I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

This salvation reaches its climax in the conquering of death. The Epistle to the Hebrews proclaims that Christ “partook of flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver those who were held in bondage” (Hebrews 2:14–15). The newborn Child is the mighty Redeemer who takes our nature to sanctify it, suffers to heal it, and rises to glorify it. No wonder Saint Paul declares, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Christ’s birth is a revelation—an unveiling of truth. Before Pilate He declares, “For this purpose I was born, and for this I came into the world, to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37). The truth He reveals is nothing less than the heart of God’s eternal purpose. After His resurrection, He tells His disciples, “All things written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Me must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44). Indeed, He affirms that Moses wrote of Him (John 5:46). Every prophecy, every shadow, every temple rite converges upon the manger, the cross, and the empty tomb. Thus, when He bears the weight of our salvation, He cries upon the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30)—the work foretold is accomplished, and the Saviour born in Bethlehem completes His mission upon Golgotha.

From the earliest days of His ministry, Christ proclaimed this saving purpose. In the synagogue of Nazareth, He opened the scroll of Isaiah and read, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me... to preach good news to the poor... to proclaim liberty to the captives” (Luke 4:18), and He declared, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled” (Luke 4:21). Again He affirms, “I must preach the Kingdom of God... for this is why I was sent” (Luke 4:43–44). The birth of Christ is therefore the inauguration of the Kingdom—a Kingdom of truth, mercy, and divine life, breaking forth into the world.

It is this same love that moved the Father to give His Son, for “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Those who come to Him find no condemnation, for “There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus... for the law of the Spirit of life has set us free” (Romans 8:1–2). The One born in Bethlehem is our freedom, our peace, our righteousness, and our eternal hope.

He is our High Priest, “in every respect tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). He is the Bread of Life who declares, “Whoever comes to Me shall never hunger... and I shall lose none of all that the Father has given Me” (John 6:35–39). He is the Light of the world who says, “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6), the One whom Philip longed to behold (John 14:8), and through whom the Father is revealed.

Thus, beloved, the birth of Christ is not an isolated moment—it is the radiant centre of salvation history, the intersection of divine promise and human hope. In Bethlehem, heaven bends low to earth; eternity enters time; God becomes man so that man may be united with God. The Saviour is born: the Light has dawned, the promise is fulfilled, and redemption stands among us. Let every heart receive Him. Let every soul adore Him. For unto us is born the Saviour, Christ the Lord—now and unto ages of ages. Amen.