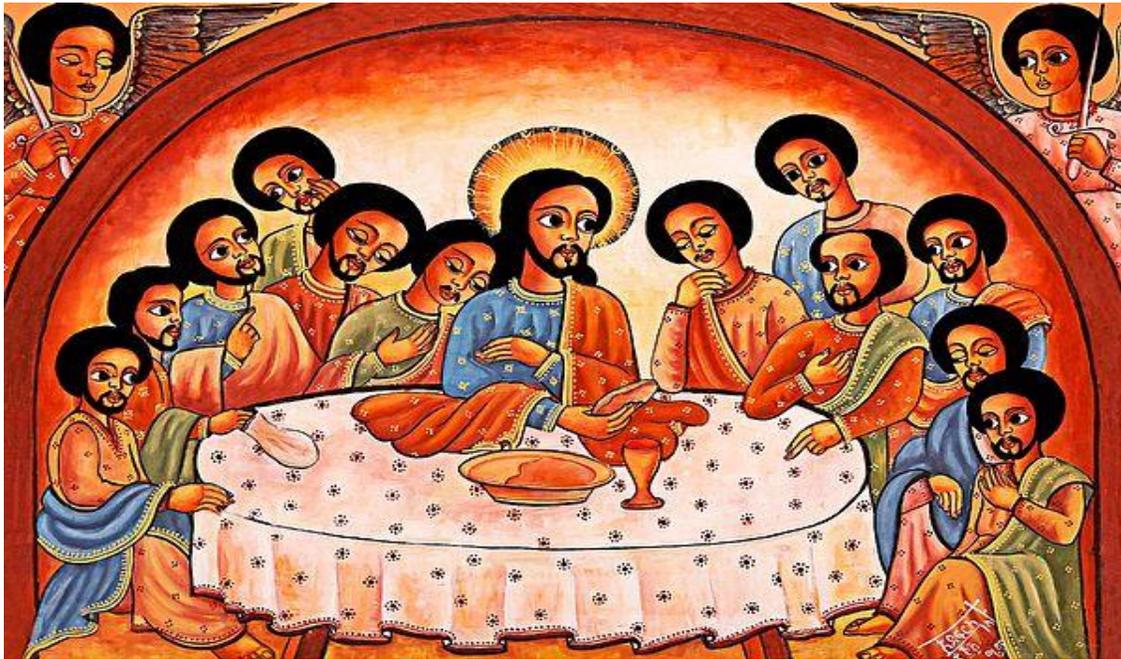

Holy Communion



Holy Communion is the culmination of all sacraments of the Church. Holy Communion means offering of sacrifice. This is not an offering of man to God but the offering of God for man. The sheep and goats were offered as sacrifices in the altars during the Old Testament times.

However, these were preceding examples of the offering of the flesh and blood of Christ during the New Testament. The offering of bread and cup of grace which Melchizedek offered to Abraham (Gen. 14:18) and the sacrifices which the Israelites offered during the day of their liberation exemplify Christ our pascal lamb.

Holy Communion has Biblical foundation (Mt. 26:26; 1Cor. 11:23-25). When the priest puts the bread on the paten and the wine in the chalice and conducts liturgical prayer, the bread is changed into the body of the Son of God and the wine into the blood of the Son of God. What is thus given in our Church is the body and blood of the Son of God. When the priest administers the body, the deacon administers the blood with a cross-spoon. Those who, due to sickness, are

not able to come to the Church receive the Holy Communion in their homes during liturgical service. The Holy Communion has to be administered on the same day; it cannot be spared for another time. Holy Communion should be taken after abstinence from food for at least fifteen hours. According to the doctrine of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church the Holy Communion is real body and blood of Christ. (Jn. 6:51, 52, 53, 55). Like the other sacraments, the Holy Communion was originally performed by the bishops who succeeded the Apostles, but as the church expanded they authorized the priests to perform the sacrament. The deacons assist the bishops and the priests. The believers who have examined and cleansed themselves through penance can receive the Holy Communion. But those who have not cleansed themselves through penance even if they receive the Holy Communion unworthily it will bring damnation upon them. (1Cor. 11:28-29; Liturgy of John Chrysostom).