

Testimony of Emahoy Wolete Selassie – June 28th, 2016 Retrieved from facebook on June 29, 2016

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My heart is overflowing with joyous melodies of praises to my Lord God and Savior the Almighty God creator, of the heavens and the earth, of all things visible and invisible, and all of creation. I am so amazed at the tender mercies of God who saw it fit not to but me to shame but has given me the hope of true salvation for my soul and a chance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. As you all may know, this past Saturday His Eminence Abba Zekarias, Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Archdiocese of New York, Northeast, Southeast and Central United States, consecrated 16 acres of land in the Catskill Mountains of New York for the future home of Kidane Mehret Kidane Selam (Covenant of Mercy Covenant of Peace), Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Hermitage and Monastery, established for female monastics gathered with monastic priest. I would have never known that God would call me to establish such of a monastery up in the mountains of New York, but seeing that He has brought me this far, my faith in God has grown tenfold. There are many of you the faithful people who over the years now has helped me on this road firstly to monasticism and secondly to establish this monastery.

To His Eminence Abba Zekarias whom from the time of his office in this country has always lived a monastic life right here in the city. I saw him day and night practicing the holy rule of prayer, reading, fasting, writing and serving the church. Every day for five years he made me to rise up at 4:30 am to pray with him the covenant prayer, read the book of the saints, the miracles of our Lady the Virgin Mariyam and the Bible. He would then interpret the scripture to me by Ademta form step three, which is interpreting the scripture with scriptures and he would give me assignments and ask questions. By this way I have read the Bible, the book of the Saints and the Miracles of the Virgin from cover to cover 4 times by his steadfastness, placing in me the holy words to be my mind and train of thoughts. And instead of telling me the rules and orders of the monks he would show them to me. For example, I would need some Biblical understanding from him or need some book or even food (for when I entered into the office of novice I gave up all my passions and did not even have money for food), he would straightway raise up and serve me! No matter the hour. I began to think, "Why is he being Archbishop serving me? I began to see over time that he was showing me the laws of the monk of obedience, humility regardless of the ranking order (levels of ordination) chastity, long suffering and tolerance. And when some evil or blessed thing was happening he would go to the holy books we have in English and point them out to me by the word of God or by the saints or even by the miracles. By this way I began to know things related to the spirit and gain understanding of how to behave concerning spiritual things rather good or evil. And when he saw fit, he blessed me to go to Israel by writing to the monks there to consecrate me in to the order of the monks at our most holiest monastery, Dir Sultan.

And it was Melaka Hale Kesis Amde Tsion who received me firstly as a catechumen as my teacher, then a baptized member of the church became my spiritual Father even through the years of me being a novice and further consecration as an Emahoy (Nun-Spiritual Mother of the Church). It was through his guidance I learned how to maintain myself in this Christian life of spiritual warfare. And brothers and sisters it...was...war...! The path of becoming a monk is no way an easy light one. There are so many levels of heart and mind one must face within one's self to go through before you can reach things pertaining to God. And I know I gave him a real challenge because I would call him all hours of the day and night, I would express all my anxieties to him, all my trials. The burden was so heavy for many years I know. But even though He is not a monk he knows very well things pertaining to the way of Life. He would always remind me of the suffering of Christ and how if I have chosen this path I too must bear my cross and accept all forms of trials and open shames. It was not easy but he saw me through it. And it was his parish of Saint Michael the Archangel in New Jersey that accepted me in as family. I have no family here in New York (I speak of the flesh) and it was this parish that provided me the most support by giving to me alms, supporting me in the religious goods that I make or even too when I needed a meal. These acts of kindness provided me so much strength and endurance through all my heart attacks (literally! The spiritual warfare would be so intense it would send me to the emergency! I would get severe pains in my heart, running down my left arm and a serious of migraines. Kesis Amde would give me unction of the sick on many occasions. When I entered the monastery my teacher Abba Geber Sellassise taught me how monks cope with spiritual attacks and sicknesses by giving me certain psalms to read and showing me how it is necessary for monks to always rejoice in God. This rejoicing shines light on the soul's heart and evil cannot stand near to it to make attacks. With time and practice one can sense when evil is coming to attack, shine light (rejoice) and defeat the presence of evil before it can attack.

Also to all the faithful peoples, the apples of God's eye, who helped me over the years by looking to me for prayer beads, crosses, breads and wines and prayer books. All of the humble donations given to me I saved up little by little over the years and by this was able to purchase this land to build a monastery. Wow how wretched I am! To be given such people so precious in the sight of God! His children who by His will came to me the poor sinner, to help me in my journey. I have come to learn that you cannot and must not offend one of the little ones! The faithful children of God. For God have their names written in the palm of His hand, He has counted the hairs of their head, and given them an angel who comes to Him face to face on their behalf day and night! It was due to the faithful who give me real spiritual courage to walk on this path of monasticism. They made me feel that I was needed for something containing the holy things and even though I do not have anything in this world to give them or pay them back, I make it my life's work as they helped me find a place to rest in this fleeting world, I will give my life to help Christ build their home in the Kingdom of Heaven. I could go on and on. If God wills I will share more in the future. To each and every one of you, Archbishops, Priest, Deacons and all faithful peoples, you know who you are, may the Covenant of Mercy and the Covenant of Peace be your protection and lead you to the glorious Life in Jesus Christ.

Amen





