

COMMUNION SUNDAY

HOLY BADARAK (DIVINE LITURGY)

“Broshoomeh.”
(Be Attentive.)

PART II. SYNAXIS (Teaching)

1. The Procession and the Beginning of the Liturgy of the Word (Synaxis or Midday Office)

When the altar and the Eucharistic gifts have been prepared, the curtain opens and the deacons lead the priest in a procession around the altar and down into the nave. The celebrant offers incense to the main and side altars, the baptismal font, the sacred icons, and all the people. The people ask that the priest pray for them in the presence of Jesus. The procession marks the beginning of the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy of the Word concerns the Word of God, Jesus Christ. He comes to his people in the public reading of the Bible.

2. A Hymn to Jesus Christ the Only-Begotten Son of God

Most appropriately, the Liturgy of the Word begins with a hymn to Jesus Christ, the Word, “*Meeyadzeen Vortee yev Pant Asdvadz*” [Only-begotten Son and Word of God]. The words of this ancient hymn express our conviction that Jesus Christ is the immortal Son of God. He became man by being born of the holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. He was crucified and destroyed death in order to give us eternal life. He is one person of the Holy Trinity.

Another hymn, called the “*Jashoo Sharagan*” [Midday Hymn] changes each Sunday according to the feast or season of the church year. The hymn always focuses on Jesus Christ and the gift of salvation that he has made available for according us.

3. The Gospel Procession: A Parade in Honor of the Savior

Since the Gospel contains the words of Jesus, the Son of God, it is chanted with great solemnity. The senior deacon calls everyone to attention by chanting “*Broshoomeh*,” (Be attentive). He takes the ornately bound Gospel book from the priest and elevates it high over his head. Lifting up the Gospel book is a sign of the authority of God’s Word over our lives. When we commit ourselves to the wisdom of the Bible, we find there a powerful source of meaning and direction.

4. The Reading of the Scriptures: We are Nourished by the Word of God

The focus of the Liturgy of the Word is the public reading of passages from the Old and New Testaments. In the Armenian Church every Sunday specific Bible passages are read. They are selected according to an ancient system that has its roots in fourth-century Jerusalem, the cradle of the Church. The Scripture passages should be read by ordained “*tubeerk*”, (readers).

5. The Reading of the Holy Gospel: God is Speaking

The Gospel reading is the culmination of the Liturgy of the Word. It is not read, but chanted from the elevated bema by an ordained deacon. The fathers of the Armenian Church emphasize that the solemn chanting of the Gospel during the Badarak is not only a lesson for our minds, but a real meeting with Jesus Christ.

6. The Nicene Creed: Our Common Faith

Another component of the Liturgy of the Word is the chanting of the **Nicene Creed** by all the people. The Creed is the official declaration of the principal teachings of the Church. It was composed by all of the churches at the Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325 AD.

7. The End of the Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word ends with a litany and a prayer. The closing prayer is specifically for those who are not yet baptized members of the Church. Since they are not yet permitted to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, the unbaptized were originally dismissed at the end of the Liturgy of the Word. Speaking on their behalf, the priest prays, “Make us equal to your true worshipers, who worship you in spirit and in truth.”

