



## COMMUNION SUNDAYS

### *“What we SEE Inside the Armenian Church”*

## Communion Sunday #4 - The Deacon

**Acolyte:** Young boys are encouraged to learn about and serve on the altar by becoming an acolyte. No ordination is required.

**Sub-Deacon:** Individuals who wish to become a deacon serve as a sub-deacon first.

**Deacon:** *There are 2 ways to prepare:*

Seminary training - Individuals may spend 2-3 years studying to become a deacon in a seminary. At the completion of training, the Bishop will perform the ordination.

Non-seminary training - Individuals spend a much longer period of time studying with their parish priest. Once prepared, the Bishop is called to perform the ordination.

**DEACON** - The rank of Deacon is one of the major orders in the Catholic, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, and Oriental Orthodox churches. (The other major orders are those of bishop, priest, and sub-deacon.)

The rank of Deacon has been maintained from the earliest Apostolic times to the present in the Orthodox and Catholic churches. Being a Deacon is a temporary, final step along the course toward ordination to priesthood.

In the Eastern Church, deacons have a profound liturgical presence in the Divine Liturgy. In the Western church the liturgical role of the deacon is limited to serving the bishop, the proclamation of the Gospel, and assisting the celebrant at the altar.

**STOLE** - The stole, ‘oorar’ in Armenian, is the distinguishing vestment worn by the deacon and subdeacon. Most likely, the origin for the stole is to be connected with the scarf of office among officials in the Roman Empire. The original intent was to designate a person as belonging to a particular organization (in our case the Church) and to denote their rank. Today, we use different shapes, sizes and designs of the stole to denote the different ranks of our clergy. In Christianity, the stole denotes the duty to **spread the Word of God**.



Furthermore, the ‘oorar’ is considered a liturgical napkin and is linked to the napkin used by Christ in washing the feet of His disciples. It is a fitting symbol of the yoke (collar) of Christ; the yoke of service.

**CENSER** - A censer, ‘poorvahr’ in Armenian, is a small metal dish used for burning incense. A common design is a metal container, about the size and shape of a small coffeepot, suspended on chains and often with the addition of small bells. The bowl contains hot coals, and the incense is placed on top of these.

Censing is the practice of swinging a censer suspended from chains towards something or someone, typically an icon or person, so that smoke from the burning incense travels in that direction. If a deacon is present, he typically does much of the censing; otherwise the priest undertakes the duty. Unordained servers or acolytes are permitted to prepare and carry the censer, but may not swing it during prayers.

To the Orthodox, burning incense represents the prayers of the faithful rising towards Heaven as a sweet smelling spiritual fragrance.

The censer used in the liturgical services of the Church contains a bowl/receptacle, which represents the Church. Some commentators suggest that this represents the Holy Mother of God – Mary, because like she contained within her womb the Divine Fire, so too, the censer contains the burning coal of faith.

This dish is supported by four chains each of which carries three bells. The twelve bells represent the voices of the disciples proclaiming the Gospel based on the teachings of the four Evangelists here represented by the chains. The three outer chains attached to the bowl are for the Holy Trinity, and the fourth inner chain attached to the lid is for the Oneness of God.

In addition, the censer used is often gold plated, combining in itself at the offering of incense the three gifts of the Biblical Magi: gold, frankincense, and myrrh

