



COMMUNION SUNDAYS

“What we SEE Inside the Armenian Church”

Communion Sunday #5 - Ordination & the Choir

Ordination of the Holy Orders is one of the sacraments of the Armenian Church. Through Ordination, men receive the power and grace to perform the sacred duties of a clergyman of the Church. Ordination is a sacrament by which the Holy Spirit offers the elected person the right to perform the sacraments and to feed Christ's flock.

The sacrament of Ordination is always administered by a Bishop. There are various ranks of clergy within the Church, each with a special service by which each one of these ranks is granted. What is common to all the ranks is the act of “laying of the hands” (*tzernatrouitun*) by the Bishop onto the ordinate. By placing his anointed right hand on the ordinate, this continues the unbroken Apostolic succession of authority, granted by the Apostles to the first Bishops of the Church, and carried on today through Ordination. Before entering the major ranks of ecclesiastical order of the Armenian Church, a person must have been ordained to the four minor ranks.

Minor Orders: One who receives these four minor ranks is known as a “*tbir*” (or clerk/acolyte). Through the minor orders, the “*tbir*” is given special privileges, which are the foundation of his service to the church as a participant during the worship services. There are four distinct functions of a “*tbir*.”

1. Doorkeeper (*trnaban*)
2. Reader (*untertsogh*)
3. Exorcist (*yertm'netsootsich*)
4. Candle bearer (*momagal*)

In receiving these ranks, one becomes an Acolyte. The requirements for ordination to the sub-Diaconate are extensive. The sub-Diaconate is a transitional rank between *tbir* and full Deacon in which a young man is preparing himself for fuller service to the church.

Choir

Serving in the church comes in various capacities. Some are involved on the administrative level such as Parish Council. Yet, many people also choose to participate liturgically, meaning they desire to be part of the choir or altar-servers guild.

The Church Choir is usually comprised of several members of the community who lead the singing of worship service and Divine Liturgy. Though the priest is the one who leads the service and bestows the blessings, the choir represents the *voice of the people*. So when we sing, “Christ amongst us is revealed” *Krisdos i mej mer Haytnetsav* – it is the people singing in joyous celebration that Christ is revealed among us, for this reason we share the kiss of peace.

The Armenian Church historically has not used organs or other instruments to accompany its hymns. However, most of our churches in North America now have an organ player in order to make the beautiful hymns sound more full.