

Communion Sunday

Overview of HOLY BADARAK OR DIVINE LITURGY

TEACHER PREPARATION: Bring this lesson “to life” by using props while you are presenting, such as:

- Cup of wine (or grape juice)
- Bread (any kind will do) or a Nushkhar
- Chalice
- Divine Liturgy book from inside of your church
- “Sharagan” music



What is the Holy Badarak or Divine Liturgy?

- A Sacrament established by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The word “Badarak” means “sacrifice” and refers to Jesus’s ultimate sacrifice on the cross for the salvation of humanity.
- Celebrated in remembrance of the Last Supper, when Christ took an unleavened bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, **“Take and eat; this is my body”**. After which He took a cup of pure wine, and when he had given thanks, He gave it to his disciples, saying, **“Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”**. Christ concluded the Supper by saying, **“do this in remembrance of me”** (Luke 22:19). The apostles of Jesus kept the word of their Lord and continued to celebrate the Holy Sacrament of the Last Supper since then.
- The early Apostolic Church started to gather specifically for celebrating the Badarak by breaking the bread, learning apostles' doctrine and praying together (Acts 2:42).

Why is the “Breaking of the Bread” significant?

- Our Lord and Savior wanted his disciples to take the celebration of the Breaking of the Bread very seriously and showed to all of us the importance of this Sacred Practice on the road to Emmaus. According to the Bible, after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to two of his disciples and started to converse with them on the road to Emmaus, but they were not able to recognize their Teacher even at the time when Jesus was instructing them about Himself.
- The two disciples were able to identify their Master only after Jesus **“Took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them”**. Bible says that at the time of the breaking of the Bread, **“Their eyes were opened and they recognized him”** (Luke 24:30).
- Apostle Paul warns Christians to approach the **“Table of God”** for Holy Communion with veneration, as the bread of celebration is the Body and the wine is the Blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:14-34).

Why do We Sing Hymns?

- The earliest celebrations of Holy Badarak were accompanied by spiritual hymns, a tradition that started by Jesus Christ Himself.
- As the Bible testifies, at the time of the Last Supper Jesus along with his disciples **“Had sung a hymn, and went out to the Mount of Olives”** (Matthew 26:30).
- It was the disciples and the evangelists of Christ who introduced to fellow believers the earliest versions of Divine Liturgies, namely, St. James the brother of Jesus in Jerusalem and St. Mark the Evangelist in Egypt. Throughout the centuries the prayers and hymns of Divine Liturgies were further developed by prominent saints of the Early Church.

How is the the Armenian Church Badarak Different?

- Some orthodox churches decided to use the Divine Liturgies of these prominent Church fathers, however Armenian Apostolic Church chose a different path. We decided to make a best possible selection from the Divine Liturgies of the time by choosing certain parts from them.
- In addition to that, Armenian saints improved the texts of Holy Badarak by adding marvelous prayers and hymns, thus developing a truly magnificent masterpiece, called Armenian Divine Liturgy, or simply - Holy Badarak.
- The whole process of the evolvement of Armenian Holy Badarak took almost 1200 years. It is by far the most cherished sacred shrine that our nation has ever come up with.

Our Holy Badarak consists of four major parts, namely: 1. Preparation 2. Synopsis 3. Eucharist 4. Last Blessing. In the lessons that will follow we will start studying each of them.