

enlightens mankind, so that they may be holy through the water and may have life through the Spirit, and He makes them dwellers of heaven. And now, O Lord our God, bless this water and make it for the cleansing of your servants. Cast away through this every harm and evil spot, every disease and all the tyranny of Satan, that we may be received, healed, blessed and sanctified by you, and may we always glorify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



Great Lent

During the period of Great Lent, the Armenian Church conducts services which reflect this penitential season. The Peace Service (*Khaghaghagan Jamerkootiun*), the Rest Service (*Hanksdyan Jamerkootiun*) and the Sunrise Service (*Arevakal Jamerkootiun*) are performed more often during Lent than at other times of the year. They are part of the Church's cycle of seven daily hours of worship, but are used especially during Great Lent because of their penitential nature. They remind us of the effort we are making to restore our pure and joyous relationship with God.

The Peace Service

Performed in the late evening of the daily cycle, this service contains prayers for peace, praises to God and gives thanks for passing the day without tribulation. It reminds us that God is with us even in the face of trial and temptation.

The Rest Service

Practiced before retiring for the night, this service asks God to watch over us throughout the night. It contains the beautiful and eloquent prayer of St. Nersess the Grace-filled (*Shnorhali*) with its many penitential verses—each ending with “Have mercy upon all Your creatures, and upon me, a manifold sinner.”

The Sunrise Service

Performed at daybreak, this worship reminds us that God is the giver of the light of the morning and the Light of Salvation. Its beautiful hymns have a bright and refreshing quality.

Altar Curtain

During the period of Great Lent, the altar curtain is closed, symbolic of the expulsion of Adam and Even from paradise. The sanctuary (the area behind the curtain) is symbolic of the Kingdom of Heaven; the main altar being the Throne of God. The faithful (in the manner of Adam and Eve) are “expelled” from paradise (the Kingdom of Heaven) and experience a 40-day period of penitence, which is emphasized by the closing of the altar curtain. During the forty days of Lent the faithful participate in a voluntary restraint from receiving communion, and fast and pray as a preparation to again receive communion on Easter Sunday. The service for the opening of the altar curtain (*Trmpatsek*) is performed on Palm Sunday, commemorating Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and His reconciling us to God.

– Rev. Fr. Haroutiun Dagley
St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church
Cleveland, Ohio

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