

SIX REASONS FOR GOING TO BADARAK

1—*Because we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.* Jesus told us to continue celebrating the Last Supper. That meal already contained his total, willing gift of himself. We believe that the badarak, the Eucharist, is the re-presentation of the death and resurrection of God the Son, so that we can enter into it and be alive with his life. This is the most basic reason for going to badarak.

No matter how dull the *badarak* seems to be on the “outside”, or how poorly the choir may sing, it is *the way* that our Lord directed us to do at the Last Supper: “Do this in remembrance of me.” In the sharing of the bread and wine, we recall Jesus’ actions each time the priest repeats “*Arek, gerek, ays eh marmin eem... Arpek ee sumaneh amenekyan, Ays eh aryoon eem noro ookhdee...*”

2—*Because we are members of Jesus’ living community.*

We belong to a community, to the Armenian branch of his body. We are part of that specific family. The *badarak* is not like a movie, where hundreds of people can enjoy themselves and never look at each other. It’s not like a cafeteria where we can pick what we like and reject what we don’t like. It is like what the Last Supper was, a gathering of friends and family who care for each other, who share each others’ joys and sorrows like any family.

We are also part of the wider community of God, the whole world, and as members of it, our altar table must be open to all who are “poor, and maimed and blind and lame.” (Lk. 14-23). We must evidence our concern for the wider family of God and let the *badarak* become our motivation for fulfilling the command of our Lord to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, visit the sick and imprisoned (see Mt. 25:31-46).

3—*Because we need to renew and reaffirm our relationship to God.*

We believe that God not only created everything, (even if he took 20 billion years to do so), but that he keeps everything in existence. God not only does this, he does it with love. God—the mystery of mysteries (*Khorhoort khorin, anhas, anusgizpun*)—created us because he wanted children he could love and who could love him in return. “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God” says St. John (I John 4:16). We need to go to *badarak* to reaffirm that relationship on a regular basis.

4—*Because it is worth the cost.*

Going to *badarak* is part of our identity as an Armenian Christian, and as that, means that we can put up with the 45-minute trip, or getting up early to be on time after getting to bed at 3:00 am, or listening

to Der Hayr’s interminable sermon, or the “simply awful choir,” or money talk, or divisions in the community. (St. Paul knew all about these; see I Cor 3:3 and 11:17). All these are part of life, and part of our life as a parish family as well. Every family has its squabbles, silent treatment, selfishness, spilt milk, fights over silly things, and we put up with it because we are part of the family. Similarly, our membership in the church family and participation in *badarak* are worth the hassles because *we are members*.

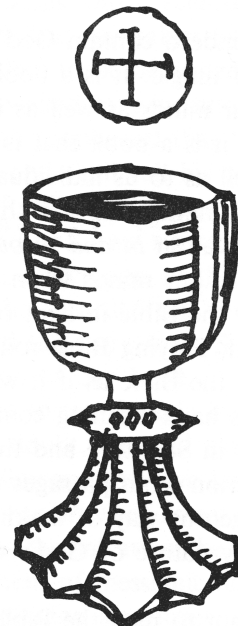
5. *Because we were born to praise God.*

We are a church that praises God. The badarak hymns are replete with references to the wonder and glory of God. His glory is beyond our wildest imagination. His “power is unsearchable and glory inscrutable and mercy immeasurable and compassion inexhaustible.” How can we do anything other than sing his praises and glory? *Soorp, soorp soorp, der zorootyantz . . . orhnootyoon ee partzoons!*

The *badarak* is the best opportunity we have to praise his name. We are not a community that feels comfortable with spontaneous “Praise the Lord”s or with “alleluia”s that emanate from the congregation impulsively. Our worship is very formal, and yet it contains the same praises and glories sung to God. We leave the *badarak* singing “*Orhnetzitz uzDer hamenayn jham... I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall always be in my mouth*”.

6—*Because we need roots and a future.*

We belong to the family that has prided itself on being the first Christian nation. The blood of the countless martyrs who have given themselves up for Christ runs in our veins as well., We are the present and the future of that same family. We are not rootless wanderers. We belong to the the past and to the future that is centered around the cross of Jesus Christ.



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