

Main Document

This document is not complete and is only a rough draft. There may be grammatical & theological errors. I have also forgotten to include a lot of citations.

The Meaning Behind Church Objects/Vessels

- The Holy Altar (Խորան): The word «Խորան» is a synonym of «Վրան» or Tabernacle/Tent in English. Very Rev. Fr. Barouyr Shernezian explains that the Holy Altar symbolizes heaven, where prayers & requests of the faithful are given along with the sacrifice (= «Պատարագ»).
- The Holy Table (Սուրբ Սեղան): A traditional Holy Table is comprised of 3 steps symbolizing the 3 levels of Heaven (as mentioned in 2 Corinth. 12:1-3), some have 7 steps, similarly symbolizing the 7 levels of Heaven. The Holy Table in its entirety is a throne for God, who is present in the church at all times (even when a service is not active).
 - Holy Stone (Վիճակ): The Holy Stone is the most important part of the Holy Table; without it, you cannot conduct a Divine Liturgy. Every church has a Holy Stone placed, consecrated, and blessed on the 7th level of the Holy Table (usually when the church is consecrated). Most people do not see the Holy Stone because it may be covered up with a cloth, but also because the Eucharistic Gifts are placed on top of the stone during the Divine Liturgy. Since an altar is truly an altar simply because of the Holy Stone, the idea of movable/transportable altars is possible, and whatever table this stone is placed on effectively becomes an altar table. This tradition of movable altars dates back to the 12th century.
 - Why a Stone? A stone is used for multiple different reasons: (1) The stone represents unbroken apostolic succession (a Bishop who stands within the apostolic succession of Sts. Thadeus and Bartholomew blesses the stone, and that blessing stays). (2) The altar requiring the Holy Stone reflects upon Jesus' parable of building on a solid foundation. The Divine Liturgy should only be done on a solid Church foundation. (3) Jesus is the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20), so requiring the Holy Stone and conducting the Divine Liturgy directly on top of it affirms that Jesus Christ is the true foundation of the Divine Liturgy and Church. (4) This is a practice from Early Christianity (doing the Divine Liturgy on relics of saints, holy locations, and on blessed stones) that has been preserved.
 - Chalice (Սկիհ): The chalice is the cup in which the Eucharistic gifts are placed when delivering Holy Communion. The chalice is paired with a dish («մաղճմալ»), which is where the unleavened bread is placed throughout the Divine Liturgy until it is mixed with the wine placed in the chalice. A chalice is used because Christ also used a chalice or cup in the

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

sequence of the Last Supper (Matthew 14:27-28, Mark 14:23-24, Luke 22:17). Some chalices also contain iconography of the major events related to Christ, which are rotated to face the people on those specific feast days. The chalice is also covered with a cloth, which symbolizes the womb of St. Mary the Mother of Christ, which is what God used to take human form (Faith Hope Love Mission).

- **Decorative Plates (Ճմբակներ):** The decorative plates can be described as metal plate icons. They are metal oval plates that have rays of light radiating out of them. They have inscribed an icon on them and are placed on the Holy Table to remind us of that which is shown on the plate.
- **Altar Candles (Մոմ):** A traditional Holy Table has 3 sets of candles, 1 pair per level. Side Altars have 1 set, and sometimes there is a big set on the edge of the stage. During the Divine Liturgy, there is also a set of candleholders. All in all, there is a total of 7 sets of altar candles.
- **Cross (Խաչ):** Every Holy Table that I have seen has a big cross placed at the top level. The Holy Cross is one of the cornerstones for Christian theology, which is why it is placed high up on the Holy Table. Since the Holy Cross represents Christ, the cross may be placed on the 1st level of the Holy Table because Jesus Christ's throne, which He sits on next to God the Father, is in the 1st heaven.
- **The Gospel (Աւետարան):** The Gospel book is placed in the middle of the Holy Table on the 3rd level, which symbolizes the core of the Christian church. The Gospel's «Աւետիս» (“Good news”) is the heart of the Church, and accepting it is the main requirement to be baptized and become a part of the Church. Without the Gospel, there would be no Church (mostly because there is no unified fundamental belief without it). The Gospel is the “Word of God”, and so is Jesus Christ. In one way the Gospel also symbolizes/represents Christ, who allowed us to speak with the Heavenly Father and to hear His direct words, giving us a better connection to Him.
 - The «Աւետարան» is composed of the 4 New Testament gospels. There are 9 types of gospel books in the Armenian Church.
 - H.H. Karekin II Sarkissian explains the importance and true meaning of the Bible in the Armenian church, saying:

All these acts, of course, have a symbolic meaning; they eloquently and suggestively signify the spiritual reverence of the Armenian people toward the Holy Bible, and the power of God's Word is thus recognized in a liturgical act. The term ‘The Breath of God’ used by the Armenians for the Book of the Bible is, as I indicated above, not just a name; it expresses an inner attitude that is

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

made manifest here, in the liturgical experience, the very heart of the people's spiritual life.

The Bible is not a precious book in the sense that it contains truths conceived and formulated by highly talented people of great genius. It is the Holy Book because the Holy God has revealed Himself in words and deeds recorded in the Bible by men in communion with Him and through His divine guidance and inspiration. His power is there in the Book. Through the use of the Bible in the worship of the Church, we are not merely instructed intellectually in the Christian truth, but are touched by the power of God

— The Breath of God.

(In Search of Spiritual Life, pg. 178)

- Icon (Սրբանկար): It is common practice to have an icon placed directly above the Holy Table. The icon must always be a picture of the Virgin Mary (Սուրբ Աստուածածին) and baby Jesus.
 - According to Fr. Garabed Kochakian, the Virgin Mary is a symbol of the Christian Church; just as she gave birth to Christ (Baby Jesus in the icon), the Church gives birth to Christians through the sacraments. The Theotokos is seen as a door, which God used to pass from Heaven to Earth. She may also be seen sitting on a throne and/or with a crown, this symbolizes her importance in Sainthood, with her being the most holy and Queen of the Saints, who found great favor in the eyes of God by bearing Christ ([The Place of the Icon of the Blessed Mother of God in the Armenian Church](#)).
 - Icons, in general, are very important in Orthodoxy, especially in the Armenian church. In short, icons usually depict Saints, who are much closer to God and have much stronger faith than us, which is why we ask for their intercession. Icons remind us to be like the Saints, who are our role models. Icons may also depict Jesus Christ, which reminds us of Christ's incarnation. Icons are also “windows to heaven”, which help us focus on divine aspects of life. More information on the significance of Icons can be found online.
- Unleavened Bread/Communion Wafer (Դժխաբ): Unleavened bread is one of two key components of the Eucharist. Unlike some churches, the Armenian church uses unleavened bread (made of only flour and water), which holds much Biblical importance and is a key factor in Jewish

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

tradition (Blanchard). Leavening in bread symbolizes corruption, therefore, the unleavened bread symbolizes purity and holiness. This is exactly why the unleavened bread symbolizes the body of Christ (also because Christ said it did in the scriptural accounts of the Last Supper).

- The letter «Է» above the Altar Table:
 - God's Eternal Being: The letter Է emphasizes the eternal existence of God, echoing the biblical declaration "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). It serves as a reminder of God's presence and unchanging nature.
 - Divine Presence: Positioned above the altar, the Է signifies that God is ever present in the sacred space of the church (as well as in our lives), particularly during the Divine Liturgy.
 - Centrality of Christ: In Armenian Christianity, Christ is seen as the ultimate manifestation of being and truth. The Է also reflects the central role of Christ in worship and salvation.
 - Connection to Creation: The letter Է is sometimes interpreted as a symbol of the divine act of creation, where God brought everything into being.
 - The Number 7: The number Է is the 7th letter of the Armenian alphabet. Throughout the Bible, we see the number 7 as a number of perfection or divine completion.
- Side Altars (Աջակողմեան & Ձախակողմեան Խորաններ):
 - Right & Left Sides of the Altar: These sides are found when viewing from the altar, facing the congregation. In Christianity, the right side is seen as the side of favor. To be present on the right side of royalty (in this case, God, as He sits on His throne: the Holy Table) is a huge honor. Furthermore, the right side of the altar symbolizes Heaven. The left side is seen as inferior to the right side, therefore, the left side of the altar symbolizes Earth. In some cases, the left side is described as the place where the unfaithful, unrighteous, ungodly, etc. things are found. This does not apply to the congregation or the icons placed on the sides of the altar, but rather to the altar and tas (possibly why the chair of the Catholicos/Prelate is placed on the right side). **Example: Matthew 25:31-46.**
- Curtain (Վարագոյր): Curtains were added to Armenian churches in the 4th century through the suggestion of Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem to Catholicos Vertanes (St. Gregory the Illuminator's son). This tradition adds mystery for the congregation, as they cannot see what the clergy does on the altar. The main symbolism behind the use of the curtain is to imitate the spiritual mystery of the sacrament of holy communion. This tradition is also linked to the tradition of Old

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

Testament Judaism, where in the Temple, a curtain separated/blocked off the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was held.

- The opening of the curtain in the church is a symbol of rolling the stone of Christ's tomb. It also symbolizes reconciliation between God and man through Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 7, 1:58). In general, the curtain is closed 3 times throughout the Divine Liturgy for preparation and personal prayers, which the Celebrant Priest needs to conduct (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 7, 2:28).
- Notch (Խորհրդանշ): The main notch is placed on the altar's right wall. This is where the eucharistic gifts are placed before the procession & liturgy of the baptized take place. The notch has both practical and symbolic meaning. For practicality, the notch keeps the chalice safe and hidden, preventing it from being knocked over accidentally or touched any time outside of the Divine Liturgy. Symbolically, the notch is covered with a curtain when the Divine Liturgy is not being performed, and when the Divine Liturgy is performed the notch curtain is opened, symbolizing the divide between us and God when there is no Divine Liturgy (since our closest encounter with God & His presence is during the Divine Liturgy). The notch being placed on the right side of the altar also symbolizes the Eucharistic gifts being Heavenly (see description & explanation of the Altar)
- Stage (Բեմ): Just like a judge or a king sits on his elevated chair/throne, the stage is elevated in the same way because Christ is sitting there.
- Platform (Պատուակահար): The platform is the place on the Altar where the Celebrant stands during the Divine Liturgy. It is slightly elevated above the rest of the Altar. This platform symbolizes the importance and spiritual authority of the Celebrant as the mediator of God to the congregation, and the congregation to God.
- Fans (Քոնգ): A silver disk with a figure of a 6-winged seraphim angel on both sides. The fans were used practically to keep flies/insects away from the chalice so that the Eucharistic gifts would not be diminished in holiness. In the modern day, where this issue is almost nonexistent, the fans are used as a musical instrument alongside the hymns of the liturgy, which symbolize the presence/singing of the angels during the Divine Liturgy.
- [Lanterns](#) (Կանթեղ): The light of the lantern symbolizes the Holy Trinity, and the oil symbolizes our faith, which must be continually renewed for the light to stay lit in our lives. The middle lantern directly above the Holy Table by canon must always be lit, reminding us of the Holy Trinity, especially during the early morning or night when we enter a church. The lanterns above the Holy Altar help us focus when in darkness. The lanterns also symbolize the importance of Christ's

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

light in the world and our lives, but also a reminder to reflect Christ's light in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

- Candles (Կեանք): These candles were used for practical reasons, to give light where it was needed. In the days before electricity, the church's candles were the main source of light, so these candles were required for the Gospel to be read and when the Celebrant faced the people so that the congregation could see the chalice full of communion. Now, since we have electricity, these candles are mainly used as a tradition, but also because candles hold great symbolism in our church. Candles, in general, symbolize the light of Christ. They also remind us to be like them since Christ reminded us to be the light of this world and to sacrifice ourselves for others, just as the candles do.
- [Priest Vestments](#) (Քահանայական Ջգեւորներ): Priestly vestments are [found in the Old Testament Pentateuch](#) as a commandment from God. The priest vestments signify holiness dedicated to the Lord as well as the Lord's purity, holiness, and glory. These vestments are needed for the priest to celebrate the Divine Liturgy because, without it, he will be unworthy to stand in the direct presence of God. The vestments are also seen in Ephesians 6:10-20 & Isaiah 59:17.
 - When certain vestment colors are used (Note that colors are usually used on any Sunday):
 - White: Day of resurrection, all dominical feast days
 - Symbolizes Christ's Resurrection and Light
 - Red: Saint, Martyr, & Holy Cross days
 - Symbolizes Martyrdom and the Holy Spirit
 - Green: Fasting & Memorial Days
 - Symbolizes Life and Growth
 - Blue: Feast days dedicated to the Holy Mother of God
 - Symbolizes the Holy Mother of God
 - Purple: Any Sunday
 - Symbolizes Repentance
 - Yellow/Gold: Any Sunday
 - Symbolizes Glory and Joy
 - What each vestment symbolizes:
 - Helmet/Crown (Սաղաւարտ): Symbolizes the Mitre (Խոյր) of Aaron from the Old Testament. Spiritually, the Crown symbolizes the Armor Headgear, just like a soldier protecting the celebrant against evil forces. The crown itself is shaped/looks like a royal crown (symbolizing royal authority), but also the Church's cupola (symbolizing priestly authority). The Celebrant goes from being a Priest to symbolizing Christ (King and High Priest) (Faith Hope Love Mission).

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- Robe/Shirt (Շապիկ): Represents purity and the cleansed soul of Christ which the Celebrant puts on, symbolizing the new life and purity granted by Christ through baptism (Faith Hope Love Mission).
- Stole (Փոքուբար): Symbolizes the priest's authority and responsibility to lead God's flock; it represents the yoke of Christ, indicating the priest's dedication and service to God.
- Belt (Գոմի): Signifies readiness, vigilance, and strength. Spiritually, it symbolizes self-control, discipline, and preparedness for spiritual combat.
- Armlet (Բազպան): Symbolizes the chains which were put on Christ leading him unto His death (Faith Hope Love Mission).
- Ephod (Վակառ և արտախուրակ): The Ephod symbolizes the Celebrant's responsibility of going after the "lost sheep", putting it on his shoulders, and bringing them back to the Church (Faith Hope Love Mission). It is also reminiscent of the vestments worn by Old Testament priests, reflecting honor, sanctification, and devotion.
- Chasuble (Շուրջան): Reflects upon the mocking of Christ before His death, when the Roman soldiers placed a red robe around Christ and gave him a staff saying "Hail, king of the Jews!". The robe symbolizes the entire world's sin which Christ took upon his shoulders (Faith Hope Love Mission). Symbolizes divine love and charity, signifying the mantle of righteousness and the all-encompassing nature of Christ's sacrificial love.
- Slippers (Հոդաբալի): The slippers have a drawing of a scorpion and a snake on the heels, which symbolizes the authority of the Celebrant to crush the powers of Satan and the evil spirits; this also means taking the sins of the faithful and crushing them in the name of Christ (Faith Hope Love Mission). Reflects on the Burning Bush event, where God told Moses to take off his slippers because he was standing on Holy ground (this supports as to why celebrants would celebrate the Divine Liturgy barefoot back in the day).
- Crosses (From Hayconography):
 - Pectoral Cross: A metal cross worn by priests as a symbol of their service and sacrifice for their communities. This cross is without jewels, but can still be intricate representing the beauty of Christ's sacrificial love.
 - Doctoral Cross (Vartabedagan): A cross worn by Vartabeds (teachers/doctors). Thai cross is bejeweled with precious and semi-precious stones. These crosses with a stone hanging on the bottom are worn by higher ranking Vartabeds. The hanging stone is called a "Tear drop" and it represents the tears of the Mother of God during her Son's crucifixion.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- Panagia (Banage): Is Greek for “All-Holy” which is a term referring to St. Mary, who is the subject of this piece. The Banage is worn by Bishops as a sign of their nurturing love to their prelacies/dioceses.
 - Double Headed Eagle: Symbolizes authority over the east and the west. This is worn by the Catholicos, the supreme patriarch of the Armenian Church. It represents his responsibility as the universal head bishop of Christ’s Church of Armenia.
- [Censer](#) (Բնրվան):
 - The tradition of censuring comes from the Old Testament: Exodus 30:1, 7-8, as well as the New Testament: Revelation 8:3-4.
 - The Symbolic Meaning of the Censer:
 - The 3 chains symbolize the Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit
 - The metal piece & the middle chain, which holds the 3 chains together, symbolize 1 single Godhead.
 - There are 12 bells, which represent the 12 apostles, that sing/preach when the censer is swung.
 - The small bowl in the censer represents the womb of St. Mary the God-bearer.
 - The coal in the censer represents the human nature of Jesus Christ (which is placed in the small bowl).
 - The fire that ignites the coal represents the divinity of Jesus Christ, as well as our warm love for God.
 - The incense/smoke that comes out of the censer symbolizes the prayers of the faithful rising up to God (Revelation 8:3-4 & Psalm 141:2). It also represents the presence of God (a sense of seriousness or spiritual focus when you enter a church that smells of incense). The incense also symbolizes the Holy Spirit.
 - The base of the censer symbolizes mankind.
- [Chandeliers](#) (Ճմի): Some say the circular shape of the chandeliers symbolizes heaven, and the candles (lights) symbolize the souls of the righteous and angels, enlightening us on Earth. The Chandeliers also symbolize the angels who sing and rejoice during the church services. The chandeliers also remind us of the stars in the sky, further reinforcing God’s promise to Abraham & Isaac in Genesis 26:4. The main/biggest chandelier in the church is placed directly in the middle of the church.
- Cross of Procession (Խաչվան): In church processions, the first element is the processional cross. The processional cross is composed of a cross and a cloth (usually with a symbolic icon of Jesus Christ), which is raised up high and leads the procession. The processional cross “serves as a visual representation of Christ’s victory over sin and death through His crucifixion and resurrection. It typically features the figure of Christ crucified, reminding

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

worshippers of the central mystery of the Christian faith.” (Orthodoxy 101, Processional Cross).

- It is possible that the processional cross also has a practical element to it. It may be true that the processional cross leads the procession so that it drives away evil spirits from the “path”, just as Moses split the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to pass through, escaping death.
- Icon of Procession (Խաչապահ): “Ecclesiastical banners hold a significant place in Orthodox Christian liturgical practices, serving as visual aids that convey spiritual symbolism and reinforce theological truths during worship services and processions... In Orthodox tradition, ecclesiastical banners symbolize the triumph of faith, the presence of divine grace, and the communion of saints. They may depict images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, angels, saints, or scenes from biblical narratives, serving to inspire devotion, reverence, and contemplation among worshippers. Additionally, ecclesiastical banners often bear inscriptions or quotations from scripture, hymns, or prayers, reinforcing Orthodox teachings and doctrines.” (Orthodoxy 101, Ecclesiastical Banners).
- Baptismal Font (Մկրտավան): The baptismal font is one of the most crucial parts of our church. This is the place where people are admitted into Christianity and into the unity of the Armenian Church. Traditionally, the font is placed somewhere in the church where it can always be seen, reminding us of our duty to serve God, our statement of faith, and our dedication to the church. The font itself is oval-shaped, symbolizing a womb in which the person being baptized is spiritually born into the church and unionizing with God and His kingdom.
- [The Church Door](#) (Դուռ): The door in the Armenian Church is placed on the west side of the church, which is a symbolic divider between the world (West) and God (which will come from the East). The church door is also a reminder that Christ makes us worthy to enter his presence. The church door also represents Christ. Jesus said: “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9).
- [The Gospel Book](#) (Աւետարան): The gospels are the word of God, and so is Jesus Christ; therefore, the gospel book also symbolizes and reminds us of Christ. We can receive a blessing by touching/kissing the gospel book.

The Symbolism of the Armenian Badarak

[Parts of the Badarak](#) (Based on the liturgy of St. Basil of Caesarea):

1. Preparation + Entrance to Worship
2. Liturgy of the Word (Synaxis or Badarak of the Unbaptized)
3. Sacrifice/Badarak (or Liturgy of the Baptized)

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

4. Thanksgiving/Sanctification
5. Requiem (Optional)

Communion Custom (Guidelines for taking Holy Communion):

1. You must be a baptized Christian (Baptized in one of the Oriental Orthodox Churches) and believe that Holy Communion is the living and life-giving Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, containing the Real Presence (it is the Real Body and Blood of Christ).
2. (If you are able) You must have fasted (No food or water) on the morning before the Divine Liturgy.
 - a. The real purpose behind this custom is spiritual. If you simply abstain from eating, you gain little spiritually, if anything at all. The real purpose of this is to abstain from your bodily desires, to “keep” Christianity (acting in accordance to the Scriptures and in likeness to Christ), and to keep goodness (reconciliation with other humans and the baptismal trinity of: faith, hope, and love) even if it sometimes means eating before the Divine Liturgy. **Isaiah 58 explains fasting which is pleasing to God.**
3. You must confess your sins and repent (Which we do directly before taking communion).
 - a. Confession is not simply the act of telling everyone or the Priest your past sins, it is actually a promise that going forward, you will proactively change your ways, thoughts, and behavior to have a better relationship with God.
4. You should have participated in the Divine Liturgy from the beginning (and not have shown up 10 minutes prior to communion).
5. You must receive Holy Communion in the utmost & perfect respect and seriousness. Some suggestions to help follow this idea are:
 - a. Men must not cover their heads during the Divine Liturgy & not wear any revealing clothing (short pants).
 - b. Women must cover their heads during the entire Divine Liturgy & not wear any revealing clothing. Women should not wear any lipstick as well (because it gets all over the fingers of the Celebrant when you receive Holy Communion).
 - c. When in the aisle, waiting in line to receive Holy Communion, we **must not partake in worldly talk with anyone** (as it distracts us from the main focus, the Holy Eucharist). Furthermore, **it is strongly encouraged to build a Christian camaraderie with others**. We must always remember that we are unworthy to receive the body and blood of Christ, therefore, we must be in constant repentance until receiving Holy Communion. A Greek Orthodox Father’s input on a similar topic can be found [here](#).
 - d. Make the sign of the cross directly before and after receiving Holy Communion. Say «Մեղայ Աստուծոյ» (“I have sinned against God”) before taking Holy Communion, and say «Ամեն» (“Amen”) immediately after, along with a kiss to the Gospel-book, which is placed in the chancel.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- e. It is a popular belief amongst the people not to chew the Holy Communion, but only to swallow it out of reverence, but this is not a strict guideline. Chewing is allowed, especially if a large piece of the body is given. It is most important of the faith that the person has while taking the Holy Communion (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 7, 8:28).

These communion “guidelines” are secondary in retrospect (with exception to the 1st guideline). Yes, they are guidelines which our wise Church Fathers have instituted, but they are secondary to the true purpose of Holy Communion. The Armenian Church is very merciful in allowing people to come up and take communion because the true purpose and meaning of the Divine Sacrament is to invite the sick, lost, hungry, hurt, etc., to the altar table to commune with us and join us as one body in Christ. What is the purpose of following all of these guidelines if you hold a grudge against a family member, for example? If we reconcile with someone with whom we had a problem over breakfast before Badarak, does that mean that we have done something wrong and should not participate in Holy Communion? Any church guideline should be followed, but if someone does not follow them, intentionally or unintentionally, it is not our job to chastise them and drive them away from the church; we must do our best to invite and bring people to church, even if they do not follow all of the church guidelines.

The Symbolism of the [Badarak \(Narration\)\(Commentary\):](#)

- The Badarak in its entirety is a remembrance of the life and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ (Birth → Ministry → Crucifixion → Resurrection). The Badarak’s climax is the point where it reenacts the Lord's Supper.
- There are some important things needed in order to start a Divine Liturgy:
 - Servers: Celebrant, Deacon, & a Congregation
 - Objects: Holy Stone (Վհմբար), Gospel book, Unleavened Bread (Եօխմար), Unmixed Wine
- “Liturgy” = “The work of the people” (Mrs. Nayiri Baljian-Bell, 2023)
- «Պատարագ» (“Badarak”) = “Dedication”, “Gift”, “Sacrifice”

1. [Vesting:](#)

Before the Badarak begins, the celebrant begins vesting.

- a. “Vesting is performed privately, symbolizing the mystery by which a man assumes a sacred function” (EasternDiocese). The Celebrant says specific prayers before each vestment is blessed and worn. The Celebrant asks Christ to clothe him with the same heavenly garment He was clothed with when He walked the Earth. The vestments symbolize spiritual armor, which is needed to battle against the armies of Evil as mentioned in Ephesians 6:10-18.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- b. The Celebrant takes off his clothes and puts on the sacred and blessed vestments. This symbolizes the Celebrant “taking off” his old self and now “putting on” Christ (symbolized by the sacred vestments) (Faith Hope Love Mission).
 - c. Order of Vestments:
 - i. Helmet/Crown (Սաղաւարտ)
 - ii. Robe/Shirt (Շաւիկ)
 - iii. Stole (Փորուրար)
 - iv. Belt (Գօտի)
 - v. Armlet (Բազպան)
 - vi. Ephod (Վական (և արտախուրակ))
 - vii. Chasuble (Շուրջան)
 - viii. Slippers (Հոդաթափ)
2. [Entrance](#):
 First, the Badarak begins with the [entrance of the Celebrant](#) in awesome vestments:
 - a. The Celebrant is clothed in such awesome vestments because he is representing Jesus Christ (a King).
 - b. The walking out of the Celebrant symbolizes Jesus Christ’s nativity and epiphany.
 - c. The Celebrant first washes his hands, reciting Psalm 26:6, symbolizing the washing of sins of the Celebrant before he goes up to the Holy Altar in front of God. The washing of hands also symbolizes Christ’s lamentation on the Mount of Olives Standing in front of the Holy Altar in this way symbolizes/mimics Christ going to the Mount of Olives with His disciples (Holy See of Cilicia Tbrebank).
 - d. The hymn «Խորհուրդ Խորին» (“Deep Mystery”) is sung, which represents the beginning of the mysterious Badarak. The Badarak is mysterious because its climax is the sacrament of communion, and we cannot physically see or understand how unleavened bread and unmixed wine can transform into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This hymn also symbolizes the prayers of our forefathers, which were directed towards God.
3. Confession of the Celebrant:
 - a. The [celebrant begins to do his own confession](#) before rising up to the Holy Altar. First, the celebrant bows in front of God saying “I have sinned against God” and then confesses his own sins to THE CONGREGATION by saying:

“I confess before God and the Holy Mother of God, and before all Saints and before you, fathers and brethren, all the sins I have committed. For I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and with every sin that men commit. I have sinned, I have sinned, I pray to you, entreat God for me to grant forgiveness.” (Missakian, pg. 6)

Then, a clergyman (who is representing the congregation at this moment) responds with:

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

“May God Almighty have mercy upon thee, and grant the forgiveness of all thy transgressions, past and present. And may He deliver thee from sins to come, and may He confirm thee in every good work, and give thee rest in life to come, amen.” (Missakian, pg. 7)

The celebrant's confession before God and the congregation symbolizes humility, acknowledging that even those ordained to lead spiritually are accountable for their sins and reliant on God's mercy. This confession also illustrates the unity and mutual dependence within the Church, emphasizing that both clergy and laity need each other's prayers and intercessions to obtain forgiveness and spiritual renewal. The confession also symbolizes/mimics Christ falling on His face and knees while sweating blood on the Mount of Olives (Holy See of Cilicia Tbreavank).

4. The Accession (Rising up to the Altar):
 - a. After the Celebrant confesses his sins, [he rises up to the Holy Altar](#) (with the recitation of Psalm 42:1-5), ready to start the Holy Sacrifice. This rising up symbolizes ascending spiritually from repentance and humility toward God's presence, symbolizing purification, readiness, and renewal of spirit, prepared now to offer the Holy Sacrifice with a cleansed heart and focused intention. This also symbolizes/mimics the countless times Christ and His disciples went up to the Mount of Olives to pray (Holy See of Cilicia Tbreavank).
5. If the Celebrant is a Bishop or a Catholicos, they now [kneel down before the Holy Altar](#), taking off their mitre (կոկիթ), which is used to cover their head.
 - a. This symbolizes humility, reverence, and submission before the majesty of God, acknowledging that all earthly authority is subordinate to divine authority, and that true honor and glory belong only to God.
6. [Presentation of Gifts](#):
 - a. When the curtain closes, the Badarak officially begins. The curtain is closed in this instant, which symbolizes the mystical birth/conception of Jesus Christ from the Holy Virgin Mary. Behind the closed curtain, the communion is prepared by being blessed and placed in the chalice.
 - i. First, the Celebrant offers the prayer to the Holy Spirit (written by St. Gregory of Nareg), and the faithful are also suggested to say this prayer themselves (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 2, 4:00). The priest also prays to God that he be found worthy to offer this sacrifice on behalf of the congregation (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 7, 2:40).
 - ii. Next, the Deacon offers the Unleavened Bread to the Celebrant, which the Celebrant blesses with the sign of the cross, accompanied with a prayer.
 - iii. Next, the Deacon offers the Unmixed Wine to the Celebrant, which he similarly blesses as with the Unleavened Bread with its own prayer.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- iv. Now the Celebrant, reciting the prayer of St. John Chrysostom, prays that the Eucharistic Gifts may be acceptable in the eyes of Almighty God.

7. Procession:

When the curtain opens, the lights of the church are lit, and a [procession begins](#). The procession has a specific order: (1) the Holy Cross, (2) Candle-Bearers, (3) Deacon holding a hand-cross (and a Deacon holding the Bishop's Staff), (4) The Celebrant, (5) Deacons, (6) Fan-Bearers.

- a. The procession symbolizes Christ (the Celebrant) descending from heaven (the altar) and walking the earth among us and doing miracles. The Celebrant walks around the altar, which is a symbol of Christ descending from Heaven (represented by the right side of the altar) to Earth (represented by the left side of the altar) and then coming down and walking the earth among us (the congregation).
 - b. The symbolism of the lights of the church being lit during the procession is the light of Christ, which lit up the Earth as he walked amongst us.
 - c. (1) represents the presence and authority of Christ, symbolizing His sacrifice, redemption, and victory over death through the Cross, leading the way for salvation and eternal life.
 - d. (2) represents the Old Testament (with the prophets), along with the New Testament, which leads and enlightens the way for Christ to find those who are in darkness (Rev. Dr. George Archdeacon Leylegian). They also represent Christ's apostles who were sent to enlighten the world (Faith Hope Love Mission).
 - e. (3) represents John the Baptist, who came before Jesus Christ and paved the way for Him.
 - f. (4) represents Jesus Christ, who walked among us in his glory (represented by the Celebrant & his glorious vestments), blessed us, and received our prayers (the Celebrant censing as he processes).
 - g. (5) represent the angels who were/are singing and praising in heaven when Jesus came down to Earth to save humanity and also during the physical procession.
 - h. (6)
8. The Lesser Entrance (Procession of the Holy Gospel):
- a. The [procession](#) is constructed in a meaningful way that stems from Isaiah 6:1-7. The Celebrant (representing Christ) gives the Gospel to the Deacon, who from the right side of the altar (symbolizing heaven) processes over to the left side of the altar (symbolizing Earth), then the reader of the epistle kisses the Gospel (possibly symbolizing the prophets who received the Words of God and prophesied, especially about Christ, the good news). We notice that the Deacon does this procession with the Gospel book raised up high, symbolizing the high authority of the Gospel, which symbolizes Christ (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 3, 2:42)

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- b. This procession reminds us that we all have a voice, which should be used to praise God and not to hurt others (which might be a reason why Soorp Asdvadz is sung over the procession).
 - c. Note: You must be AT LEAST a fully ordained Deacon in the Armenian Church to do this procession.
9. Blessing of the Congregation («Խաղաղութիւն ամենեցուն»):
 11 times throughout the Divine Liturgy the Celebrant Priest/Bishop turns around and blesses the congregation by saying one of three blessings: [«Խաղաղութիւն ամենեցուն»](#), [«Տէր Աստուած, օրհնեսցէ զամենեւեւանդ»](#), [«Եղիցի ընդ ձեզ, ընդ ամենեւեւանդ»](#).
 - a. Since the Celebrant is a representative of the congregation in front of God, as well as a representative of Christ in front of the congregation, by turning around and blessing the congregation, it is as if Christ is blessing the congregation.
10. The Liturgy of the Word (Midday Lections/Reading of the Epistles):
 In the Armenian church, there are assigned lectionary readings for each day of the year. In this way, the entire Bible would be read in a span of a few years. These readings are all carefully selected from both the Old and New Testament books to reflect the specific day.
 - a. As you notice, the Epistle is read from the Pem and not from the Holy Altar, which symbolizes that, prior to Christ, prophecies & spiritual teachings were spread by prophets and apostles.
 - b. This portion of the Divine Liturgy is called the Synaxis («Պատուոյն Ճաշոյն») because, in old times, the faithful would eat while listening to the scriptures.
11. The Liturgy of the Word (Reading of the Gospel):
 The [reading of the Gospel](#) is one of the most important parts of the Badarak and the climax of the Badarak of the Unbaptized. Here, God reveals His message for us through the assigned Gospel reading for the day.
 - a. The Gospel is read from the Holy Altar, contrary to the epistle reading, which is a symbol of God directly delivering this message to the people. According to canon, the Deacon who is reciting the Gospel must cover his face (especially his mouth) during the reading to further reinforce this symbolism.
 - b. Why does the Deacon sing/chant the Gospel instead of reading it normally like the Epistle? This is done to prevent any emphasis when reading, which can potentially alter the message being delivered, since, after all, God is speaking, and human interpretation should not interfere.
 - c. St. Gregory of Nazianzen compares this ritual to Exodus 19:16-18:
 - i. The book stand (Գրքակալ) symbolizes Mt. Sinai.
 - ii. The Censing Deacon exclaiming «Օրդի» & «Պրոսթուսմէ» symbolizes lightning and thunder.
 - iii. The gospel symbolizes the voice of God.
 - iv. The ringing of the censer bells symbolizes the sound of the trumpets.
 - v. The charcoal in the censer symbolizes the fiery presence of God.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- vi. The incense that comes out of the censer symbolizes the thick clouds on Mt. Sinai.

12. Confession & Declaration of Faith:

- a. The servers of the Holy Altar gather directly in front of the Holy Table (Throne of God) and [chant the Nicene Creed](#) (better known as the Havadamk), which is done at the start of the main Badarak. The meaning behind this is to declare the basic beliefs of the church. After the Nicene Creed, the deacon says the Anathema, which is a statement of the main heretical teachings around the time of 300 AD. This statement was pronounced at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. After the Anathema, the Celebrant continues this declaration by chanting what is known as the Doxology of Saint Gregory («Իսկ մեկ փառալուրեւոյ՜...»).
- b. The Nicene Creed is not a strict theological answer for the Holy Trinity. It is, in some way, a boundary, drawing the line between the mystery of the Holy Trinity and heresy, which was greatly debated by the church fathers at the first ecumenical council of Nicea.
- c. Confessing the creed together as a church is a symbol of unity, as it helps us maintain the Orthodox faith.
- d. This also reminds us of Apostle Peter's actions of denying Christ from Matthew 16:13-20.
- e. We sometimes say the declaration 3 times in other services to correct Apostle Peter's mistake of denying Jesus 3 times.
- f. The Gospel book is raised up high during the confession because ...

13. Sermon/Homily:

- a. The sermon is one of the most important educational moments of the Divine Liturgy. Many people decide on the impact of the Divine Liturgy on the strength of the Celebrant's Sermon. The Sermon is given from the altar, specifically from the right side of the altar, symbolizing the divine inspiration of the spiritual teaching/message.

14. Liturgy of the Eucharist Begins:

- a. The [celebrant removes all external vestments](#), including his cross and crown. In the case of a Episcopal Badarak, the curtain will close and the bishop will remove his mitre and stole (եմփոբոն), which is the universal Christian vestment that identifies a Bishop. The ornaments of the priest, which represent their rank, are taken off as an act of reverence and humility, but also so that their rank is unknown to the faithful because in the eyes of God rank does not matter, and humans are all equal (epistle, AC202, 4:44).
 - i. The symbolism of this is that the celebrant is acknowledging that there is only one true King present, Jesus Christ, which is present in the Eucharistic Gifts (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 4, 1:41)

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- ii. The other symbolism of this gesture is that the celebrant admits/confesses his unworthiness to offer the Badarak (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 4, 1:41)
- iii. At this point, the Deacon chants the following:
 «Մի՛ նֆ յերախայից, մի՛ նֆ ՚ի քերահաւատից եւ մի՛ նֆ յապաշխարոպց եւ յանմաբից մերձեցի յԱստուածային Խորհուրդս:»
 “Let none of the catechumens, none of the incredulous, and none of the penitents and of the impure draw nigh [near] this Divine Mystery.” (Missakian, pg. 29)

It is at this exact point that only the baptized faithful move from the church’s Գաւիթ (courtyard) to the church’s ասեմնի (sanctuary). Up until this moment, both the baptized and unbaptized were in the courtyard, and now only the unbaptized remain there since only those who are baptized are allowed to participate and receive the Holy Communion (Rev. Fr. Movses Yosoukkanian).

15. The Great Entrance ([Procession of Gifts](#)):

- a. This is one of the holiest moments of the Divine Liturgy. Here, the gifts (the Chalice, which is filled with unleavened bread and unmixed wine) are processed around the Holy Altar and presented to the Celebrant. This solemn act symbolizes the offering of Christ Himself to the Father. The bread and wine, carried with reverence, represent Christ’s body and blood, willingly offered for the salvation of mankind. It reflects the moment Christ gave Himself up, uniting the earthly elements with the heavenly mystery.
- b. This procession reminds us of Jesus’ glorious entrance into Jerusalem, as well as Jesus’ walk to death, knowing that He would be crucified.
- c. The last part of the procession is the censing of the gifts. The censing signifies the sanctification and reverence of the gifts. It represents the prayers of the faithful rising to God (Psalm 141:2) and acknowledges the holiness of what is being offered. It also reflects the presence of the Holy Spirit descending upon the gifts, preparing them for consecration.
- d. At the end, the Celebrant blesses the congregation with the gifts, saying:
 “Grant this bread and this cup to be for us, who taste of them, a remedy of forgiveness of our sin” (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 4, 5:06)

16. [Kiss of Peace](#):

- a. At this moment of the Divine Liturgy, the congregation receives a blessing from the Eucharist gifts and passes it on to every member of the church. Through this, the congregation greets and blesses each other, which is an amazing way to build a connection and show unity amongst the congregants. This comes mostly from the letters of St. Paul (Romans 16:16, 1 Corinth. 16:20, 2 Corinth. 13:12, 1 Thessalon. 5:26, 1 Peter 5:14).

17. The Eucharistia (“The Doors, The Doors!” [«ԳԻՐԱՆԱՆ, ԳԻՐԱՆԱՆ»]):

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- a. [The Deacons from the Holy Altar exclaim](#) the following words:
 “The doors, the doors! (Guard them) with all wisdom and vigilance. Lift up your minds with divine reverence” (Missakian, pg. 34)
 The Deacons here are talking about two doors: the physical doors of the church and the spiritual doors. The Deacons exclaim to close the physical doors of the church to make it clear that the remainder of the Divine Liturgy is for baptized Christians ONLY and not for catechumens or non-baptized Christians. Catechumens or Non-Baptized Christians are required to leave at this point. This is also a reference to the command of Jesus: “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matthew 6:6, NKJV). The Deacon also tells us to close some spiritual doors, the doors of our mind and heart, so that we separate ourselves from worldly desires.
18. The Anmnesis ([“Holy, Holy, Holy” \[«Ամբբ, Ամբբ, Ամբբ»\]](#)):
 - a. Some consider this the [holiest moment or climax of the Divine Liturgy](#). When the hymn begins, the lights of the Holy Table are turned on, the fans are shaken, and [the Deacon begins to cense the Holy Altar](#). This is a symbol of the dominating presence of God, His light shining bright in the church and our lives, the angels in heaven singing with us, and our prayers being raised to God.
 - b. This hymn comes directly from Isaiah 6:3 & Revelation 4:8.
19. The Epiclesis (Blessing of Gifts):
 - a. At this moment, the [Censing Deacon walks up to the Holy Table and begins to cense the Eucharist gifts](#), while the Celebrant blesses the gifts.
 - i. “The greatest mystery of the Christian faith is that the one God and Father shares his divinity with his Only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and with his Holy Spirit, three persons united in one God. At this point in the Eucharist, the priest calls on God the Father to send his Holy Spirit upon all of the assembled faithful and on the gifts of bread and wine, to make them truly the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is our ultimate desire and prayer, that in this Eucharist the Holy Spirit will unite all the faithful together with each other and with Christ by way of his Body and Blood so that we will truly come to constitute the Church in its fullest sense.” ([V. Rev. Fr. Barouyr Shernezian](#))
20. The Diptychs (Remembrance of Saints):
 - a. After completing the 3 hymns dedicated to the Holy Trinity ([«Հոգի Աստուծոյ»](#)), the [altar servers all line up](#) behind the celebrant and [begin to chant prayers](#) in remembrance of prominent figures and Saints in Armenian Christianity. It is also very important to stand during this time, since we remember the most important of our saints (in the same way we stand for high ranking figures) (Faith Hope Love Mission). This act symbolizes the unity of the Church across time and

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

eternity. By remembering saints and holy figures, especially those of Armenian Christianity, the Church affirms the continuity of faith from the times of the Saints and acknowledges that the Saints are intercessors before God, but also invisible congregants amongst us.

21. The Lord's Prayer (Հայր Մեր):

- a. After the sermon, the Lord's Prayer is sung. The Lord's Prayer is the prayer that we have inherited directly from Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:9-13 & Luke 11:2-4). That is why this prayer is so important, especially in our church.
- b. It is a church canon to say the Lord's Prayer 7 times a day; this is why on Sundays, the Lord's Prayer is said/sung multiple times.
- c. The Lord's Prayer is sung in this position within the Divine Liturgy because the Eucharist has been transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. We have presented the offering to God, and we are about to receive Christ through communion (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 6, 5:36-7:36).

22. The Inclination & Elevation (Offering of the Gifts):

- a. At some point after the Lord's Prayer is sung, the Celebrant offers the unleavened bread and unmixed wine to God by raising them up above his head. This symbolizes Christ offering Himself to the Father as the sacrificial Lamb. It reflects both the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, presenting the bread and wine not just as a physical element but as Christ's body, willingly given for the life of the world.

23. The Intinction & Fraction (The Blessing of the Congregation with the Gifts):

- a. After the Eucharistic gifts have been offered and the Celebrant has blessed them, the [Celebrant takes the chalice and the gifts, faces the congregation, and blesses them](#). This act symbolizes Christ blessing His people with the fruits of His sacrifice (forgiveness, grace, and spiritual nourishment). It signifies that the redemptive power of the Eucharist is not confined to the altar but extends to all the faithful.

24. Behind the Drawn Curtain:

- a. Behind the drawn curtain, the celebrant continues to pray and bless the eucharistic gifts. The curtain is drawn for confession and solemn prayer, symbolizing the distance/separation from God because we are all sinners.

25. Blessing of Mass:

- a. The Mass (or Մաս) is blessed either before or after confession. This bread is different than the Holy Communion. The purpose of this mass is to share with those who did not partake in the Divine Liturgy on that day for whatever reason. Some churches conveniently place the mass in small bags to give to others. The blessed mass symbolizes the Church's inclusivity and pastoral care, ensuring that even those absent are spiritually nourished. It represents the continuation of the

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

community's unity in Christ beyond the physical bounds of the liturgy and the church walls.

26. Confession:

- a. After the curtain is drawn, [confession is done](#) before Holy Communion is distributed. Confession is a crucial part of the preparation before receiving Holy Communion.
- b. You are subject to condemnation if you receive Holy Communion without confession because you have not turned away or been absolved of your unrighteousness and, therefore, cannot be in communion with God.
- c. After confession, the curtain opens, symbolizing our communion with God after confession & repentance.

27. [Communion](#):

- a. When the confession has finished, [the curtain is opened](#), symbolizing the end of the separation between God and humans. As the curtain opens, the Deacons chant:

«Երկիւղիւ եւ հաւատով յառաջ մտալիք եւ սրբութեամբ հաղորդեցարուք:»

“In fear and in faith draw near, and communicate in holiness.”

Next, the celebrant goes to the edge of the stage, kneels, and gives a part of the Holy Eucharist to the faithful, saying:

«Սա եղիցի քեզ ի քաղութիւնս եւ ի թողութիւնս մեզաց»

“Let this be the expiation and the remission of your sins”

 - i. This symbolizes the connection/union between heaven (the altar) and earth (the faithful) through the Eucharist (Jesus Christ). Because of the forgiveness of our sins, we are now able to be in union with the divine realm.
 - ii. The Deacon's chant is a reminder of how we should approach and receive the Holy Communion: In Holiness (Faith Hope Love Mission).
- b. The main reason why the sacrament of communion is seen as a “Great/Deep Mystery” is because the unleavened bread and unmixed wine turn into the body and blood of Jesus, but that transformation remains a mystery to us.
- c. Holy Communion is the seal of the new covenant, the union with the true body and blood of Christ.

28. Behind the Drawn Curtain:

- a. At this point, the Celebrant finishes the remaining communion, cleans the chalice with water, and places it back into the notch. After the “cleanup”, the Celebrant begins praying while also putting on the vestments that were removed during the Divine Liturgy, in preparation for the end of the liturgy. This moment symbolizes the sacred intimacy between the Celebrant and God, reflecting the biblical image of the Holy of Holies. The redressing of the Celebrant signifies spiritual restoration and completion, marking a return to his liturgical dignity after serving as the intermediary in the Divine Mystery.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

29. The Descent & End of the Divine Liturgy:

- a. When the Holy Communion is distributed, [the Celebrant and altar servers descend from the altar](#) in the same manner they ascended at the start of the Divine Liturgy. The descent mirrors the earlier ascent and symbolizes Christ's incarnation (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 8, 5:39). It also signifies that the faithful, now spiritually renewed, are sent back into the world to live out the Gospel, carrying the presence and peace of Christ with them.

Requiem Service (Հոգեհանգիստ):

- Purpose: The word «Հոգեհանգիստ» (Hokehankist) means “rest of the soul.” This service is not a second funeral; rather, it is a memorial liturgy offered to ask God for mercy on the departed soul, to grant them peace and rest in Christ, and to affirm their place in the eternal communion of the faithful.
- When requiems are done:
 - 7th day after death: Symbolizes mourning and the initial release of the soul from the earthly body.
 - 40th day after death: Drawn from biblical tradition (e.g. Christ's Ascension) and represents the soul's transition toward God's judgment.
 - 1-year (or annual marks) after death: Represents continued remembrance and the hope of eternal life.
- Մատույ (Memorial Meals): It is customary for families to prepare memorial meals (consecrated food), especially wheat or meat, which is blessed and shared. This act is both a symbol of charity (almsgiving in the name of the deceased) and a reflection of early Christian communal meals.
- Theology/Symbolism:
 - Communion of Saints: The service underscores that the Church is not divided by death. The sleeping/departed faithful remain a part of the Body of Christ. The living pray for the dead, just as the saints intercede for the living.
 - Hope in Resurrection: The hymns and prayers express the Church's unwavering hope in the general resurrection and eternal life. In the service, the Priest/Bishop asks that the departed be received into the light of Christ's Kingdom, awaiting the final resurrection.
 - Judgment and Mercy: The Church prays not to change God's judgment but to ask/beg for His mercy, trusting in His love and compassion. The prayers acknowledge human weakness and plead for divine forgiveness and rest.
 - Spiritual Solidarity: The gathering of family and Church during Hokehankist affirms communal support in grief and reflects the unity of the faithful in times of sorrow and hope.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- Liturgical Continuity: The Requiem is typically offered after the Divine Liturgy, linking the sacrifice of the Eucharist (Christ's redemptive act) with the hope for salvation of the departed soul.

During Great Lent (Մեծ Պահք):

- The changes to the Badarak are done specifically, symbolizing our separation from God in the same way; after Adam & Eve disobeyed God, they were exiled from paradise (the Garden of Eden). These changes also cause us to reflect upon ourselves and to seriously work on changing our sinful lifestyle and habits for our own spiritual growth and also in preparation for Easter.
 - The [curtain](#) during the Badarak remains closed (no view of the Badarak), and the curtain is changed to a black curtain (a color of mourning).
 - Kissing the Gospel is prohibited (a sense of separation from God's word)
 - The Gospel is covered in a black cloth (separating the faithful from the Gospel)
 - Holy Communion is not delivered (Not being able to commune and receive the Holy Sacrament of Communion separates us from God)

Badarak Q&A (w/ Hayr Pakrad):

- The Origins of the Divine Liturgy: The Divine Liturgy was instituted on the Last Supper. The first Christian community gathered and did a simple Divine Liturgy of scriptural reading & an agape meal or love gathering.
- How did the Divine Liturgy look in ancient times in comparison to modern day: In the 2nd century, St. Justin the Martyr gives a detailed description of the Divine Liturgy, and it is very similar to what the Divine Liturgy is like now but with some additional prayers.
- 5 Main Liturgical Texts:
 - St. James' Liturgy (The most popular)
 - Clemens' Liturgy
 - St. Marcus' Liturgy
 - St. Basil's Liturgy
 - St. John Chrysostom's Liturgy
- Who does the Priest/Celebrant represent: The Celebrant of the Divine Liturgy is a representative of the living church when doing the sacrifice (Badarak), but is also a representative of Jesus Christ leading the church into heaven.
- Why are robes (Շապիկ) used on the altar: The robes symbolize purity, cleanliness, and the garment of light.
- Importance of veils: 1 Corinthians 11:3-5.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- Significance of repetition: It is usually the Deacons who give instructions to the congregation.
- Why is the Badarak in Classical Armenian (Krapar) and not in Modern Armenian: «Գրքարար» = “Language of the Book [Bible]”, this language is considered sacred (since it does not actually contain profane words or expressions. This language is linguistically similar to ancient Hebrew and ancient Greek, which makes it a much more accurate translation of the Bible.
- Why is “One” used in the context of the church: The church is the ONE living body of Christ.
- Why are unleavened bread and unmixed wine used for communion: Unleavened bread & unmixed wine are used because of tradition and also because of scripture. In the Old Testament, unleavened bread was very important. Jesus used unleavened bread & unmixed wine during the Last Supper.
- Why do we need to confess our sins: We need to confess our sins to be cleaned & released from our burdens.
- Why go to church when you can pray at home: Praying at church is much better than praying at home because of God’s unique presence in church. Attending the Divine Liturgy is a large compilation of prayer if you participate in it. The church is also the unity of Christ.
- Why does a choir sing during the Divine Liturgy: The choir represents the faithful since it is the role of the congregation to sing and follow along the liturgy.

Additional Q&A:

- What is the Badarak: The Badarak is a celebration/remembrance (Յիշխանութիւն) of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice for us on the cross & is also a reenactment of the Last Supper.
- Why is the Badarak done on Sunday: Sunday is the Lord’s Day (the day Jesus rose from the dead).
- How many times can Badarak be done: The Badarak can be done once per altar, per day, per priest.
- What does it mean to be “Loosavorchagan”? Many believe this word means that we are followers of St. Gregory the Illuminator, which is true; however, the true meaning of being a “loosavorchagan” church is that the church strives to illuminate those who are in darkness.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- Why does the Priest face away from the faithful during the Divine Liturgy? The Priest isn't ignoring the faithful, he is praying and preparing the Eucharist on their behalf. The faithful pray alongside the Priest to God (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 8, 6:00).
- What is the difference between the different hand positions of praying (Open hands, closed prayer hands, etc.): Usually, praying with open hands is done when you are requesting something from God. Closed-hand praying is usually done during exclamations or when showing gratitude.
- When should we kneel during the Divine Liturgy: During the procession of the gospel, «Տէր Ողորմեա», and during confession.
- Why do we shorten church services (Why do abridged versions exist): It is very hard to change something in the church once it is instated (which is a good thing). We shorten the services for pragmatic reasons because of lower attention spans and less familiarity with the services.
- What does the medallion (Պաշտպան) that Bishops wear mean: These medallions have icons on them; bishops wearing these medallions remind us of the icon that is worn.
- How does a Bishop get ordained a Catholicos & who ordains him if there is no higher rank in the church: Technically, any clergyman can become the Catholicos, but the Catholicos is usually elected from a group of Bishops with several rounds of voting (everyone in the church votes, and it goes through a hierarchy. It is similar to a U.S. presidential election). Once the Catholicos is elected, there must be 3 or more Bishops to ordain him.
- Where do the words of the Divine Liturgy come from: Most of the sentences/hymns come directly from scripture. If you read the Bible in Classical Armenian, you will notice these sentences.
- What should we do with our children? Should we leave them at home? “Through baptism, a child is made a full member of the Body of Christ and is expected and encouraged to be present during the Divine Liturgy. Naturally, it is anticipated that children may fidget or cry, and this is alright. However, if the child becomes too much of a distraction, we ask that you please escort the child out until the child calms down. As stated earlier, food is not allowed in the sanctuary; however, a light, dry, finger-food type of snack for young toddlers is permitted. Bottle-feeding infants is allowed. We ask that parents tidy up after their children and parents with strollers are asked to sit in the back of the sanctuary, storing the strollers near the rear pews.” (Fr. Ghevond Ajamian, pg. 4-5)

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- What is the purpose of the Incense/Censer/Censerbearer in the Divine Liturgy? Incense holds great importance not only in the Divine Liturgy but in almost all Church Sacraments and services. The use of incense originates from the Old Testament, which explains in detail the purpose and significance of incense. The server who swings the incense (in the vestibule called the poorvar) is called the Poorvaragir. He is the one who is entrusted with the sacred task of filling the church with incense in a proper and sacred manner. The incense builds a crucial prayerful atmosphere in the church (Armenian Church of Our Savior, Episode 6, 1:22-3:29).
- What is the difference between the Catholic Church and the Armenian Orthodox Church when it comes to the Divine Presence of Jesus Christ in the eucharistic gifts? The Catholic and Armenian Churches both have the same understanding. We both believe that the bread physically becomes the body of Christ, and the wine physically becomes the blood of Christ. The only difference is that in the Catholic church, this “Transubstantiation” occurs the exact moment the Priest says “This is my body” and “This is my blood”. In the Armenian church, the “Transubstantiation” occurs when the celebrant priest prays and asks for the Holy Spirit to come down onto the eucharistic gifts, which occurs a little later in the Divine Liturgy. Both practices are theologically correct and do not cause an issue between the churches (Rev. Dr. George Archdeacon Leylegian).
- Why don’t ancient Armenian churches have pews? Standing during the Divine Liturgy represents being ready for salvation and for the 2nd coming of Christ (Faith Hope Love Mission). This is not only present in the Armenian churches but in the majority of Orthodox Churches.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

Citations:

- Fr. Ghevond Ajamian, *Armenian Church Etiquette*, St. Vartan Press, 2023,
<https://online.fliphtml5.com/vwvqz/nppn/>
- Armenian Church of Our Savior. “Divine Liturgy, Soorp Badarak Video Series, Episode 3” *YouTube*, 9 March 2025, <https://youtu.be/qrfhuV-phy0?si=QdkaasdqMNWJ155X>
- Armenian Church of Our Savior. “Divine Liturgy, Soorp Badarak Video Series, Episode 4” *YouTube*, 4 April 2025, <https://youtu.be/MkoxfNKykYc?si=KOM45jithxMDxqBb>
- Armenian Church of Our Savior. “Divine Liturgy, Soorp Badarak Video Series, Episode 6” *YouTube*, 18 June 2025, https://youtu.be/_K1HOLlqBto?si=ga36p8iz2K-A6kc0
- Armenian Church of Our Savior. “Divine Liturgy, Soorp Badarak Video Series, Episode 7” *YouTube*, 22 July 2025, https://youtu.be/R3gWKT5wXt4?si=dnV94fzPay0__5p8
- Armenian Church of Our Savior. “Divine Liturgy, Soorp Badarak Video Series, Episode 8” *YouTube*, 18 September 2025,
<https://youtu.be/yj-A5BAe2Aw?si=KQvaTQuWDR2YilRQ>
- “Armenian Orthodox Theology.” *Armenian Orthodox Theology*,
www.armenianorthodoxtheology.com/blog.
- Blanchard, Christine. “What Is the Biblical Meaning of Unleavened Bread and Its Significance in Faith and Tradition [Key Insights!].” *Biblical Chronology*, 1 Oct. 2024,
biblicalchronology.com/what-is-the-biblical-meaning-of-unleavened-bread.
- CiliciaTV. “ՏՕՆ ՎԵՐԱՓՈԽՄԱՆ ՍՈՒՐԲ ԱՍՏՈՒԱԾԱԾՆԻՒՆ՝ ԱՆԹԻԼԻԱՍԻ ՄԱՅՐԱՎԱՆՔԻՆ ՄԷՉ” *YouTube*, 18 Aug. 2024,
<https://www.youtube.com/live/t349pRPVB8c?si=4l4A7rV0SmvBQRCq>.

This document is not complete and is only a draft. Citations are missing.

- EasternDiocese. “The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church, Part 1 of 4 (Narrated).” *YouTube*, 25 Mar. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWJzmEnJ8_g.
- epostle. “AC202 #03 - Vestments, an Explanation.” *YouTube*, 2 Nov. 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-ylaBQLVsA.
- Faith Hope Love Mission. “Ս. Պատարագի բացատրություն, Վալանի Ս. Սահակ Եկեղեցույ մէջ, Ֆրանսա (Նոյեմբեր/November 2, 2025)” *YouTube*, 20 Aug. 2022, <https://youtu.be/6sFdcKzyJ44?si=fmPNKBOWGRZE7uGr>
- Hayconography, “Why do clergy wear a Cross? (And other symbols), *Instagram*, 30 Apr. 2026, https://www.instagram.com/p/DXwJ4niFWWy/?img_index=1
- Missakian, Jirair. *The Divine Liturgy or The Ordinary of the Holy Mass of the Apostolic Church of Armenia*. Boston, Hairenik Association, Inc., 1960.
- Rev. Arnak Kasparian, “The Structure of the Divine Liturgy”, Prepared in Tenafly, NJ.
- St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church of San Diego. “Friday Nights With Hayr Soorp: Badarak Questions and Answers.” *YouTube*, 20 June 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjAAteqyqhw.
- “The Priestly Garments - Bible History.” *Bible History*, <http://bible-history.com/tabernacle/the-priestly-garments>.
- *What Is the Ecclesiastical Banner in Orthodox Christianity*. www.orthodoxchristianity101.com/orthodox-glossary/ecclesiastical-banners.
- *What Is the Processional Cross in Orthodox Christianity*. www.orthodoxchristianity101.com/orthodox-glossary/processional-cross.