

## The Main Event

### Getting Ready for the Main Event

Let's take a step back before we move forward again.

Just as the Son of God came down from heaven to be born, live, die, and rise again, so he comes to us in every Divine Liturgy, again in an incarnation (meaning something is given form or flesh)

- Through the words of the Gospels, those four sacred biographies from which book (the *Avedaran*) we read every Sunday, which we adorn and which we exalt in a special procession around the altar.
- Through the bread and wine of communion which become the life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord.



### Dictionary Definitions

**Avedaran:** In the Armenian language, the suffix “ah-ran” means “place where.” So a kordzaran is a factory, or a place where work (kordz=work) is done. The Avedaran is the place where the Good News is found (Avedis=good news).

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These, then, form the two basic movements of the Divine Liturgy: the Liturgy of the Word, and the Eucharist. These two liturgical sections are preceded by a preparation and end with a “wrap-up” or last blessing and these four sections can be outlined according to some main events. Jog your memory and your years of church-going to match the photos below with the actions they depict:



### Who's Who

In his famous commentary 10th century commentary on the Divine Liturgy, Khosrov Antzevatzi wrote this about confessing sins and taking Holy Communion:

“God is the physician of souls; show him your wounds and he will provide you with a remedy and cure. He is a father and his heart is moved by your weeping for your spiritual pain. He knows our nature is prone to stumble and has arrayed numerous treatments for our recurring ailments... first and foremost the frequent celebration of Christ's sacrifice which is always offered to atone for the sins into which we constantly fall...”

### The Preparation 1-10

1. The priest vests prayerfully with the deacon's help.

a



2. He and deacons proceed from the vestry into the church.

b



3. The priest ritually washes his hands.

c



4. The priest confesses his sins.

d



5. The priest and deacon(s) go up to the altar and the curtain closes.

e



6. Behind the curtain, the deacon presents the priest with the gifts of bread and wine.

f



7. The priest blesses the gifts, after which they will be set aside in a side niche.

g



## The Liturgy of the Word (Synaxis) 11-22

1. The curtain opens, the priest and deacons proceed through the church. He censes the altars and offers his hand cross to be kissed by the faithful. (tapor).

a



2. As we sing Soorp Asdvadz, The deacon proceeds around the altar holding the Gospel book high (lesser entrance).

b



3. We are led by the deacon in a litany of prayers for the church and the people.

c



4. The Bible is read, culminating with a Gospel reading.

d



5. The creed is recited to proclaim the belief we all share.

e



6. The deacon leads us in prayers for ourselves.

f



7. The priest takes off his crown and slippers.

g



## The Eucharist 23-52

1. The deacon chants "Mi vok," reminding us that only those who are confirmed in the Armenian Church or are from sister churches are privileged to receive Holy Communion..

a



2. The deacon carries the veiled chalice containing the bread and wine to the priest and they are then placed upon the altar.

b



3. The kiss of peace is passed as we share the love of Christ with one another.

c



4. The priest begins to pray the Anaphora.

d



5. The priest says the words of Jesus: "Take, eat, drink."

e



6. The priest prays that the Holy Spirit will come upon the gifts and turn them into the body and blood of Christ (the epiclesis).

f



7. We pray for the saints and all who have died as well as the living leaders of the Armenian Church (The Intercessions).

g



8. We sing the Lord's Prayer.

h



9. The curtain closes while we pray for mercy; behind the curtain the priest and altar servers take communion.



ⓘ

10. We confess our sins and take holy communion to be restored in the sight of God.



Ⓜ

11. We sing songs of thanksgiving for Holy Communion.



Ⓚ

## The Last Blessing 52-55

1. The curtain opens and the priest comes down from the bema with the Gospel book.



ⓐ

2. The Gospel is read.



ⓑ

3. The priest blesses us and we go forward to kiss the gospel book.



ⓒ

## A Life Without Sin

### Doomed to Fail or "A" for Effort?

Sin means "missing the mark," in other words, falling short of what God asks us to do and be. For centuries Christians have been openly confessing their sins during – or before – liturgy, and receiving absolution by the celebrant priest.

What a great way to move forward with hope and faith in the future! Interestingly enough, modern psychiatry affirms the ancient need to "repent" by facing our behaviors, acknowledging them, and moving forward so that healthy actions replace guilt. Of course, that's as far as we can take the affirmation, since psychiatry does not necessarily talk about God or right and wrong. Protesting the hesitancy of his colleagues to learn from religious concepts, the famous 20th century psychiatrist Karl Menninger wrote a book entitled *Whatever Became of Sin?*

## Up Close and Personal



### A Confession Exercise

Turn to page 48 in your pew book. Follow the instructions below.

1. In the first confession "stanza" (I have sinned against the all-holy Trinity...), sum up the statement in a few key thoughts. Write them here:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. In the second "stanza," what are some concrete examples of the sins cited below from your own life?

Pride e.g. *I was too proud to admit I was wrong about something and apologize to my brother* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Envy \_\_\_\_\_

Anger \_\_\_\_\_

Laziness \_\_\_\_\_

3. Summarize the third stanza in a few key thoughts:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## The Least You Need to Know

- ✓ The ultimate encounter we have with the Lord during liturgy is receiving him through Holy Communion.
- ✓ Confession and penance are the final acts of spiritual "housecleaning" prior to taking Communion.



### The Armenian Angle

It is an ancient tradition of the Armenian Church that before receiving Holy Communion, the faithful have opportunities to examine their lives and confess individually to a priest, even before liturgy has begun. In our Diocese, it has become the custom to offer a general confession and absolution immediately before Holy Communion is distributed. We read a prepared examination of conscience and then the priest, with the Church's authority, absolves the sins of all who have made confession.