

## The Lord Be With You All

*Lord, grant peace to the whole world, to churches, priests, to Christian rulers and to their armed forces, and to all your people. Amen.*

*From The Last Blessing and Dismissal*



### Who's Who

**St. John Chrysostom (347-407)**

One of the great fathers of the church, Chrysostom was first a monk then an ordained priest and renowned preacher in Antioch, Syria. His orations were so extraordinary he earned the nickname, "golden-mouth" or "chrysostom." Against his wishes, he was made Patriarch of Constantinople in 398 where he proceeded to be such a zealous reformer that he alienated corrupt churchmen as well as the Empress Eudoxia herself. He was exiled to Armenia (!) in 404 from where he wrote hundreds of letters that are extant. Although many lobbied for his release, he was exiled further East to the tip of the Black Sea but died on his way there. After the Bible, there are more Armenian manuscripts of John's writings than any other author. What does this tell us?



### Up Close and Personal

*Good and Perfect Gifts*

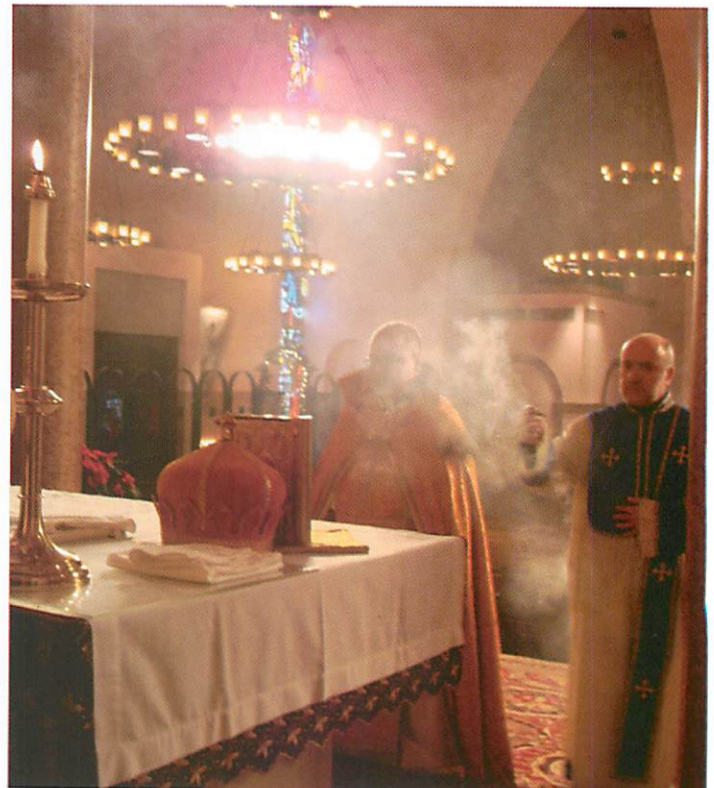
Tell the story about the best gift you ever received. Now list as a class some of the gifts you consider "from God."

### Sing Psalms to the Lord!

**(Saghmos asatzek!) Սաղմոս ասացէք**

During liturgy, we pray, chant and sing the psalms often, using them as a rich resource for expressing our feelings, just as Jesus did. The Last Blessing contains two Psalms sung to a joyous upbeat melody, since they are exclaiming the greatness and blessedness of God. Look up the Psalms below and draw a line to when you might find it helpful to pray these words (you can generally tell from the first 4 or 5 lines).

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>1. Psalm 127</b>   | a. If you need strength against persecutors                     |
| <b>2. Psalm 142</b>   | b. If you feel like God is really an awesome creator            |
| <b>3. Psalm 148</b>   | c. If you feel like God has forgotten you                       |
| <b>4. Psalm 13</b>    | d. If you need to remember how comforting God's presence is     |
| <b>5. Psalm 3</b>     | e. If you need to tune down the noise in your world to hear God |
| <b>6. Psalm 8</b>     | h. If you need to be reminded that God is in charge             |
| <b>7. Psalm 46:10</b> | i. If you need to tell God your troubles                        |
| <b>8. Psalm 23</b>    | j. If you want the whole world to join you in praising God      |





## Dictionary Definitions

**Mahs:** literally means a “part” or “portion” and is blessed unleavened bread distributed to the faithful as they leave church. It is intended for those who did not take communion or for people not in church to whom you want to take it.

Often these are simply given out in small waxed paper bags. If your parish follows Armenian tradition (and not all do), the *hokadar* or trustee will break off a small piece of the thin bread and place it on the back of your extended hand. After which you say: “God is my portion forever.” *Asdvadz eh eem pazhinus meeshd.* Աստուած է իմ բաժինս միշտ:

## ? What Do I Do...

*When the service has finished and everyone’s going up to kiss the Gospel book?*

Join them! It’s very important to touch the Gospel Book with your lips since you have just sung the beautiful words of Psalm 34:1 vowing to have the praise of the Lord at all times on your lips. This is a powerful reminder that when we leave church, we take the word of God with us and have it guide us in all we think and do. If you want to follow the traditional Armenian practice, before you kiss the Gospel book the priest holds before you, say: “*Heeshestzeh Der zamenayn badarakus ko*” or in English, “May the Lord remember all your sacrifices.” The priest will answer you: “*Datzeh kez Der, ust surdit koom*” or in English, “May the Lord grant to you according to your heart.”



## The Least You Need to Know

- ✓ The Last Blessing formally concludes the Divine Liturgy with special prayers and a Gospel reading.
- ✓ Kissing the Gospel at Liturgy’s end is a way of bearing the Word of God out into the world.
- ✓ Taking the blessed bread (mahs) is a way of sharing the Lord’s Body with those not present at liturgy.

