

Take, Eat!

How truly right it is, Almighty God, to always adore and glorify you because you saved us through your Word, your co-creator Jesus Christ. It was he who lived among us as a human being, and like a divine master-builder, made earth into heaven.

Help us to continue this holy work in all we do and say, so that we too have a role in building a new creation. Amen.

(First paragraph based on the priest's Eucharistic Prayer)



Up Close and Personal

What special things do we do to remember someone important?

Looking Up (Even When You're Down)

We're at the moment in liturgy when we are ready, reinforced with all we have heard and experienced so far, to affirm the holiness of God. The beautiful hymn "Soorp, soorp"—usually launched by a soprano soloist who can hit the high notes—is really, as are all the hymns of the Divine Liturgy, a song that all of us should sing.

The hymn derives from a very interesting Scripture story. Turn to Isaiah 6:1-8. But before you read, a bit of background: Assyria, the invincible superpower of the time, looms over Judah, ready to attack. King Uzziah, who had brought stability and hope to this tiny nation, has just died. Things couldn't have looked worse from Isaiah's perspective; the prophet who had to have hoped that his own prophecies could be derailed by a change of heart in the people. Nope. Didn't happen.

But strangely, in the very year King Uzziah died, at perhaps one of the lowest moments of his life, Isaiah is given a unique glimpse of heaven. Now turn to Isaiah and read. Then do the following Bible study exercise:

Isaiah 6:1-7 "Holy, holy, holy!"

1. What might Isaiah have been feeling before the vision?
 - a. I'm helpless
 - b. I'm frustrated
 - c. I'm lonely
 - d. I can't take this anymore

2. What do you think might have been Isaiah's initial response as the vision began?
 - a. awe
 - b. fear
 - c. motivation
 - d. guilt

3. What did Isaiah mean when he said: "My lips are unclean and I live among a people of unclean lips"?
 - a. There's a problem with my speech
 - b. There's a problem with my heart
 - c. I'm just like everyone else
 - d. I'm not worthy

4. How do you think Isaiah felt after the burning coal experience?
 - a. Confused
 - b. Encouraged
 - c. Free
 - d. Ready for action

5. If I were Isaiah, my sense of _____ would be the first to be awed.
 - a. Sight
 - b. Smell
 - c. Hearing
 - d. Feeling
 - e. Taste

6. What would be the hardest for me to say "Send me!" to God:
 - a. Telling a friend about Jesus
 - b. Helping the poor
 - c. Visiting a hospital or nursing home
 - d. Giving money to charity
 - e. Other



Who's Who

Isaiah was a giant in his day (c.740-680 B.C.), a respected prophet and poet in royal circles despite his unpopular message. He predicted the fall of Jerusalem (which indeed came about in 586 B.C.) and God's deliverance of his people from the Babylonian captivity (which also came to pass in 538 B.C.) as well as their ultimate deliverance from sin by Jesus Christ. Beloved for his insights and poetry, Isaiah is quoted more often in the New Testament than all the other prophets combined.

Arek, Gerek (Take, eat!) Առեք, Կերեք

Matthew 26:26-30

Luke 22:14-20

I Corinthians 11:23-26



Dictionary Definitions

Intercession: From the Latin, meaning "intervene," a prayer to God on behalf of another. The Armenian Church uses the word *parekhosootyoon* which means "putting in a good word" with God for someone.

The Intercessions: Getting Real

As the priest and deacon lead us in praying for a long list of people (pp 35-39 of the Divine Liturgy book), why not envision real people? For example, who would you think of when you are asked to pray for...

Pastors?

Deacons?

Devout kings? (think leaders of faith everywhere)

People who have died?

People in captivity?

What group of people would you suggest adding to the list of those we pray for here?



The Armenian Angle

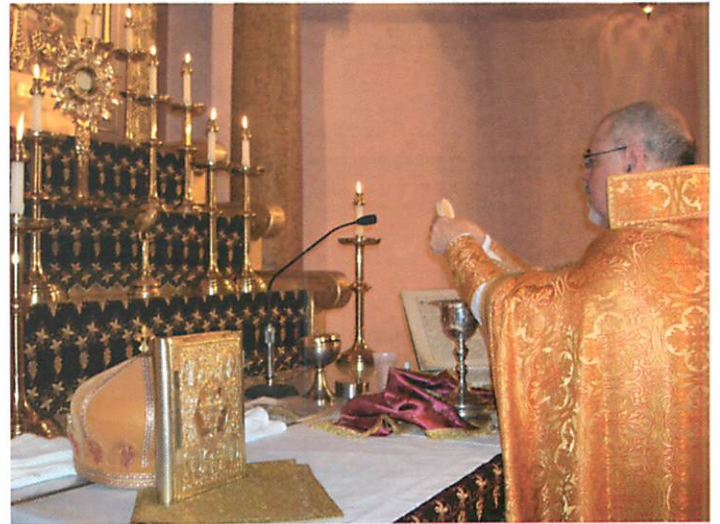


During the Intercessions, many people in the Church, living and dead, are prayed for: saints, Christian leaders, monks, priests, prophets, patriarchs, and all believers. Among those mentioned is the *Diocesan Primate*. No, this isn't a relative of the higher apes! The *Primate* in the

Armenian Church is the head of a cluster of churches or Diocese. Do you know the name of your Primate? He is as important to you as the President of the United States since, with the Diocesan Assembly, he governs the life of the Church within his jurisdiction.

We Are Your Children

Like the father in the story of the prodigal son, God has never stopped looking upon us as his children. From the idyllic life of paradise, we have stubbornly fallen away again and again from the love and peace God offers (just take a look at the headlines for proof of that!). When God the Son entered human history as the man Jesus, it was the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf. And, further, God has sent his Spirit into our hearts to always remind us that God the Father is our loving parent (Galatians 4:6).



At this moment in the liturgy, we stand and sing the beautiful community prayer the Lord himself gave us, affirming in the first few words that God is indeed our father. Since we say the prayer so often, every Sunday in song, sometimes in quick recitation and always in classical Armenian or King James English, let's take a moment to think a little deeper about what we're saying.

My Lord's Prayer

Next to each traditional line, write a word or phrase expressing the line in your own words, without using any of the key words on the left

Our Father _____

Who art in heaven _____

Hallowed be thy name. _____

Thy kingdom come, _____

Thy will be done, _____

On earth as it is in heaven. _____

Give us this day _____

Our daily bread _____

And forgive us our trespasses _____

As we forgive those _____

Who trespass against us _____

And lead us not into Temptation _____

But deliver us from evil _____

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory _____

Forever and ever, amen. _____

? What Do I Do...

*When they pass the basket or plate for offering?
(How crass!)*

Far from being crass, the offering basket is our opportunity to return some of God's own bounty – after all, everything is his gift to us – back to him. In earlier decades, Armenians would bring gifts of bread, wine, oil (for the church lamps), beeswax for candles, cloths and flowers to decorate the altar, and livestock to be blessed, slaughtered and shared among the faithful. In our more modern urban setting, money substitutes for things and so this is how we provide for the church's needs.

The Least You Need to Know

- ✓ As the Eucharist service unfolds, we enter more deeply into the holiness of God.
- ✓ The priest prays for the Holy Spirit to enter the gifts of bread and wine that they might become the Body and Blood of our Lord
- ✓ The congregation prays for the entire Body of Christ, the Church.
- ✓ Finally, fully conscious of our miraculous status as God's children, we pray to him as Father in the Lord's Prayer.