

# The Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern)

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

*E* Tsayn *E* Voice

is a publication of

**Department of Mission Parishes**

*Rev. Fr. Tateos R. Abdalian*, Director

[www.armenianchurch-ed.net](http://www.armenianchurch-ed.net)

Diocesan Office: 212.686.0710

Email: [dertateos@armeniandiocese.org](mailto:dertateos@armeniandiocese.org)



## *a few words from der tateos . . .*

When we think of Pentecost, we usually view it as the birth of the Church, the point at which the Holy Spirit entered the Apostles giving them the ability, wisdom, courage, and power to travel to the four corners of the world to proclaim Christ Crucified and Christ risen, as we do today.

For that group of twelve, the feast of Pentecost was also something of a closure, a point of departure and a radical transformation from what they had been experiencing. They all left the Upper Room, probably for the last time, perhaps realizing that their entire group would never be together in one place ever again.



After three years of following their Master, listening, watching, trying to understand what they were witnessing, they now, on this day of Pentecost, were to end their days as the disciples or students and become the Apostles – the teachers of the Church. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon them was the end of the old and the beginning of the new.

As you will read below, today also is designated as Vocation's Day in our Diocese. On this day of all days, when we are to think of the Holy Spirit, our young men are asked to consider Vocation: the call of God to serve him, the dropping of everything, even our fishing nets, and following him into a crowded Cathedral or a small chapel saying, "Here I am Lord".

It is an inexplicable thing, a humbling thing, but for each who has responded to that call a very real thing. So perhaps on this day, the day when we consider the Holy Spirit leading and guiding the Early Church to its vocation, we should consider this important calling.

When we speak of vocation, we almost always think of vocations to the Priesthood. In our Armenian Church today, especially in our Diocese, this is of utmost concern. We must encourage our young men to consider becoming a priest of the Armenian Church. However, I want to look beyond this obvious call to vocation and think about the vocation of all of us.

---

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, had no doubt that vocation was what led the entire pilgrim people of God, not the select few men dressed in black at the front of the Church, but all of us. He quotes the prophet Joel who says:

*“God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams”*

God’s Spirit – the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Paraclete, the Comforter - these are all the same divine facet of God. God’s Spirit is not discriminatory, and comes to all, to men and women, to young and old, to rich and poor, to the clergy and to the laity alike; and I want to suggest to you today that we all have a vocation of one kind or another.

St. Peter wrote in his first letter:

*. . . like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5)*

We are all part of the living Church which was born on Pentecost day, and we are all a part of that holy priesthood in that Church: it is not Der Tateos’ church, it is not the Bishop’s church, or the Catholicos of All Armenians, or the Parish Council’s; and it is not the bricks and mortar and heating costs, but the Church is yours because it is you – the gathered faithful - and we all have a vocation as Christians toward that.

Vocation often means being set apart, called to be different, called to be Holy. And being a Christian in this very secular, unbelieving, cynical age is to be set apart. This call to vocation is an inclusive one: a call that should involve us all, not just the few of us who go to seminary.

We are all as Christians responding to some form of vocational call, for sometimes God calls individuals to his priesthood, to serve the people of God in worship and pastorally, but also and equally validly he calls people to other ministries: to the choir or the organ, to the Sunday school or the young people’s groups, or sometimes he simply calls us to a vocation to simply be, sometimes to simply be in our places of worship, and to worship him; for that is also a vocation.

For myself in responding to the call of God to serve him at the altar and in the ministry I am doing is not because of any excess piety on my behalf, not because I am considered to be more holy than the average, for really, very few clergy are any better at being a Christian than anyone reading this is. However, I believe my call to ministry is what God is asking of me, a request that I could not resist, but only whole-heartedly submit to.

I do not know what God calls each and every one of you to, but I know for certain that he does call. In response to that call from the Holy Spirit, I ask each of you to listen intently to the Holy Spirit calling you from within, and I urge you to respond to whatever he may call you to witness as Christians.

I especially appeal to the young men of our Diocese who perhaps have thought about the notion of entering seminary and priesthood and who have heard a whisper of calling, to talk to your pastor, or to Fr. Mardiros, the Dean of St. Nersess Seminary, or to me, or to any

---

other priest that you may know and respect. Certainly talk with God about it. Then listen to his answer that I believe, will please you more than any other.

As always, the choice is yours.



## The Feasts That We Commemorate

### The Feast of Pentecost

#### PENTECOST: An Armenian Tradition and Three Pentecost Prayers

This Sunday (June 8, 2014) is the Feast of Pentecost. According to the New Testament book of the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples were gathered in the upper room on the Jewish feast of Pentecost some time after Jesus' resurrection.

*Suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. -- Acts 2:2-4*

#### A Day and a Season

"Pentecost" means fifty days in Greek. It refers both to the fiftieth day after Easter, and also to that entire season of fifty days. The 8th century Armenian Church father and theologian St. John of Otzun says that during the fifty days of Pentecost, "every day is Sunday." By this he means that every day is a day to celebrate the Easter mystery of Christ risen and active among us. There should be no fasting and no kneeling down because these are penitential rites which are not compatible with the joy of Easter.

#### Ancient Ceremony of Genuflexion

One characteristic of the Feast of Pentecost in the Armenian Church and all other ancient Eastern churches is a ceremony of "Genuflexion" or kneeling down. After the festivities of Easter are completed on Pentecost Sunday, the church resumes its normal cycle of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays. In addition, the prohibition against kneeling down in prayer and penance is lifted. In fact, the churches celebrate this by ceremonially inviting the faithful to bend the knee for the first time since Easter.



In the Armenian tradition, this ceremony takes place during the *Badarak* (Divine Liturgy). The priest celebrating the Divine Liturgy interrupts the Eucharistic Prayer (before the words, *Arek, gerek...* (Take, eat...)) and reads three prayers which come to us from the ancient liturgy of Jerusalem. Each prayer is addressed to one member of the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Before each prayer a hymn is sung. After each prayer the priest invites all the faithful to bow down three times, saying, "With prayers, we fall on our knees and beseech the Lord."

### **St. John Chrysostom**

The three Pentecost Prayers are attributed to the great orator and theologian of the early church, St. John Chrysostom ("the golden mouth", *Vosgeperan*) who was enormously influential in the theology and liturgy of the Armenian Church. A priest born in Antioch, he became Bishop of Constantinople in the late fourth century. He died in exile in western Armenia.

Other traditions attribute the prayers to St. Basil the Great of Caesarea, another great saint of the fourth-century.

In most Eastern churches the Ceremony of Genuflexion has a penitential theme: kneeling down is seen as a sign of sinfulness and unworthiness. In the Armenian Church however, the three prayers to the Holy Trinity portray genuflexion on Pentecost as an act of adoration and worship. We kneel down before God to commemorate the descent of the Spirit on the Apostles on the first Pentecost day.

### **Pentecost and Baptism**

In the Armenian Church a newly-baptized child, having been immersed in the water and anointed with the sacred oil, is taken up the steps of the altar by the priest and with him bows down "before the holy altar, and before the holy sanctuary, and before the holy font." The Armenian prayers of genuflexion recall this act of adoration at baptism and can be understood as a renewal of divine gifts received at baptism.

The great scholar of Armenian Christianity, the Benedictine monk Charles Athanase Renoux has theorized that the Armenian version of the three Pentecost Prayers and Byzantine version are based on a common model which evolved differently in the two liturgical realms.

A complete English translation of these majestic prayers is provided below for the interest and edification of our people. If they are to be simply read, they can be considered a bit lengthy. If however, one offers them as prayer the time taken will be of no concern.



# Prayers of Adoration to the Holy Trinity on the Feast of Pentecost by St. John Chrysostom

Translated by V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan

## PRAYER TO THE FATHER

Almighty, immaculate God, Father without origin; invisible, infinite, indescribable, uncircumscribable, immutable, unknowable, unreachable; you, who alone have immortality, abiding in unapproachable light;



Through your Word, you created the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land, and all creatures that are in them; and through your Spirit, all creatures came into existence.

And for the sake of your infinite love for the human race [Eph 2:4-5], you sent your only-begotten Son to save us from the curse of Adam. He descended from heaven, took body from the holy and immaculate Virgin Mary by means of the Holy Spirit. He bore all human passions except for sin, and he liberated us from the passions of sin.

And having endured the cross and death for us, he liberated us from servitude to Satan and from the adoration of idols.

And he taught [us] to bend our knees and necks to the all-Holy Trinity, to offer prayers, and to ask for the forgiveness of our sins.

And after his resurrection, he appeared to his disciples with various signs [Acts 1:3-4], sharing the bread with them for forty days, for the establishment of the faith of his life-giving economy.

And when he ascended into heaven on the fortieth day of his resurrection, he placed his hand upon, and blessed his disciples [Lk 24:50], bestowing upon them the perfect gifts of apostleship.

And he opened their minds to comprehend the Scriptures [Lk 24:32]. He commanded them to remain in Jerusalem and to await the divine promise [Acts 1:4], the good news of the heavenly Father who loves mankind.

You, Lord, gave the human race the infinite grace of your mercy. You sent the Holy Spirit, consubstantial with you, on this great Sunday, at the completion of the fiftieth day of the resurrection of the Savior, at the third hour, when the first father was created by the life-giving divine breath of the Holy Spirit [Gen 2:7], lost to him because he tasted the fruit and died. Again at the same hour, he was brought back to life by the descent of the Holy Spirit on the ranks of the apostles.

Appearing in tongues of fire, [the Holy Spirit] rested upon them [Acts 2:4] and filled them with all-abundant grace to speak in every tongue and ear, ministering with one voice to the Holy Spirit. He gave birth, as a first birth, to the three thousand [Acts 2:41], in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [Mt 28:19], and they first worshipped the Holy Trinity.

With them, today we too bend our knee and our neck and beseech with your apostles. Receive our adoration with theirs, and [with those] who, with the same worthiness, have mystically adored you until now.

---

Hear us on this great day of Pentecost, on the very day that you sent the Holy Spirit here below, after the ascension into heaven of your Son Jesus, in whom, we call to you in faith.

Look from the heights of your holiness upon these your people, who stand before you and await your great mercy.

Send your beneficent Holy Spirit today into this your temple, and upon these who have assembled in it, as [you sent Him] in those days in the Upper Room upon the apostles.

So that your only-begotten Son may always be sacrificed here, as in the upper room, where, delivering the Holy Mystery, he distributed it to the disciples at the mystical supper; and he washed their feet; and he appeared through the closed doors on the first Sunday of his resurrection in the evening [Jn 20:19, 26], and again on the eighth day in the upper room.

And at the completion of these days of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended with a breath of wind, and he filled them with fire, together with the holy ones who were united to them.

For this we glorify you, beneficent Lord, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we entreat you with all our heart. Look upon us in kindness, and remember in compassion and mercy us, who have suffered, and who have been condemned, and who take refuge in you. Reverse the enslavement of our spirits, seized by the Slanderer, and restore us, who have fallen and are lost.

We entreat you, loving Lord, for although we have sinned, yet we have fallen on you from the womb of the font, and you are our God. Do not let us out of your hands, for our days of vanity have dwindled, and we have become disgraced before our enemies; the laughing-stock and the mockery of those who hate us.

Instead, hoping in your mercy which came to be on this day, we implore you. Open for us the gate of your mercy [Ps 117:19] and purify us from the secrets of our sins.

See the lowliness of your servants, and forgive us all our trespasses, voluntary and involuntary, known and unknown.

Grant expiation for your people and cleanse us all by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Save us from the clutch of the enemy and fortify our lives against the contriving snares of the Slanderer.

Commit us to an angel of peace, you, who prepare what we need before we ask. Make us worthy before we die to turn to you in confession and in penance.

Make of us, together with the holy apostles, a temple to receive your Holy Spirit [1Cor 6:19]. And with them, write our names in the book of life [Phil 4:3].

Assemble all of us in your kingdom in the supernal Zion, in your heavenly and most high upper room. For mercy is yours, and to you, and to your only-begotten Son, and to the Holy Spirit we send up glory, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

---

## PRAYER TO THE SON

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who granted your peace to your holy apostles [Jn 20:22] by breathing into them, and who today manifestly bestowed the Holy Spirit upon them. Having come from the Father, he abided in them, and dispersed their sorrow. And in tongues of fire resting on their tongues, he opened their mouths to speak in all tongues.

And all mankind, who, because of the tower had been scattered in polytheistic aberrations, he unified in the one knowledge of the true three persons of your power. He taught [mankind] to glorify the one God in all languages, throughout the whole universe, by the proclamation of the Gospel; and to bend the knee to the same one God, as did the three thousand, who were reborn on this day in baptism.

With them, we too have been enlightened by the same Spirit. In faith we bend our knee to the all-holy Trinity, and all of us assembled entreat you unanimously.

Look upon me, unworthy as I am, who offer the prayers of these people to you, before your holy altar.

Open, Lord, the lips of this sinner, as those of the blessed apostles, and fill us with your Holy Spirit, so that we may commune with all the graces given by you, with your chosen ones. And do not, on account of my many sins, impede the flow of your mercy toward us, who stand in hope before you and entreat your infinite compassion.

Make your servants worthy of your divine gifts; of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and the fear of God [Is 11:2]. Fill our minds with a spirit of fear. [Grant us] a pure heart and right spirit [Ps 51:10] and restore in us pure minds, loving One.

Direct our goings along spotless paths by your Holy Spirit, you, who are the harbor of ships, so that we may reflect always on your law, and keep your commandments and carry out your orders, and preach your words. Answer our prayers and our requests for the better.



You, who united our infirm nature to your unimpaired divinity, and through it joined yourself to our afflictions and healed our infirmities;

Hear us, God our Savior, and bend your ear to us who are assembled in adoration in your holy church, in the likeness of your chosen ones in the holy upper room.

Purify us of all the filth of sin, and send your Holy Spirit on us, united in faith, so that He may abide in us and enlighten our minds in the light of the knowledge of God, and lead us in all truth in the observance of your commandments. May He make us skilled in the law of the divine testaments, which the prophets and the apostles and the vartabeds spoke by the Holy Spirit, who will teach us and strengthen us to do all.

I entreat you and implore you to look in conciliation upon this your people, the price of your holy blood [cf. 1Cor 6:20, 7:23]. Do not ignore their entreaties on account of my many transgressions, for they are your saved ones, and to you do they lift up their hands and ask for conciliation.

Now receive the genuflexion of these who pray as from those who are newly enlightened, and the

---

lifting up of their hands as an evening offering; and their prayer, as sweet incense before your beneficent lordship. And cover them under the shadow of your wings, protecting them from visible and invisible enemies. So that living in this world with pure Christian faith, we may be worthy of heavenly life with all your saints, and that giving thanks, we may glorify you with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

You, true God, who are Lord of power, fountain of light and of life, flowing unsearchably from the Father, O miracle-working Holy Spirit, promised to the holy apostles by Christ our God. By his death, he broke the chains of death and locked the origin of sin in the inextinguishable flame and in the outer darkness.

There, with unbreakable chains he firmly locked up the vile dragon with his rebellious powers, and by his resurrection he rescued from hell those who were sequestered there, the sons who had fallen asleep because of Adam.

And going up to the Father with our nature, at the fulfillment of all good things and at the completion of all the mysteries, he sent you, the Renewer, the life-giving Holy Spirit, as the Comforter [Jn 14:16, 26] for those in sorrow.

You, O inaccessible One, came  
came into the upper room from  
and grace your chosen ones, whom  
Word of life throughout the entire



down, God from God the Father, and  
heaven, and filled with ineffable joy  
you sent as a proclamation of the  
earth.

They filled the universe with your full  
whole world to the one Godhead,  
idols.

knowledge, Lord, and introduced the  
abolishing the worship of useless

Through the holy font they gave birth to the Gentiles, for adoption by the heavenly Father, and they made them all worshippers of the all-Holy Trinity.

In all places they laid the foundation of the holy church and they erected the table of your glory, from which they fed all who believe in you with the immortal Mystery. Turning earth into heaven, they made the earthly equal to the heavenly.

And now, O Lord our God, merciful and loving, receive the requests which we make of you, and give rest to those of ours who have fallen asleep, who, also enlightened by spiritual birth, became worthy of the name "Christian," and participating in the divine Body and Blood [1Cor 10:16], they have left this world in faith and right teaching. Today, on the great day of your appearance, we have commemorated them in the hope of this saving Badarak.

Lord almighty, God of the mortal and of the immortal, creator of all and Lord of life and death; provider for body, and in the future, the hope of all the corners of the earth; who, on the last day of the great feast of Pentecost exhilarated by your glorious advent those who were assembled in your name in the upper room, hear also now the voice of our supplications, and remember those who have fallen asleep, (our fathers and brothers), and give them rest in a place of light and in the tabernacles of your saints.

---

Remember their prayers and implorations, and their confession both in this life and at death, and grant forgiveness for all their transgressions. Make all of them worthy to await the distribution of the good and glorious things to come, which you have prepared for your beloved, and with them [make them worthy] to bless the all-holy Trinity.

And to us, assembled in your name in your holy temple, worshippers and celebrants of the day of your all-saving advent, grant your heavenly peace and the renewal of [our] souls and bodies from the staleness of sin so that we may be born again in repentance and tears. And strengthen us all, in sobriety and righteousness, together with the holy apostles, so that we may abide in you, lest there be in us any opportunity or occasion for evil.

Purify the lips and tongues of your servants by means of the fiery tongues, so that with spiritual blessing we may be worthy to sing, and to say psalms, and to pray at all times with the spiritual ones; with a holy heart and humble spirit to offer you the rational service, and from the depths of the heart, with tearful pleading, to ask you for expiation.

Fortify our entire life in fear of you, and defend and protect us from evil thoughts, words and deeds.

Make us worthy to live in your pleasure, and according to your will to complete the course [of our lives] in the confession of the true faith and ardent contrition, participating in the saving Mystery, with a priestly funeral, with offerings and sacrifices to make commemoration before your holy altar always.

Falling down before you, we ask, O loving Holy Spirit, that you also keep our souls fearless in their journeys during this bodily life, so that they be spared from ethereal and vile demons; that you may lead them on a straight path [Ps 142:10] in this blessed life and in this station of the just, where the souls of the saints bless you joyously. And at the renewal to come, when the Savior, consubstantial with you, comes to awaken all at the sound of the archangel's trumpet, and the voice of God;

And when you, our God and Lord, Holy Spirit, receive all mankind through the resurrection, and renew each one in spirit from the threat of Gehenna, and exempt them from unforgivable torment, and join them in the camps of your saints, with those who love your name, to become heirs of the kingdom of heaven; then we too, your rational flock, who believe in you, shall bless and glorify the all-holy Trinity, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



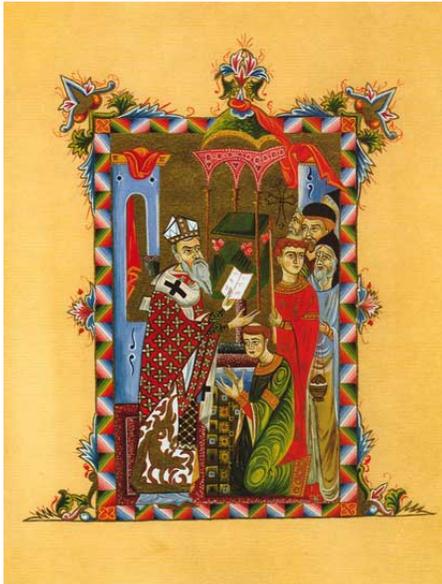
## VOCATION DAY

If you take a look at the Diocesan calendar published each year, you may notice that coinciding with the Feast of Pentecost is VOCATION DAY. This is the once a year seemingly obligatory mentioning of the vocation of priesthood and of those who have chosen priesthood as their life's journey. But you have to really look hard and take the time to discern just what the words VOCATION DAY really signifies.

---

There's not a lot of fanfare associated with the day. In fact, little if anything is done either in our parishes or on the Diocesan level to have our faithful even take notice of the day. Two words printed on a calendar is about all the notice this day is given.

Yet we clamor that there are not enough priests serving in our Diocese. There is a shortage of properly trained Deacons, Sub Deacons, Choir Directors, Choir members, and Sunday School Teachers to serve and staff our parishes.



The Feast of Pentecost was chosen for Vocation Day since it marks the birth of the Church. And if we are to celebrate the birth of the Church we need remind ourselves that in order for the Church - us - to continue and carry out her mission, we need properly trained clergy to accomplish this. Reading from the Book of Acts, one of the first things the Apostles did after going out into the world to begin their mission was to ordain Deacons to assist them.

With just about every issue of *eTsayn*, the question **Is God Calling You?** is boldly printed occasionally with a picture or two of a clergyman and some names of those who could help you "discern" what you may be hearing.

*eTsayn* is proud to claim that it is the only Diocesan publication - world wide - that has constantly posed this question with the intent of having young men taking the time to "discern" the answer.

Our readership is asked, in commemoration of VOCATION DAY, to do two things.

First, say "Thank You" to your pastor and all clergymen for answering the call of God to serve Him and for his service to our Armenian Church.

Next, go and speak with that young man whom you see coming to church each week, serving at the altar, or singing in the choir, perhaps telling him how he is appreciated and maybe he should consider becoming a priest.

**You may never know how much influence you can have unless you actually speak up.**



***The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send our laborers into his harvest. Matt 9.35***

---

We need to look at this verse through the lens of Vocation. The Lord of the harvest, presumably God, needs to call more folks to help. Help how, where, when you ask?

So often we equate – and rightly so – the harvest with the Church and the harvesters are church leaders, the clergy. This text does speak of a call for more vocations to the ordained priesthood. But what if the harvest is seen as all of us continuing the work of Christ – proclaiming the good news of the Resurrection of eternal life, of curing diseases and sicknesses, of helping feed the hungry and clothe the naked?

Then perhaps the vocations we now focus on are characterized by humanitarian efforts and social justice such as working for the good of mankind. The difference and specialness of such vocations is not the garb we wear, or the ecclesiastical order and place of honor priests hold within the church. Rather, it lies in bold and constant proclamation of the Christ who calls each of us to work compassionately for one another.

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"  
And I said, "Here am I; send me!" (Isaiah 6.8)*

**Is the voice of the Lord asking you the same question? Perhaps.**



***To better discern the answer, you may want to speak with Fr. Mardiros Chevian, Dean of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.***

***Contact him at***

***dean@stnersess.edu or 914-636-2003.***



**and finally, received in der hayr's email box from Mrs. Sara . . .**

---

**The first ever  
Cordless Phone  
was created by  
God.**

**He named it  
"Prayer"...**

**It never Loses its  
Signal and U never  
have to Recharge it.  
Use it Anywhere...!**

