

*Saint John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit  
22001 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, MI 48075*

**THE RITE OF INITIATION INTO THE  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

**The Canon of the Sacrament of Baptism  
of the  
Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church**

**Կանոն Սուրբ Մկրտութեան Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ**

Baptism, Chrismation/Confirmation (affirmation of the Holy Spirit) and Communion are the most important Mysteries or Sacraments of the Church. The Order of Baptism of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church includes all three Sacraments aforementioned which together are understood as one's Initiation into the Armenian Church.

Jesus Himself received Baptism and the Confirmation of the Holy Spirit when he Himself was baptized by Saint John the Baptist in the Jordan River. By this example, Christ the Lord set a standard by which all human beings can become Children of God.

The Church faithfully and diligently observed Christ's ordinance to baptize all those who wanted to enter the Kingdom of God.

Through Baptism a person enters the Church of Christ, becomes a member of the Body of Christ, and is cleansed of sin.

By Chrismation, the new Christian is sealed and anointed with Holy Chrism oil (called *Muron* in Armenian) and by anointing receives the Divine Energies of the Holy Spirit and is affirmed as a member of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

With Holy Communion, the new Christian is nourished with Christ's Body and Blood and united with Him and the eternal Kingdom of God.

The order of Baptism is a public service. In this rite of Christian Initiation the child is brought into the fullness of the Church of Christ, welcomed into the fellowship of the community and invited by the priest to a new life with the assurance of salvation.

Baptism is celebrated only once. The Church's Creed, which is the profession of Faith, declares quite clearly that ***We believe in only one baptism for the forgiveness and remission of sins.*** If Baptism had been administered in any Christian Church in the name of the Holy Trinity—The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit—the rite cannot be repeated again. It is accepted as valid and sacramental.

## **THE GODPARENTS**

The parents and Godparents take upon themselves the responsibility of raising the child in a way that he or she comes to know God, Jesus, His Son and the power and graces of the Holy Spirit within the family and as they worship and speak about their faith as Christians.

They promise to bring the children to God in accordance with the Orthodox Faith of the Armenian Church. At one point during the service, the Godparents, on behalf of the child who cannot yet speak, will declare the Orthodox Faith. Thus the child of God—whether an adult or infant—is taken into the fellowship of the Church where he or she will grow in Christ.

In the ritual of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church, the three great mysteries or Sacraments of the Church are given: Baptism by immersion in water, Chrismation—the anointing with oil and sealing of the Faith—and Holy Communion, the Body and Blood of Christ which is our meal that connects us with the Lord.

The Armenian words for these Sacraments are:

**Baptism-*Muhgurdootiyune***

**Chrismation-*Troshm* or *Gnoonk***

**Holy Communion-*Soorb Haghortootiyune***

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SACRAMENTAL RITE**

### **1. At the Door of the Church**

The Presentation & Penitential Psalms

Renunciation of Satan

Godfather & Godmother - Psalm 22:10

*“Upon Thee was I cast from my birth and since my mother bore me, Thou hast been my God.”*

### **Renunciation**

*We renounce Satan and his every deceit, his wiles, his counsels, his goings, his evil will, his evil angels, his evil ministers, his evil agents and his every evil power, renouncing we renounce.*

## **CONFESSION OF FAITH**

Godparents: We believe in the All-Holy Trinity, in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit, in the Annunciation of Gabriel, in the nativity of Christ, in His Baptism, in His Passion, in His Crucifixion, in His three-day Burial, in His Resurrection, His Ascension as God, His sitting at the right hand of the Father and His aweful and glorious second coming, we confess and believe.

## **2. Entrance into the Church and Rite of Baptism**

Godparents will be asked, “What does this child request?” and shall answer, “FAITH, HOPE, LOVE AND BAPTISM.”

In Armenian, *HAVADK, HOOYS, SER YEV MUGURDOOTYUNE*.

to be Baptized and justified,  
to be cleansed of sins,  
to be freed from demons,  
and to serve God.

## **3. Chrismation with Holy *Muron***

## **4. Adoration at the Holy Altar and First Holy Communion**

## **5. Benediction**

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION**

1. A date shall be set for the Baptism and Chrismation in consultation with the Pastor.

Baptisms can take place on any day of the week. According to the canon, practice and tradition of the Armenian Church, the Sacrament should be administered anytime during the eighth to the fortieth day after the birth of a child. We do not recommend delaying or deferring the rite for a later time in order to safeguard the spiritual salvation of the child.

2. The Major Witness of the Baptism, either the Godfather or Godmother or both, must be communicant members of the same faith into which the child is being baptized, i.e. members of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church. If only one of the Godparents is a baptized member of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church, the other Godparent must have been baptized in the Christian faith.

The Godparents at Baptism, like the parents, accept a responsibility in teaching and sharing the Faith with their Godchild. It is expected that they watch the spiritual growth and development of the child by their own Christian example, by education and full participation in the life of the Church and parish community.

3. Prior to the Baptism the Pastor will meet with the parents and Godparents at which time he shall inform them of their responsibilities.

4. It is customary that the Godparent(s) give to the child a small gold Armenian Cross that will be blessed at the beginning of the service and placed on the child.

5. Items needed for the day of the Baptism

-Two large white towels - one to cover the child after clothing is removed and the second one for drying the child after the baptism.

-“The Robe of Gladness” - a white baptismal gown which will be worn after the Baptism and Chrismation.

6. Post-Baptismal Bath

The full washing of the child is to be done at home on the third day after the Baptism. The water used for the bath is not to be emptied down the drain, but is to be collected and poured in the soil of a garden or lawn. The reason for this is that there may still be some Holy *Muron* left on the child’s body which was transferred into the water. Also, when the undergarments of the child are washed for the very first time after the Baptism, the water should be dispensed in the same manner.