

GUIDELINES FOR BAPTISM

1. A date shall be set for baptism in joint consultation with the Pastor and arrangements must be made three months prior to the sacrament.
2. All baptisms are to follow the Canons of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church. The Sacraments will be explained by the Pastor.
3. All donations are the responsibility of the person involved. It is a tradition in the Armenian Church that the Godparents incur the costs of the church portion of the expenses as well as any participating clergymen. The customary donation to the church is \$ 200.00 for dues paying members or St. Gregory Stewards (\$400.00 for non-dues paid members).
4. The gift to the Pastor shall be left to the family's discretion. The fee for the services of a **visiting or guest priest** is according to the individual wishes of the family (the customary minimum gift is \$200.00) plus travel expenses. A deacon is necessary during the sacrament and the customary gift is \$100.00. If a specific deacon is requested, the Pastor shall be the one to invite him.
5. Before any guest priest is engaged, the Pastor **must** be consulted. According to protocol of the Armenian Church, the Pastor must be the one to invite any guest clergy. If the guest priest is a member of the Armenian Church he may be invited to perform all or part of the service. In addition to an Armenian Priest, should a priest of a different Christian denomination be invited, the Pastor shall decide the appropriateness of his participation. The Pastor will assign to him those portions he sees fit according to the Canons and traditions of the Armenian Church and it should be clear that any priest of a different denomination is an invited guest and not a con-celebrant.
6. According to a directive of the Eastern Diocese, one of the Godparents (Godfather or Godmother) of the child to be baptized **must** be a baptized and chrismated member of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church. Each child to be baptized will have only one Godmother and one Godfather.
7. The Armenian Church has no explicit provisions for a Godmother at Baptism. We can consider a Godmother the person who takes care of the child during the performance of the Order of Baptism by holding the child during the ceremony, and dressing and undressing the child at the prescribed times.

8. The specific items needed for baptism (should be provided by the Godparents) are the following:

INFANTS:

- A. A chain and cross for the Neophyte (Newly Baptized). The cross must be Armenian in style. “Crucifix” style crosses are not part of the tradition of the Armenian Church.
- B. A white outfit to be worn after the Chrismation.
- C. One or two new large white towels not to be used for any other purpose.
- D. A “Narod” will be provided by the church.

It is recommended that the Pastor meet with the parents and Godparents at least once, prior to the Baptism, in order to explain the Sacrament.

ADULTS: To be instructed by the Pastor.

9. “Infants” and “Adults” will be determined by specific case.

10. Photographs may be taken at any time during the ceremony. Caution should be used by the photographer (or videographer) not to blind the eyes of the Priest, Deacon or any other member of the baptismal party. At no time nor for any reason will the photographer ascend the steps of the Altar or be at the Altar itself.

11. A baptism is a sacrament of the Armenian Church and a public service and no person may be excluded from the Church, except where the invited list approximates the seating capacity and if cards of admission have been issued.

12. After the ceremony, because Holy Muron (Holy Chrism) has been used to anoint the child when he/she is bathed for the first week, the bath water should be poured into the soil rather than into a water waste system.

13. If the Pastor, deacon or other guest clergy are to be invited to a reception, he (they) should be sent an invitation.