

Fourth Sunday After the Nativity –Four Minor Orders

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian
St. Sarkis Armenian Church. Carrollton, TX
February 5, 2017
Gospel Reading: John 6:15-21*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

This coming Saturday evening we will have an ordination for five boys who will be ordained acolytes. The word acolyte comes from a Greek word which means “beginning of a journey”; a spiritual journey which these boys will begin. The Armenian word is դպիր/t’bir, which means “one who studies”. This is where we get the word for school դպրոց/t’brots.

The service will begin with the bishop cutting the hair of those being ordained in the sign of a cross and as he cuts their hair, he says, “As your hair is cut off, may the desires of this world also be cut off from your heart”. After this, the bishop gives them two things: a book of psalms and a broom. The psalms were the first prayers of the Church and he tells them, “What you read with your lips, you must also believe in your heart; and that you believe in your heart, you must show with your deeds.” The broom symbolizes and shows that they must work and serve the Lord, no matter how lowly the act might be.

When a boy is ordained to the rank of acolyte, in reality, he is given four ranks at once; four responsibilities which are represented with four symbols. The first is the rank of doorkeeper. He is given a key and is charged to **protect** everything in the house of the Lord. The second rank is reader, symbolized with the lectionary, all the readings of the Church. He is told to **proclaim** what he reads for all to hear. The third rank is exorcist and he is given the Armenian Church Book of Rituals, which he is to **learn**. He must learn the prayers to heal and renounce Satan from all who come to Holy Baptism. And the final rank is candleholder. For this rank he is given a physical candleholder and a cruet (a little glass bottle for wine) and he is charged to **enlighten** the church and to **fill** the bottle with wine.

So what does this mean for us and the five who are being ordained? They have been ordered to **protect, proclaim, learn, enlighten** and **fill**, but unfortunately, there is often a misconception that only the ordained should do these things and those who are not ordained are either not supposed to or don’t bother to do these things. In reality, we are all called to **protect, proclaim, learn, enlighten** and **fill** through the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

This is also why an ordination is not a private initiation or secret event, but a public demonstration of faith. It is a reminder to everyone what we have all been charged to do.

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The Book of Psalms and the broom remind us that we must have faith and put that faith into action and works. We must also **protect** what he have been given, namely the Holy Gospel. We must **proclaim** the Holy Gospel. We must **learn** the Holy Gospel. We must **enlighten** the souls, minds and hearts of others with the light of the Holy Gospel. And in doing all of this, we ultimately will **fill** people's lives with peace, comfort, hope, and love.

So I hope that everyone will come and support our altar servers, but that we will also be reminded that each and every one of us is called to serve God in our own way. We are called every day to **protect**, to **proclaim**, to **learn**, to **enlighten** and to **fill** with the blessings and talents which God Almighty has given us.

Amen.

	Minute	Length
Armenian	0:07	2:42
English	2:49	2:14
Armenian	5:03	2:04
English	7:07	1:55
Armenian	9:02	3:04
English	12:06	1:52
Conclusion	14:58	1:12
Total		16:10

Minute 7:14 →
