

Welcoming His Holiness...

When arriving at your Church, His Holiness Karekin II will be greeted with bread and salt; he will bless the two and then dip the bread in the salt and take a bite as a symbol of thanksgiving for your parish's welcoming him.

Bread and salt are life-giving elements and symbolize man's essential needs. The blessing recited by His Holiness is a plea to God to achieve meaning in life and to thank Him for His mercies.

In the Armenian Church, this blessing is an ancient ceremony. It is performed by the Catholicos, the Patriarchs and Bishops of the Church whenever beginning a journey, pilgrimage or visit. This act of sanctification is done to remind us all that we are the salt

(carriers of God's Word) of the creation (Earth) and our wellbeing and safety of the lands, seas, and creatures are totally dependent on how we savor or season them.

Upon the arrival of the Catholicos, a Hrashapar (Arm., wondrously glorious) service is traditionally offered by the Church or Cathedral involved. It is a service of Welcome and also, on the part of the Catholicos, a service of Thanksgiving for having reached his destination safely and an acknowledgement of the honor being bestowed upon him. The service itself is brief and consists of the singing of the Hymn of Pontifical significance and the recitation of an appropriate Psalm.

ՀՐԱՇԱՓԱՌ

Հրաշափառ Աստուած եւ միշտ
բարեխնամող, որ յառաջ գիտութեամբ
գփրկութիւն Հայաստանեայց
սկզբնաւորեալ ի պարթեական մեղապարտ
ազգէն Լուսաւորիչ մեզ շնորհեցեր. վասն
որոյ բարեխօսութեամբ սորա Փրկիչ կեցո
գմեզ այժմ եւ ի քո յահաւոր գալստեանդ:

HRASHAPAR

Wondrously glorious and ever-beneficent God, who by they foreknowledge did ordain the salvation of the Armenian people and did give us an Enlightener from the sinful Parthian family, through whose intercession, O Savior, save us now and at thine awesome coming.

GREETING MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY

The greeter should approach the clergy to ask his blessing by kissing his right hand. Why do we do this? According to the canon of Ordination of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the hands and the forehead of the priest to be are anointed by the Holy Muron (Holy Oil) during the Ordination Service. That holy anointment imparts to the priest that same mysterious power which was given to the apostles by Jesus Christ Himself, "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you lose on earth shall be lost in heaven." (Matt 16:19)

This is why, when we meet a priest, we approach them while extending the proper greeting based on their rank while we kiss their right hand, receiving it into our own hand(s). This is the traditional way of greeting an Armenian priest and is more respectful and appropriate than simply shaking their hand. They have the authority to bless and sanctify and have dedicated their lives to Christ and His Church. It is for this reason that we treat them with special respect.

When we kiss a clergyman's right hand, we show respect for his very office and calling. So, be the one who knows our Tradition and doesn't shake the priest's hand but kisses it, thereby asking for his blessing.



FUN FACTS ABOUT HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II

- This is the second official visit to the Eastern Diocese (the first was the 1,700th Anniversary visit)
- As Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness has made Pontifical Visits to 21 countries.
- His Holiness has undertaken 6 Ecumenical Visits during his pontificate.
- Vehapar prefers tea over coffee.
- It's not uncommon for His Holiness to be at work in his private study well past midnight, communicating with his churches in time zones spanning the globe from Australia to Armenia.
- His Holiness knew he wanted to be a priest by the age of 14.
- Vehapar has 2 brothers and 3 sisters.

ADDRESSING THE CLERGY	Verbal Address	Armenian Greeting	English Greeting
Catholicos of All Armenians	Վնհափառ Տէր Vehapar Der	Աստուած Օգնական, Վնհափառ Տէր Asdvadz Ognagan, Vehapar Der	May God be your helper, Your Holiness
Archbishop (Patriarch)	Սրբազան Պատրիարք Հայր Srpazan Badriark Hayr	Աստուած Օգնական Սրբազան Պատրիարք Հայր Asdvadz Ognagan Srpazan Badriark Hayr	May God be your helper, Your Beatitude
Archbishop and Bishop	Սրբազան Հայր Srpazan Hayr	Աստուած Օգնական Սրբազան Հայր Asdvadz Ognagan Srpazan Hayr	May God be your helper, Your Eminence
Celibate Priest	Հայր Սուրբ Hayr Soorp	Աստուած Օգնական Հայր Սուրբ Asdvadz Ognagan, Hayr Soorp	May God be your helper, Holy Father
Married Priest	Տէր Հայր Der Hayr	Օրհնեցէ՛ք Տէր Հայր Orhnetzek Der Hayr	Bless me, Father