

RAISING SAINTS

CHILDREN + FAMILY MINISTRY // WEEKLY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS + PARENTS

SUNDAY OF THE WORLD CHURCH – GREEN SUNDAY

The Sundays which follow Easter are seven in number until the Feast of Pentecost. The third Sunday is also called the Sunday of the World Church pointing to the Upper Room where Jesus had the Last Supper with his disciples (Luke 22:7-12) The importance of this designation is not merely of the place, but what it has meant for all of Christendom.

1. We know from the Gospels that it is in the Upper Room where Jesus gave us the Holy Eucharist:

Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Mat 26:26-29).

2. After Jesus' crucifixion and burial, the fearful disciples gathered there. This is where the Oilbearing Women, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and Susanna came running after they had seen the empty tomb to tell Peter and all the other disciples that Jesus was raised from the dead! It is here that Jesus appeared to them after his resurrection, to reassure them that indeed he lived as we read in the Gospel of Luke.

Jesus himself stood among them. But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw

a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them. (Luke 24:36-43)

3. Finally, it is in this Upper Room where Jesus' followers, along with Mary, the Holy Mother of God, and all the apostles gathered, waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit as they were instructed by the risen Lord Jesus Christ. This happened on Pentecost. They continued to meet there regularly to pray and break bread, just as Jesus had done at the Last Supper. In essence, this is where the beginnings of the Church community took place. That is why we call this Sunday, the Sunday of the World Church, since the life of all Christian communities is connected to what happened in that Upper Room in Jerusalem. Today, that same Upper Room exists. It is the Cathedral of the Assyrian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem. According to tradition, the Upper Room was the home of the evangelist Mark.

Learning from the experience of the first Christians, let us be faithful to the importance of gathering as the people of God. We do that each time we come together to pray and offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Receiving the consecrated bread and wine become the Body and Blood of the Lord, we are invited to become the living body of Jesus Christ as the loving presence to all those around us.

Let us churches who trace their beginnings to the Upper Room, which we have come to know as the World Church, Ash-khar-ha-ma-door, Աշխարհամասնոր.

It is noteworthy that this year we are observing the 850th year of the eternal rest of St. Nersess remember firmly, that we, as members of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church are part and parcel of all the Graceful. He was an influential theologian and hymnographer of the Armenian Church. He has enriched our services with hymns and songs which redirect the Armenian people's focus onto Christ as the light of the world. A very familiar song which we sing during the Night Service is Aravod Looso. As a theologian he worked diligently to strengthen bonds of understanding and unity with sister Churches. This year a joint committee of Holy Etchmiadzin and the Vatican will celebrate his untiring efforts to realize the Oneness of Jesus' Christ's Church.

Be faithful to our ancestors in faith and gather regularly to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, just as the early Christians did in the Upper Room, having the Holy Mother of God with them. She and all the saints are still with us during Badarak, as we remember them during the Dypthics.

YN. SIRARPI AIVAZIAN

Note: The material for the children will be presented in three levels in order to make it age appropriate:

Level 1: Ages 5-8 (K-3rd grades)

Level 2: Ages 9-12 (4-7th grades)

Level 3: Ages 13-17 (8-12th grades)

