



Hope is Nurtured During the Holy Badarak

Rev. Dr. Fr. Stépanos Dingilian © 2011

“I read the Bible, say my prayers, and help others. I don’t need to go Church Badarak.” How often have we heard this comment from well intentioned people? It seems to make sense that all one needs to do is read the Bible, pray, and help others and that would make him or her a person who enjoys the full spiritual benefits and strength of the Christian Way of Life. Yet, such people miss out on the true potential of the Christian life: The hope that brings peace, joy, and determination for growth and progress that is based upon the Christian Faith that Jesus Christ demonstrates through his exemplary life.

Christ emphasized and blessed the faithful with spiritual “peace” that no one else could give and the world cannot take away. Christ also shared his life with us so that our “joy may be full.” Yet, Christ also emphasized that living the Christian Way of life is difficult - “many are called but a few are chosen.” In order to embrace all these and live a true Christian life, we as human beings need to create the hope that we can transform our faith into the vision of love, of peace, joy, and courage that Christ gave us. In our daily personal, family, career, and social life, this hope that has come from our childhood can only be nurtured in the Church, during the Divine Liturgy, the Holy Badarak. Below are three reasons for this reality.

First, it is during the Holy Badarak, in the midst of the prayers, hymns, liturgical movements, and presence of other community members that we can set aside our anxieties and bring out our true priorities in life. Stress often comes from being anxious about making so many decisions and trying to be so many places at the same time. Yet, being in the Church Sanctuary, taking part in the Badarak, helps us prioritize properly so our anxieties could be lowered and we’d be at peace.

Second, once we prioritize properly it is much easier to plan to move forward with our decisions and actions. It is very difficult to plan when we are anxious, but much easier when we are at peace. When we have a plan of action in life or in any matter, we have that sense of relief and even joy, and we are ready to face life’s challenges with excitement.

Third, this peace and joy that we develop to respond to our challenges remain in our imagination until we develop the hope, that is the courage and determination to reasonably and willfully bring about our plans. This is the hope we can develop only in the Church during the Holy Badarak. When we develop this hope, then we can have a sense of rebuilding, revitalizing, along with the initiative and determination to face the world and attain the objectives we have.

Often people say that “Badarak is too long and too boring.” It could be so *only if* we do not participate in it with heart, mind and soul. The Holy Badarak is much more uplifting than any prayer, far more peaceful than meditation, and more inspiring than any social, artistic, and benevolent work could ever be, because it transforms us with heart, mind, soul and power into a more hopeful person, family, and community. It is then that we can affirm with many who state: “If I don’t participate in the Badarak on Sunday, I feel that something is missing in me the whole week long. *But now that I have taken part in the Holy Badarak, I sense stronger, more peaceful and hopeful that I can handle anything that comes my way.*”