

The Liturgy of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – Adapted from the Rite of the Armenian Orthodox Church

Prior to the rite the following preparations are made.

“A sufficient amount of sweet basil sprigs, to be distributed to the congregation, is obtained.”

“A (silver) tray large enough to hold an altar size cross is covered with the sprigs of basil. The cross is placed (in standing position) on the tray and generously decorated with basil.”

Following the Eucharist on Holy Cross Day (or at another appropriate time) the celebrant and attendants take their place at the basil cross, which is on a table either in the center of the nave or at the head of the central aisle of the church.

Officiant and People

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy and Immortal, you were crucified for us,

Have mercy on us.

The officiant and attendants then carry the basil cross (on the tray) to the west part of the sanctuary, saying as they go:

Today on the feast of the renewal of the church in Jerusalem the sign of the Lord our God appeared in great brilliance.

People

O peoples, bless Christ; rejoice and be glad.

Officiant

For the rays of the holy life-creating cross appeared from the east in sun-lit brilliance, in radiant light.

People

O peoples, bless Christ; rejoice and be glad.

Officiant

The Lord's sign, flaming and terrible, marvelous new wonder, appeared from the heavens on Holy Golgotha.

People

O peoples, bless Christ; rejoice and be glad.

The officiant, taking the cross from the tray, raises it and facing to the east says:

Let the eastern part of the land be blessed, protected and guarded by Providence by the sign of the Holy Cross, and by the holy Gospel and by the grace of this day, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People

Amen. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The officiant and attendants then carry the basil cross to the east part of the sanctuary, saying as they go:

You stretched out your spotless arms on the Cross, O Christ our God, and in it gave us the sign of victory.

People

By it preserve our life.

Officiant

The world-saving outstretched wings of your cross, O Christ our God, you gave to us as a staff of power.

People

By it preserve our life.

Officiant

You gave life again to him who had died by eating from the forbidden tree, by the tree of life.

People

By it preserve our life.

The officiant, taking the cross from the tray, raises it and facing to the west says:

Let the western part of the land be blessed, protected and guarded by Providence by the sign of the Holy Cross, and by the holy Gospel and by the grace of this day, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People

Amen. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The officiant and attendants then carry the basil cross to the north part of the sanctuary, saying as they go:

O tree of life, Christ gave you to us as the fruit of life, in exchange for the death-bringing fruit.

People

Preserve under your protection the assembly of believers.

Officiant

Through you was opened the way to the tree of life, guarded by the Seraphim.

People

Preserve under your protection the assembly of believers.

Officiant

Through you our first parents were delivered from the sin of tasting the forbidden fruit, and all believers bow down in worship before you.

People

Preserve under your protection the assembly of believers.

The officiant, taking the cross from the tray, raises it and facing to the south says:

Let the south part of the land be blessed, protected and guarded by Providence by the sign of the Holy Cross, and by the holy Gospel and by the grace of this day, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People

Amen. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The officiant and attendants then carry the basil cross to the south part of the sanctuary, saying as they go:

We all bless you for the life-giving Cross, which became our salvation. From the Father and light the cross arose on earth with brilliant light and was given to believers as the staff of might.

People

We all bless you for it: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages.

Officiant

After its wonderful and brilliant appearing it was given us as help against the enemy.

People

We all bless you for it.

The officiant, taking the cross from the tray, raises it and facing to the north says:

Let the north part of the land be blessed, protected and guarded by Providence by the sign of the Holy Cross, and by the holy Gospel and by the grace of this day, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People

Amen. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The officiant and attendants return to the starting point of the procession and conclude with a prayer and a blessing:

Guard us, O Christ our God, in peace and under the shadow of your holy and precious Cross. Make us worthy to give thanks to you and to glorify you with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages.

People

Amen.

Officiant

May we be blessed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Depart in peace and may the Lord be with you all.

People

Amen. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The people are invited to come to the cross and receive a sprig of basil, which they may take with them or eat at once if they prefer.