

SEASON OF THE CROSS

DAILY PRAYER RULE



Use Daily from Eve (*Paregentan*) of the Fast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
until the start of *Heesnag*

Daily Prayer Rule

Season of the Cross

The following prayers focus on the Cross and crucifixion of Jesus Christ as the constant witness of sacrificial love, the core of Christian life. Jesus transformed the Cross, at one time a symbol of torture and execution, into a symbol of faith, salvation, and victory over death. And so we look to the Cross with hope, because through his death Jesus redeems and heals our suffering with his life-giving presence.

What you will find below is a communal opportunity for the faithful of the Eastern Diocese to pray together, to unite our concerns as one, to build up the Body of Christ. All of these prayers are taken from the sacred tradition of the Armenian Church, most of them from the treasury of blessing we call the Zhamakeerk.

We urge all faithful to find ten minutes each day, preferably at a designated time and location, and read this prayer rule aloud from beginning to end. You can do this alone, with your family, or with a friend. It is also suggested to create a prayerful environment by setting up a Cross, khachkar, icon, candle, and incense.

Keep in mind, this prayer rule is a starting point, a daily prayer rule that should ideally create a habit of prayer, where praise, repentance, and reorienting ourselves toward God becomes a natural and regular part of our lives.

May the Lord hear our prayers and have mercy on us.

† *Make the sign of the Cross*

All selections from the Book of Hours (Zhamakeerk) of the Armenian Church, and the Hymn of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, translated by Bishop Daniel Findikyan, 2021. The creed from the Sacrament of Baptism of the Armenian Church. Scripture readings from the Revised Standard Version © National Council of Churches of Christ in America. Excerpted prayer of St. Gregory of Narek, Thomas J. Samuelian, 2002. Prayer Rule compiled by Dn. Eric Vozzy. Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), 2021.

† Blessed is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hands raised

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive those who are indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. † For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Thumbs crossed

We believe in † the all-holy Trinity, in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit: in the Annunciation of Gabriel, in the Nativity of Christ, in his Baptism, in his Passion, in his Crucifixion, in his three-day Burial, in his Resurrection, in his Ascension as God, in his Enthronement at the right hand of the Father, and in his awesome and glorious Second Coming. We confess and we believe.

† Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy and immortal, who was crucified for us, have mercy on us. *(Repeat 3x)*

Glorified and blessed ever holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Mother of Christ, present our supplications to your Son and our God to deliver us from tragedy and from all danger.

† Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. *(Prostrate)*

† Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. *(Prostrate)*

† Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. *(Prostrate)*

† Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. *(Prostrate)*

Let us pray to the Lord by virtue of the holy ascetics, who triumphed over evil, endured torment, and became worthy of the unfading and radiant, heavenly crowns. By their prayers and intercession may the Lord have mercy on us. Almighty Lord our God, raise us to life and have mercy on us.

On Saints' Days

O Christ, Bestower of the crown, you crown the saints, and you do the will of those who fear you, looking after your creatures with love and kindness. Hear us from your sanctuary in heaven, through the intercession of the holy Mother of God, and by the appeals of all your saints, especially Saint(s) (names), whom we commemorate today. Hear us, Lord, and have mercy on us.

Help us, Lord. Help us, God our Savior, for the sake of the great glory of your name. Lord, save us and pardon our sins for the sake of your holy name. As a fortress protecting those who take refuge therein, let † your holy and precious Cross shelter us, keeping in peace all of your people that look to you with hope. Save us from every visible and invisible enemy. Privilege us to give you thanks and to † glorify you, and the Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Psalm 21/22

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? • Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but thou dost not answer; • and by night, but find no rest.

Yet thou art holy, • enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In thee our fathers trusted; • they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

To thee they cried, and were saved; • in thee they trusted, and were not disappointed.

But I am a worm, and no man; • scorned by men, and despised by the people.

All who see me mock at me, • they make mouths at me, they wag their heads;

“He committed his cause to the Lord; let him deliver him, • let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

Yet thou art he who took me from the womb; • thou didst keep me safe upon my mother’s breasts.

Upon thee was I cast from my birth, • and since my mother bore me thou hast been my God.

Be not far from me, • for trouble is near and there is none to help.

Many bulls encompass me, • strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

they open wide their mouths at me, • like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; • my heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast;

my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; • thou dost lay me in the dust of death.

Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; • they have pierced my hands and feet—

I can count all my bones— • they stare and gloat over me;

they divide my garments among them, • and for my raiment they cast lots.

But thou, O Lord, be not far off! • O thou my help, hasten to my aid!

Deliver my soul from the sword, • my life from the power of the dog!

Save me from the mouth of the lion, • my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen!

I will tell of thy name to my brethren; • in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee:

You who fear the Lord, praise him! all you sons of Jacob, glorify him, • and stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel!

For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; • and he has not hid his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.

From thee comes my praise in the great congregation; • my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; • those who seek him shall praise the Lord!
May your hearts live for ever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; • and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

For dominion belongs to the Lord, • and he rules over the nations.

Yea, to him shall all the proud of the earth bow down; • before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and he who cannot keep himself alive.

Posterity shall serve him; • men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, • that he has wrought it.

† Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. • Now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

A Prayer of Hope and Healing

Loving God, you are the hope and sanctuary of our souls. You gave us † the all-triumphant sign of the holy Cross as an invincible weapon against the works of Satan, so that you might sanctify everyone who approaches it. O Lord our God, heal (name's) sickness and alleviate (his/her) pain † by the power of the holy Cross. Amen.

Heavenly King, my life is in your hands at every hour, and I have placed my hope † in your holy Cross. I have as the multitude of your saints to intercede with you. Lord, you are forbearing toward all. Do not overlook us, who look to you for refuge, but keep us in peace † by your precious and holy Cross.

Proclamation for the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God

Holy Mother of the wondrous Light, you bore in your womb the God of all the ages, and you gave birth to God the Word, the delight of the world; we ask you—

—Holy Mother, intercede for us.

Pray for us to God, who took body from you and came down from the Father's inner being. He took body according to our human nature in order to establish peace in heaven and on earth; we ask you—

—Holy Mother, intercede for us.

Pray for us to God, who took body from you. May he forgive us, overlook our mistakes, and help us to resist our adversaries in battle; we ask you—

—Holy Mother, intercede for us.

Pray for us to God, who took body from you, that wars may cease and the assaults of enemies may stop, and that love and justice may be planted on earth; we ask you—

—Holy Mother, intercede for us.

Pray for us to God, who took body from you, to increase in our land the sweet flow of springs, and that a bountiful harvest of vegetation and plants may please all of our essential needs; we ask you—

—Holy Mother, intercede for us.

Pray for us to God, who took body from you, so that he may reconcile his holy church, built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets; and that He may keep her untainted until the day he appears at his coming; we ask you—

—Holy Mother, intercede for us.

Holy Lady, pray to the only-begotten Son for us, and for the souls at rest, that he may receive them into the kingdom of heaven, and allot them a share and a portion with all the saints; we ask you.

—Remember them, Lord, and have mercy on them.

Encomium by Catholicos Simeon Yerevantsi

O Holy Mary, Bearer of God, what would God the Father withhold from you, he who loved you so much that he granted you his Only-begotten Son through whom he created all creatures? What would God the Son withhold from you that you would ask of him, he who loved you so much that he dwelt in your womb and sat in your lap, who feeds all but was fed from your breasts, who was your God and Lord but became your son and called you mother? God the Spirit, too, loved you so much that he entrusted his co-equal in essence to you and he who adorns everything rested in you and made you the lodging place for his unending gifts.

Be a mediator and commend me, sinful servant that I am, to your only-Begotten Son, that he may accept my pleadings which I have presented to him and that he may fulfill my requests, that he may forgive my mistakes and pardon all my sins, that he may accept me again into his love and care and that he may keep me as it pleases his will for as long as I am in this body. And after the present life, may he make me worthy to behold him in bliss.

Encomium by St. Gregory of Narek (Prayer 80)

Receive these prayers from me, who believe in you...
offer and present them to God as your own.

Weave and mix into your prayers of happiness
and adoration the bitter sighs that I, a sinner, utter,
you, who are the tree of life bearing the blessed fruit,
so that always receiving help from you and through your
good deeds, and taking refuge in the light of your
holy motherhood, I may live for Christ, your Son and Lord.

We fall down before you, Holy Mother of God, and we entreat you, untainted Virgin.
Intercede for our lives and entreat your Only-begotten to save us from temptation
and from every danger.

Most blessed holy Lady and ever-virgin Mary, Mother of God, intercede with the
Lord for this sinner.

A Hymn from the Prayer Service for the Hour Of Peace

The portrait of your flawless mother we hang in front of you, indulgent Lord.

When you come with the Father's glory to judge the enemy of your Cross,
Forgive our offenses by the intercession of your Virgin Mother.

We entreat you, Lord, protect us in the shelter of your holy † Cross.

Help us, Lord. Help us, God our Savior, for the sake of the great glory of your name.
Lord, save us and pardon our sins for the sake of your holy name. As a fortress protecting those who take refuge therein, let your holy and precious † Cross shelter us, keeping in peace all of your people that look to you with hope. Save us from every visible and invisible enemy. Privilege us to give you thanks and to glorify you, and the † Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

A Reading from the Wisdom Of Solomon (14:1-7)

Again, one preparing to sail and about to voyage over raging waves
calls upon a piece of wood more fragile than the ship which carries him.
For it was desire for gain that planned that vessel,
and wisdom was the craftsman who built it;
but it is thy providence, O Father, that steers its course,
because thou hast given it a path in the sea,
and a safe way through the waves,
showing that thou canst save from every danger,
so that even if a man lacks skill, he may put to sea.
It is thy will that works of thy wisdom should not be without effect;
therefore men trust their lives even to the smallest piece of wood,
and passing through the billows on a raft they come safely to land.
For even in the beginning, when arrogant giants were perishing,
the hope of the world took refuge on a raft,
and guided by thy hand left to the world the seed of a new generation.
For blessed is the wood by which righteousness comes.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Galatians (6:14)

But far be it from me to glory except in † the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by
which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Prayer for the Season of the Cross

You were before eternity, O God the Word, Co-existent with the Father, and Co-Creator with the Holy Spirit. At this hour, † through the sign of your all-conquering Cross, you took upon yourself the transgression of Adam, the first creature, when he ate of the fruit. You thereby transformed † the Cross into life. Nailing our offenses to it, you promised those who put their hope in you, pristine life, the renewal of life. Give us the honor to partake in that life, † our Lord Jesus Christ, who are blessed with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. Now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Hymn for the Elevation of the Holy Cross

We have taken refuge in your cross, O eternal Creator, who gave us a triumphant guardian against the enemy.

— † Through the Cross we beseech you, Savior, defend our souls.

Exalted King, you ascended the cross for our sake, and through it took away the transgressions of Adam the first-created.

— † Through the Cross we beseech you, Savior, defend our souls.

Holy summit of faith and wood of life revealed to mankind, the vile demon saw it and was destroyed in the abyss of the earth.

— † Through the Cross we beseech you, Savior, defend our souls.

The enemy shuddered when the holy cross was revealed, and in awe of his glory he was destroyed in the abyss of the earth.

— † Through the Cross we beseech you, Savior, defend our souls.

Heaven exulted and the earth rejoiced, for the holy cross was manifested as savior, and bearer of light to the universe.

— † Through the Cross we beseech you, Savior, defend our souls.

St. Gregory of Narek – Prayer 90

Speaking with God from the depths of the heart

Look, Lord, from heaven, with cheerful sweetness
upon me, imperiled on all sides by destruction.

Calm my anxious sobbing.

Grant the ease of repose.

The deadly armies are mounted against me:
battalions of violent warriors armed with
all manner of demonic devices,
the barrage of ugly sins hateful to you,
the strokes of pain and destructive disease.'

Repel them, take them away, cut them off, stop them,
drive them out, banishing them to a distant place.

Destroy them yet again

and erect † the sign of your cross
as a destiny of life and beacon at my death
guiding me to your refuge,
O Salvation.

From the 24 Prayers of St. Nerses the Gracious

Caretaker of Creatures, † by the sign of your Cross, protect my spirit and my body from the seduction of sin, from demonic temptation, from unjust people, and from all spiritual and bodily dangers.

— Have mercy on your creatures, and on me, a great sinner.

For having become man truly and without illusion, and having become incarnate, through union without confusion, through the Mother of God, the holy virgin Mary, he journeyed through all the passions of our human life without sin and came willingly to † the world-saving cross, which was the occasion of our redemption.

Let us make our requests to the Lord with † this holy cross, that through it he may save us from sin and raise us to life by his gracious mercy. Almighty Lord our God, raise us to life and have mercy on us.

By the sign of † your holy and precious Cross, drive the visible and invisible enemy away from our confines and our home.

Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.

Most blessed holy Lady and ever-virgin Mary, Mother of God, intercede with the Lord for this sinner.

Keep us in peace, Christ our God, under the protective shelter of † your holy and precious Cross. Save us from enemies seen and unseen. Give us the privilege to give thanks and † glory to you, and the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.





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