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WELCOME TO
**ST. GREGORY
THE ENLIGHTENER**
ARMENIAN CHURCH

FR. MESROB HOVSEPYAN, PASTOR

MORNING SERVICE: 9:45 A.M.

DIVINE LITURGY: 10:15 A.M.

FEBRUARY 5, 2023

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF THEOPHANY

ՅՈՒՆՈՒԱՐ 5 - Գ Կիրակի Զկկի Ծննդեան

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS:

2 Timothy 3:1-12

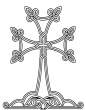
John 6:22-38

PC MEMBERS ON DUTY:

Arman Bedonian

Sylvia Kruizenga

Nectar Munro



REQUIEM SERVICE WILL NOT BE OFFERED TODAY

Our address: 1131 North Street, White Plains, NY 10605, www.stgregorywp.com

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ST. SARKIS, PATRON OF YOUTH AND LOVE

In Armenia it is accepted to celebrate the Feast of St. Sarkis not only according to church rites and prayer, but also according to various folk traditions. St. Sarkis the Captain is the patron of youth. Many miracles happen thanks to his intercession. On the day of the feast young people pray to the saint asking him to make their prayers audible to God. St. Sarkis is the realizer of these love longings. There are many legends about St. Sarkis and one of them is the following.

Poor bard Gharib loved Shah-Sanam who was the daughter of a very rich man. Shah-Sanam loved him, too, but because the bard was poor, Shah-Sanam's father was against their marriage as he wished to marry his daughter to a rich man. Bard Gharib decided to go to foreign countries to earn money and accumulate wealth. But before leaving for foreign countries bard Gharib asked Shah-Sanam to promise to wait for him for seven years providing that if he were late even for one day the young woman might marry according to her father's will. That seven-year-period was a very difficult time for bard Gharib.

He couldn't see his beloved, had no news of her, nevertheless, he wasn't disappointed and waited for the time when they would meet, make a family and live together all their life. Working day and night for seven years bard Gharib accumulated wealth and started his way back to the motherland. However, on his way back he faced many difficulties and hardships. It seemed to him that he wouldn't be able to reach his beloved. So, he prayed with honest heart and righteous mind for the help of St. Sarkis. Listening to the prayer of the bard St. Sarkis immediately appeared sitting on his white horse, seated him on the back of the horse and in one moment brought him to Shah-Sanam. Seeing the bard's strong will, their sincere and deep love and devotion, Shah-Sanam's father blessed their union.

Fast of Catechumens established by St. Gregory the Illuminator precedes the feast. On the eve of the feast, young people eat salty cookies and relate the appearance of their future bride or bridegroom in their dream because they ate the salty cookie. On the night preceding the feast of St. Sarkis, the faithful people place a tray full of gruel before the door believing that while passing near their door at dawn St. Sarkis will leave his footprint on the gruel symbolizing the fulfilment of their dreams. People in love give each other cards, flowers or sweets on the occasion of the feast. On the day of the feast a Divine Liturgy is celebrated in all churches named after St. Sarkis. Following the Liturgy a special ceremony of blessing of young people will be offered.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

The reading is from the Second Epistle of Paul to 2 Timothy (3:1-12)

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

The second reading is from the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to John (6:22-38)

The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal

life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Why do we pray for the deceased?

The most basic teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ is: *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another* (John 13:34). This love is best expressed when we as loving brothers and sisters and as the true followers of the Lord come together to experience His presence in our midst: *For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them* (Matthew 18:20). In such an atmosphere of binding love and Divine presence our prayers unite and come out as if from a single source. This is what the Lord had in mind when he taught us the Lord’s Prayer and stressed the use of the collective first person plural throughout.

Praying in one voice and as one person does not only indicate that we are all in agreement in our faith in God and in our expression of love towards each other, but also that we pray for each other. Prayer that is offered in unison will reach God: *Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven* (Matthew 18:19). Praying together is strongly stressed by St. Paul, who in his letter to the Romans, 15:5-6, states: *May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Common prayer is the very essence of the Church. And we must under-

stand that while offering private prayers should be a part of our daily practice, they do not take the place of common prayer, since, according to the Holy Scriptures, we experience the presence of Christ in our midst as a group or a family, provided that we set aside our sinful ways and adhere to the divine command of love.

One may assume that all of this applies to those of us who are alive, since according to the general understanding, once a person passes away, he stops communicating with others and committing sin, and the sins committed during his lifetime are now a part of the record so to speak. The deceased will be judged at the great tribunal of the Last Judgment for the life they have led on earth. Consequently, why offer prayers for the deceased? Similar questions have been asked over the centuries and some Christians reject the practice of praying for the dead. The Armenian Church is obviously not one of those Christian groups.

Prayers for the dead, which are well attested from the Old Testament, and requiem services are based on an understanding derived from the Holy Scriptures and particularly from the New Testament. We believe that the faithful who are deceased are still the Lord's: *If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.* (Romans 14:8-9). The faithful who are dead are merely asleep in Christ. This concept, which is in St. Paul's epistles (1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5) is one of the basic teachings of the Armenian Church, and the term "asleep" in its past participial form [nunchetsyal] is used formally in reference to a deceased person.

Like the faithful who are alive, the faithful who are deceased are a part of the corporate body of Christ and therefore of the Church. Those who are asleep in Christ and have reached the end of their earthly lives in the faith are referred to as the "first born" or the Victorious Church.

The Scriptural evidence also suggests that those who are asleep in Christ pray for themselves and for us. That the souls of the deceased are conscious and concerned about the living is best reflected in Christ's story about poor Lazarus and the rich man. The latter begs the patriarch Abraham to send someone to his five brothers still alive to warn them of what is in store for sinners (Luke 16).

The indissoluble union of the living and the Victorious Church is also the basis for seeking the intercession of the saints before God. Asking a saint for his/her intercession merely means that we ask him/her to pray for us.

REALM—Church Management Platform

We are upgrading our church record keeping to allow us to engage more directly with our parishioners and to give parishioners access to church resources and allow them to connect to one another more easily. We will be using a cloud based solution called Realm that manages the over 500 names and profiles that are associated with our church. Realm's benefits are:

- ensures the church has your latest contact information - you go online and update your information;
- allows events such as concerts, Women's Guild luncheons, Men's Club dinners and special events like the St. Gregory Award Dinner and the New Year's Eve party to be managed and paid online with a check-in kiosk;
- stores Marriage and Baptism dates and information as a backup record keeping;
- allows you to pay membership dues and to make donations through your computer or mobile device and, if desired, set up payment plans and be assured that it appears in your Giving Statement;
- improves work life for our volunteers with a full church accounting systems and reporting package that is connected to the other modules of information; and
- has a dashboard of key metrics to ensure we have reached out to new guests, donors and those that have stopped coming (to assist where we can)

With Realm, you'll be able to connect with one another, keep your own information up to date, and manage your giving to the church all in one convenient place.

Scan the QR code below to sign up and download the app "REALM CONNECT". Realm is very easy to navigate, and we are excited about its potential benefits for our Church and parishioners.



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

TODAY

Guest celebrant: Very Rev. Fr. Harutyun Damadian celebrates Holy Badarak today and will deliver the sermons of the day while Fr. Mesrob will be visiting the Sunday School.

Children's sermon will be delivered next Sunday, on February 12.

WOMEN'S GUILD POP-UP FOOD SALE.

Select baked goods are available to purchase in the atrium.

FEBRUARY 11,
SATURDAY

Poon Paregentan Family Fun Night

The flyer can be found inside the bulletin

FEBRUARY 12,
SUNDAY

Children's sermon will be delivered following the Divine Liturgy.

FEBRUARY 19,
SUNDAY

Poon Paregentan

Great Lent begins on Monday, Feb. 20

FEBRUARY 26,
SUNDAY

**ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
following the Badarak.**

MARCH 3,
FRIDAY

Lenten Friday Evening Programs.

6:30pm - Lenten Service, 7:00pm - Lenten Dinner, 7:30pm - Program.

Details to follow

MARCH 17,
FRIDAY

Lenten Friday Evening Programs.

6:30pm - Lenten Service, 7:00pm - Lenten Dinner, 7:30pm - Program.

Details to follow

MARCH 18,
SATURDAY

Women's Guild: Sainly Women's Day program & lunch. Details to follow.

MARCH 18/19,
SAT. & SUN.

ACYOA Junior's Lenten Retreat.

Details to follow.



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 31,
FRIDAY

Lenten Friday Evening Programs.
6:30pm - Lenten Service, 7:00pm - Lenten Dinner, 7:30pm - Program.
Details to follow

APRIL 2,
SUNDAY

Palm Sunday, ACYOA Day.

APRIL 9,
SUNDAY

EASTER SUNDAY

JUNE 5,
SUNDAY

SAVE THE DATE (DATE CHANGED): ORDINATION SUNDAY: SUB-DEACONATE & DEACONATE ORDINATION
Details will follow



Fellowship Coffee Hour

We appreciate the generosity of the Parish Council members on duty for providing the refreshments for today's fellowship coffee hour.

If you would like to sign-up for a future date to host and sponsor refreshments for the fellowship coffee hour on Sunday, kindly contact coordinator: Adriane Keleshian Bonfiglio (914) 649-1072.

ST. GREGORY
THE ENLIGHTENER
ARMENIAN SCHOOL
Invites you to Celebrate

POON PAREGENTAN

Family Night **MARD GRG** 2023

PLENTY OF APPETIZERS, BEEF & CHICKEN DINNER,
HOMEMADE DESSERTS
CASH WINE/BEER BAR
MUSIC BY DJ HAROUT - KID'S ACTIVITIES

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2023 @ 6:30PM
TUTAK HALL - 1131 NORTH ST. WHITE PLAINS, NY

ADULTS: \$45.00 - CHILDREN 5-12 YEARS OLD: \$15.00

MAKE RESERVATIONS BY FEBRUARY 1ST VIA TEXT/CALL
AREK OHANISSIAN: (215)827-6509 OR MARIA BEDONIAN: (914)329-5352
OR EMAIL stgregoryarmenianschoolwp@gmail.com