

# St. Vartan Voice

The Newsletter of St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church

Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan, Parish Priest



## Սուրբ Վարդանի Չայն

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Fr. Krikor Zakaryan

July 2021

### More About the Transfiguration

Three disciples come face-to-face with the mind-boggling nature of God. How do they react? And is there a lesson for us in their experience? That's the question the church poses in the Feast of the Transfiguration—which the Armenian Church will observe on Sunday, July 11.

#### *A Mystery*

There is a mystery at the heart of Christianity. In our Divine Liturgy, we worship Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnate Word of the Lord, through whom the entire universe was created. As humble human beings, we might naturally ask, Where do we fit into all this? Can such a cosmic being really care about creatures as small as us?

A clue to such questions is quietly offered in the Gospel story of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13).

Prior to the Transfiguration, Jesus had been very secretive about his true mission and identity, even to his twelve disciples. At one point, Jesus asked them who they thought he was. After a round of wrong answers from the others, Peter spoke up and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus blessed Peter for this insight, and then disclosed the prophecy of his own death and resurrection.

Now, the disciples had always understood that Jesus was a unique and important figure—he was, after all, a riveting teacher, an inspiring leader, a powerful miracle-worker. But here, for the first time, they were being let in on the secret of just how special Jesus was.

With that disclosure, the groundwork was now prepared for the visual spectacle of the Transfiguration—which is the very next episode in Matthew's gospel.

#### *Alone and Apart*

The story begins: "After six days, Jesus took Peter and the brothers James and John, and brought them up into a high mountain apart." Right from the start, we are given a subtle reminder of the mystery of Creation, in the seemingly unnecessary comment about "six days." The mountaintop, too, is a place of mystery. The difficult climb, thin air and cold climate all make the high altitudes inhospitable to human beings: this is a world quite literally "apart" from normal human activities and concerns, where the heroes of the Bible met in solitude with God Himself.

In this strange, unearthly environment, Jesus suddenly appears physically changed and glorified—transfigured—to the three disciples: "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Even more amazingly, Moses the lawgiver and Elijah the prophet emerge from the mists of Biblical history, and break into conversation with Jesus.

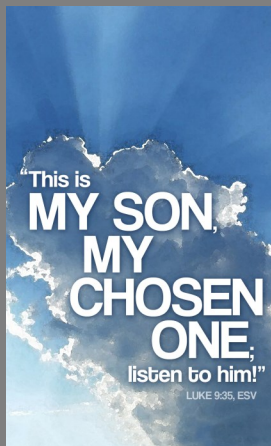
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### Bible Readings

July 4 Matt. 14:13-21  
July 11 John 16:24-17:8  
July 18 Matt. 18:10-14  
July 25 John 2:1-11

### Matthew 17:4

And Peter said to Jesus,  
"Lord, it is well that we  
are here."



## COVID Restrictions Ended for St. Vartan Church

As of June 15, 2021 Alameda County rescinded its Shelter-in-Place Order, which means **no more physical distancing, no more capacity limits on businesses, no more county tiers, and relaxed mask guidance.** Alameda County no longer requires masks for vaccinated individuals in churches. Masks continue to be required for unvaccinated individuals in indoor public settings and businesses. St. Vartan Church will continue to have masks available for anyone who wishes to use one.

What does this mean for St. Vartan Church Services: **Full Capacity, Reinstating the Distribution of the Kiss of Peace and Reinstating the Classical Holy Communion Distribution.**

St. Vartan will also be working toward reinstating in-person meetings, work-days, coffee hour, and social events.

St. Vartan will continue to broadcast services on-line.



### Parish Council Update

The St. Vartan Church Parish Council remained busy during June. On June 9 the Parish Council met in-person for the first time in over a year for their monthly meeting (photo, upper left). A Security Grant Sub-Committee was formed to explore security upgrades for the church property and apply for a grant to fund the upgrades (photo, lower left). The Parish Council worked with Boy Scout Haik Kibarian, who completed his Eagle Scout project by painting the downstairs classrooms and assembly room in the Church Hall Building (photo, upper right).



### Fellowship Hour Sign-up

St. Vartan Church would like to begin serving fellowship hour after Sunday services again. If you would like to host coffee hour, please contact the church office at 510-893-1671 or stvartanoakland@aol.com and let us know which date you would prefer.





## Donations

*St. Vartan Church Parish Priest and Council gratefully acknowledges the following donations:*

### **Stewardship Donations—Thank you to all St. Vartan's Stewards**

**Silver Level:** Don & Virginia Tafjen, Carol Rustigian

**Bronze Level:** Edward Minasian, Don & Lisa Manoogian, Ara and Angel Azizian, Zaven Kanneian & Janet Yeghissian, Emma and Lida Mazmanian, Yeghia Apkarian & Ana Dalmeida

**Steward Level:** Armen & Jermen Gollu, Suzanne Diers, Seta Azizian, Arax Konjoyan, Michele Radcliffe, Louise Metaxas, Fr. Krikor and Yn. Anoush Zakaryan

**365 Day Steward:** Maggi Kooyoumjian-Wiley Beardsley and Rick Beardsley

**Donors:** Nicole Vasgerdsian, Harout and Marie Hagopoian

#### In Memory

† **Levon Apelian**

Barbara Morjig, Janet Kamian, Caline Soghikian,  
Johanas Gregorian, Edward Minasian

† **Bill Nalbandian**

Caline Soghikian, Mae Kaljian, Edward Minasian

† **Shavarsh Hazarabedian**

Mike and Sue Kilijian

† **Ed Godoshian**

Mae Kaljian

† **Charles Kezerian**

Mae Kaljian

† **Vahan Jamgotchian**

Ray and Reyhan Shepherd

#### **ENDOWMENT FUND**

##### In Memory

† **Helin Piperis**

Alice Sarafian

#### **Altar Flower Sponsorship**

If you would like to donate funds for altar flowers for a specific Sunday, please notify the church office at [stvartanoakland@aol.com](mailto:stvartanoakland@aol.com).

The suggested donation is \$35. Currently, Sunday, July 25 is open for sponsorship.



## *News From Our St. Vartan Family*

### Birth Announcement



**Levon Kacheg Abnous** was born on May 18, 2021, to proud parents Haig and Ani Abnous and two very excited sisters Arev and Allique. Levon's grandparents are Razmik and Suzanne Abnous and Varouj and Sylvia Bagdasarian.

### Baptism

On May 22 **Noeme Angel Azizian** was baptized at St. Vartan Church by Fr. Krikor Zakaryan. Noeme is the daughter of Shaunt and Lorena Azizian. Her Godfather is Herant Azizian. Grandparents are Ara and Angel Azizian and Ron and Liz Ojikian.



### Wedding

Fr. Krikor Zakaryan performed the sacrament of Holy Matrimony between **Ani Armen Azizian and Curtis Clark Millward** on June 12 at St. Vartan Church. Ani is the daughter of Armen and Diko Azizian and Curtis is the son of Richard and Lauri Millward. The best man is Jason Millward and the maid of honor is Mariam Torosyan.

### Condolences

St. Vartan is sorry to announce the passing of **Gladys Kermoyan Peters** on May 7, 2021, in Fresno, California, at the age of 92. Gladys was a long-time member of St. Vartan Church who played the organ and sang the Badarak as a teen. Our deepest condolences to Gladys' daughters, Lorraine and Elaine, her husband Carl, and their children, Carla, Rebecca, Alex and his wife Linnea, as well as numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

A memorial service was held for **Charlotte Masgalajian** at St. Vartan Church on Thursday, June 24. Charlotte is survived by her brother, Ronald Smith, her sons, Michael and Paul Masgalajian, and nieces and nephews.

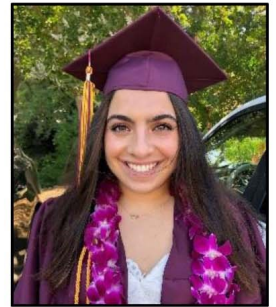


## Congratulations Graduates!

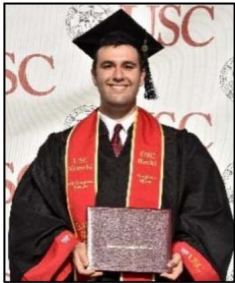


**Alexander Capurro** graduated from the University of Oregon with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Advertising and a minor in Business. While at UO, Alex was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity where he served as Alumni Chairman and Rush Chairman. He has accepted a position as Account Associate at San Francisco-based digital marketing agency Blackbird PPC. Alex is the son of proud parents John and Sandi Capurro, and the grandson of Dorris and the late Charles Kezerian and Jeanne and the late Adolph Capurro.

**Ani Jamgotchian** graduated from Los Lomas High School of Walnut Creek, CA, in May. Ani is the daughter of Edward and Armineh Jamgotchian, and the granddaughter of Maria Jamgotchian, the late Vahan Jamgotchian, and Charles and Ophelia Menzigan. She excelled in high school to achieve lifetime membership in the California Scholarship Federation. Ani will be attending UC Davis in the fall to pursue a degree in International Economics.



**Alec Hakimian**, son of Hagop and Sonik Hakimian, graduated from Castro Valley High School with honors, and will be attending the University of San Francisco majoring in engineering in the fall 2021!



**Alex Colello** graduated from the University of Southern California with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science and a minor in Sculpture. Alex was a President Scholar while at USC focusing on robotics. He is continuing a second internship at Amazon in Seattle this summer and will be completing his master's degree in Computer Science at USC next year. Alex is the son of Nairy and David Colello of Danville, CA.

**Sophia Colello** graduated from Stanford University with a Bachelors of Arts degree, double majoring in Archaeology and Classics with Honors. While at Stanford, she was named a Hume Humanities Honors Fellow and successfully completed her honors thesis focusing on ancient imperial Armenia. Sophia was awarded the Classics Department's Museion Prize for her work with museum collections. She will continue her studies at Stanford as a master's student in Classical Archaeology. Sophia is the daughter of Nairy and David Colello of Danville, CA.



**Charles Esnault**, son of Amy and Tony Esnault and grandson of Harold and Bonnie Koojooian, graduated from Holy Family Elementary School in South Pasadena, CA, and will be attending South Pasadena High School in the fall.

**Brendan McMahon** graduated from Petaluma High School on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. He will be attending UC Santa Cruz in the fall and majoring in Economics. His entire family is very proud of him - especially his grandmother, Sylvia Gozurian!





**Karen Marie Sarafian** graduated with a doctorate in Educational and Organizational Leadership from University of the Pacific. She was also honored by the university with the Doctor of Research Innovation and Practice award based on her leadership in the program and her action research study focused on continuous improvement of an out-of-school-time social-emotional learning program for elementary school students. Dr. Sarafian currently serves as an instructional coach in the Elk Grove Unified School District, Director of Education for The Sarafian Foundation (thesarafianfoundation.org), and associate professor of education at the University of the Pacific. Dr. Sarafian is the daughter of Alice Sarafian and the late Fr. Mesrob Sarafian.



After four years of hard work volunteering at Kaiser Hospital, serving as a Homenetmen leader, and participating in numerous dance competitions, we are thrilled to announce the graduation of our daughter, **Sophia Topchiyan**, from Las Lomas High School in Walnut Creek, CA. Sophia graduated from Las Lomas High with honors and will be attending the UC Irvine in the fall. The Topchiyan Family

### Graduation Announcements

If you or a loved one has graduated this year and would like to be included in the next issue of the St. Vartan Voice, please email your graduation announcement to [stvirtanoakland@aol.com](mailto:stvirtanoakland@aol.com) by July 15, 2021.



### Khanoot Korner

The ladies (and a few very distinguished gentlemen) were busy in the kitchen last month making choreg, which is our featured item for July. I've brought in the last of the lamajoon for the summer, so don't hesitate to order as it won't be replenished until October once we run out. Luleh (and perhaps a few more surprises) will be available again in August.

There is one pickup day this month: Saturday, July 24 in the church hall between 11am and 2pm. To order, please phone me at 408-247-3772 (you'll probably get the machine, so leave a message with your order and I'll call you back to confirm). Looking forward to hearing from you. -Kristian

Here is what we have:

Armenian Cookies — \$10/ dozen  
 Bulghur — \$2/ pound (all sizes)  
 Choreg — \$17/ dozen  
 Gata w/Khoritz — \$15/ dozen  
 Lahvosh 5"rounds — \$7/ bag  
 Lahvosh Hearts — \$4/ box  
 Lamajoon — \$10/ half-dozen  
 Spicy Lamajoon — \$10/ half-dozen  
 Sm. Cheese Beoreg — \$40/ 2-dozen  
 Ladies Society Cookbook — \$ 25



### On-Line Bible Study with Fr. Krikor

Bible Study will continue to meet on Wednesday, July 7 and Thursday, July 15 via Zoom at 7 pm. Then Bible Study will take a break for the remainder of July and the first week of August, as Fr. Krikor will be at Hye Camp and on vacation. Bible Study will resume Thursday, August 12. For the Bible Study Zoom code, register at <https://www.stvirtanoakland.com/events>.

### *More about the Transfiguration, continued from page 1*

This fantastic scene unfolds as if the disciples were not there; the presence of Peter, James and John is either forgotten or ignored by the participants in the mystical proceedings. For their own part, the disciples must feel as though they have stumbled upon something they were not supposed to see. It is Peter who finally finds voice to speak, but his words are little more than a plea to be useful: “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you would like, let us build three tabernacles [shrines or shelters] here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

It is a kind and pious sentiment; but it seems woefully inadequate to the grand scale of the event. Imagine having three of the greatest figures of all time materialize right before your eyes, and all you can think to say in response is, “Can I get you a seat?” In such circumstances, it might be better simply to keep silent. Jesus, Moses, and Elijah seem to take no notice of Peter’s remark; in fact, before Peter has a chance to finish, he is interrupted by the most astonishing apparition yet: “a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice out of the cloud said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” The voice is so terrifying that the disciples—brave, tough men in normal situations—fall to the ground and hide their faces in fright.

#### ***Lifting Their Eyes***

At this point, one feels compelled to ask: Just what is going on here? Reading the story fills us with questions: What does Jesus’s transfiguration signify? Why are Moses and Elijah present—what do they represent? Are they supposed to be ghosts? Conjured spirits? Actual historical figures plucked from their own times? What are they talking about with Jesus? And what is the meaning of that cloud?

Unfortunately, none of these questions is answered for us in the story. We may speculate about them, or interpret them in various ways, but in the most profound sense, we are in the dark about the Transfiguration. Yet this is a familiar situation for us. God’s ways are mysterious, and His infinite nature defies human understanding. The church’s theological teaching is our attempt to come to an understanding of God and the universe He created. But even this is just a peek into something we cannot fully comprehend.

The story of the Transfiguration illustrates a parallel situation, where the disciples get a rare glimpse of Christ’s full glory, and his central place in God’s scheme. By comparison to such things, the hopes and fears of human existence seem terribly small and meaningless. Perhaps this is the source of the disciples’ fright—just as the fear of human nothingness is the source of much confusion and misery in our own world.

But the key to the story is yet to come.

As they lie on the ground, their bodies trembling, their eyes shut, the disciples feel a gentle touch, and hear a reassuring voice: “Arise,” it says, “and be not afraid.” They look up, emerging from their self-imposed darkness—and what do they behold? The glorious Son of God? The culmination of Biblical history? The divine creator of the universe?

In the truest sense, all of these things are still standing before them.

But what the disciples see is much simpler, and in its own way much more wonderful: “When they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”

One imagines that Peter, James and John must have greeted the calm, familiar sight of their master with a sigh of relief. They—and we—still have many questions about the Transfiguration and the mysterious universe it embodies—questions which may never be answered to our complete satisfaction.

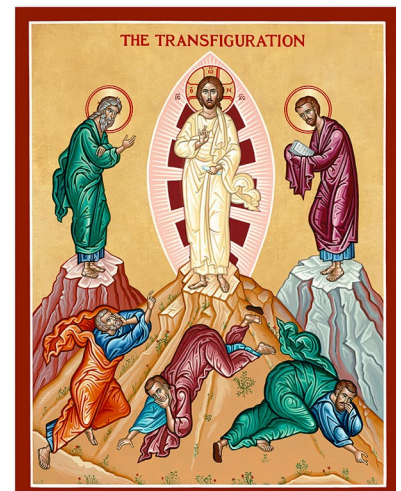
But the gospel writer seems to be telling us that what we really need to look at, first and foremost, is Jesus Christ. Because he contains all of these mysteries within himself, Christ is our human point of contact with the gigantic questions about God, Creation, and man’s place in it. He is our familiar doorway onto the unimaginable.

#### ***Out of Darkness***

We are like the disciples in the story of the Transfiguration. Christ has called us to walk with him. Why did he choose us? Where is he taking us? We cannot say for certain. All we know is that he is leading us upward. Our ascending path will be strenuous at times, and it will lead us to a place beyond our everyday lives. Some of the things we see during our climb may be too enormous, too confusing, too frightening for our human minds to grasp. At the same time, our human gestures of piety and reverence, however sincere they may be, are inadequate to the momentous thing we seek to honor—much as Peter’s remarks about building shrines seems ridiculous as a response to what he saw.

But Christ did not come among us just to show us how insignificant we are. He came to show us that the infinite God Who created the universe, who

*Continued on next page*





### ***More about the Transfiguration, continued from page 6***

transcends time and space, is not too big to concern Himself with human things.

With his hand on our shoulder, and his voice in our ear saying "Be not afraid," Christ has come to lead us out of the darkness.

#### **Ladies Society Update**

The executive board had their last Zoom meeting on June 10. The ladies are busy working on khanoot cooking dates. Our khanoot is stocked with choreg for purchase. We will keep you updated for items for purchase.

We are planning for Surpazan's visit the weekend of September 18 and 19.



We look forward to seeing everyone.

#### **Ladies Society Featured Recipe of the Month**

##### **Jajikh Cold Cucumber Soup**

"Goutah, Armenian cukes, are long, thin skinned cucumbers with a delicate taste. The recipe can be made as an appetizer, salad or summer soup. It is a cool and refreshing treat." This recipe is in our cookbook.

Serves 4

- 2 cucumber (Goutah)
- 3 cups of Madzoon (Plain Yogurt)
- 1/2 cup of cold water
- 1 clove garlic crushed
- 1/4 teaspoon of salt
- 1 Tablespoon crushed mint or dill

Cut peeled cukes into quarters lengthwise. Cut into these slices across the width of the cuke.

Mix madzoon and water together in a medium sized bowl until smooth.

To the liquid add cucumber, garlic, salt and mint stirring gently to mix.

Place some ice cubes in the bowl, cover it with a lid and refrigerate the mixture for a few hours.

Stir Jajikh just before serving.

#### **Upcoming Events**

Church Picnic  
Grandma's Attic Rummage Sale  
Archbishop Hovnan Derderian Pastoral Visit  
Drive Thru Festival  
St. Vartan Golf Tournament

Sunday, August 8  
Saturday & Sunday, September 11 & 12  
Saturday & Sunday, September 18 & 19  
Saturday, October 2  
TBD



### ***The St. Vartan Voice***

**newsletter is published once a month by St. Vartan Armenian Church.**

The deadline for all articles is the fifteenth of each month.

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**Divine Liturgy Service—Sundays 10:30 a.m.**

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