

St. Vartan Voice

The Newsletter of St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church

Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan, Parish Priest



Սուրբ Վարդանի Չայն

Ս. Վարդան չայ Առաքելական Եկեղեցւոյ Պաշտօնաթերթ



Fr. Krikor Zakaryan

September 2023

Armenians and Their Cross

"As individuals, as a Church and as a nation Armenians take the cross very personally," Jerusalem's Patriarch Torkom Koushagian once said.

We Armenians have completely identified our cross with our soul....We have all shared in its experience and kept it alive throughout our existence. We have painted it with our own blood. As a result, just as the Bible was translated into Armenian, the cross has been "translated" directly into our hearts and into our spiritual life. It is truly us. Living with the cross in the 20th century—not living with it as if it were an object on a wall, or even an object of meditation, but as our own, now, is a vital part of our Christian practice.

Armenians believe that every race, nation and group of people has its own cross, uniquely expressive of its identity and faith experience. The Irish have a cross; the Germans have a cross; the Americans have a cross; the Lebanese have a cross. Your family has its cross; my family has its cross. Your parish has its cross; my seminary has its cross.

So it is no surprise that depictions of the cross are ubiquitous wherever Armenians have lived. The landscape of Armenia itself is sprinkled with carved standing crosses called khachkars. Thousands more are found decorating structures. Many serve as tombstones: as the sign of immortality, the cross identifies the space of death as being also the space of life.

Armenians are not shy about the cross. On the contrary. Where it is possible that a khachkar won't be recognized from a distance, it is carved on a stone shaped like a cross and sited where it will be most visible.

The Armenian cross also defines space. Picture the cross as a flat carving; then in your mind expand it into a three-dimensional hollow structure twenty or thirty feet tall. Put a roof on it. And you have an Armenian church. You may play with the length of the cross's arms, as Armenian architects have done over the centuries, but whatever the ultimate proportions, an Armenian church building is the cross as space set aside for the meeting of heaven and earth. To stand in the middle of the church, under the light of the dome, is to stand at the spot where the arms of the cross join. All formal Armenian prayer is prayed from within the cross. The cross, as church, has room within it for all who live or have lived or will live. In it is space to speak to and be heard by God.

Not only is the church building a cross, but the cross marks its architectural features. Crosses are carved on church pillars, structural or decorative; the cross is the pillar of the Church's faith.

Carved above entranceways, the cross is the door to the Good Shepherd's fold. When one enters the cave church at Geghard with its famous carved crosses, the double entrance reminds a person that by faith one physically enters the crucifixion scene, either as one of the thieves, or as Mary

Bible Readings

Sept. 3 Mark 6:30-44

Sept. 10 Mark 7:31-37

Sept. 17 John 3:13-21

Sept. 24 Mark 10:1-12

Matthew 16:24

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."



and John, or both. The cross is a door that opens onto new ways of experiencing the crucifixion and the life beyond it.

Even in two dimensions the cross has profound meaning. Often depicted at the top of a stairway, it reminds us that the Old Testament patriarch Jacob, running away from the consequences of what he had done, feeling isolated and afraid, fell asleep and dreamed of a stairway that reached from just nearby his head to heaven. Poised at the head of the stairs in these carvings, the cross is heaven and the door to heaven.

Frequently the cross is shown as a leafy, fruiting tree. Sometimes it is framed by four schematic rivers, reminding the viewer that God planted Paradise and set the tree of life in its midst. Choosing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil instead, humans lost access to immortality's fruit, but now, humankind receives that fruit again through the cross. What was the tree of death is now the tree of life.

As the fruit of the tree of life, Jesus' entire existence was lived for the cross. From the very beginning that expression of divine love and ultimate life was why he came. On narrative crosses, the lower register may show the nativity, while the cross in the upper register shows the meaning, completion, or eternal reality of that event. The cross is flanked by six stars; the six days of creation culminate in the day of divine rest, the once and future day of humanity in Paradise.

A khachkar carved for Prince Gregory Broshian in 1233 makes a complex statement about the eternal life of Paradise, and how Gregory expected to get there. This cross is framed in eternity symbols. Masses of foliage and huge clusters of grapes burst from its top. Gregory is framed in its roots, which form the gate to Paradise where Gregory is entering after literally fighting the good fight, as his arms and armor indicate. Christ, seated at the very top, awaits him.

Representations of Christ on the cross are less common. Imagine this, a nested set of crosses is carved on a cruciform stone. The cross flourishes; the vine is luxuriant and the buds are fat. At the foot of the cross is the head of Adam, sheltered by the roots of the vine. At the top of the cross is the haloed head of Christ, "the new Adam", the new prototype of humanity, whose body is the cross itself. In this carving, Christ's identification with the cross is complete. The joining of heaven and earth, the creation of a new humanity is His essence. Christ and the cross are one, never to part. For the person who carved this, to eat Christ's body in holy communion is to take into oneself his cross.

May we as Adam's present children be sheltered at the foot of our cross, whatever it is. May it come to be our reality. Through it may we in all our experiences of death also experience what it means to become part of the new humanity intended by God from the beginning. As the Jerusalem Patriarch from whom I quoted earlier said, Let us not live with the cross as if it were an object on a wall, or even an object of meditation, but as our own, now.

—Dr. Roberta Ervine EDACNA



Church Humor Christian One-Liners

- Don't let your worries get the best of you. Remember, Moses started out as a basket case.
- Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited until you try to sit in their pews.
- People are funny. They want the front of the bus, the middle of the road, and the back of the church.
- Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on your front door forever.
- Quit griping about your church. If it was perfect, you couldn't belong.
- If the church wants a better pastor, it only needs to pray for the one it has.
- God himself does not propose to judge a man until he is dead, so why should you?
- Some minds are like concrete — thoroughly mixed up and permanently set.
- Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisers.
- It is easier to preach ten sermons than it is to live one.
- When you get to your wit's end, you'll find God lives there.
- We were called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.
- Be ye fishers of men. You catch them. He'll clean them.

Church Riddle

Q: "What's God's favorite car?"

A: "A Christ-ler!"

*-written by Mardig Gourjian,
St. Vartan Church member*

Donations

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

Grape Blessing—Nadya and Arto Yagjian, Vartan and Ayko Berberian, Wartkes Hagopian, Claris Sarkis-Golly

Stewardship Donations—Vaughn Hovanessian, Yeghia and Ana Dalmeida Apkarian, Ara and Angel Azizian, Caline Soghikian, Dana and Seza Dominguez, Mae Kaljian, June Demerdjian, Judi Swenson

St. Vartan Food Festival Donations

Leg of Lamb—Faith Sohigian DuBois, Janet Kamian, June Demerdjian, Kathleen Demerdjian, Ani Nayman, Yeghia & Ana Dalmeida Apkarian, John Karanfilian, Arax Konjoyan, Donna O'Connor, Arthur & Susan Van Diggelen, Ray & Reyhan Shepherd, Michael DeOrian, Beth Rustigian Broussalian, Kip & Caro Garabedian, Ani Nayman; **Case of Wine**—Patti Rosenthal, Donna O'Connor; Ani Nayman; **Tent**—Carole Chang, Jack & Tammy Papazian, Dickran & Ann Tashjian; **Admission Booth**—Seta Tcherkoyan

In Memory

† Annabelle Taylor to Ladies Society

Greg Cherezian, Paul and Cheryl Ohanesian, Marlene Minasian, Norma Pryds, Nelly and Arka Kargodorian, Alice Sarafian, Pete and Pat Barsamian, Armen Phelps, Nora and Harvey Hanoian, Harry and Carol Dokouzian, Van Kouzoujian, Harold and Bonnie Koojoolian, Marie and Harout Hagopian, Bev Chooljian, Dorothy Deombeleg, Judi Swenson

† Annabelle Taylor

Lucille Dolab, Edward and Kristian Minasian, Peg Magarian

† Zohrab Markarian

Evelyn C. Boyd, Tamar Tatoian, Karnig and Santoukht Mikaelian, Helen and Larry Nolan, Carole Chang, Mark and Maida Henesian, Misak and Souzi Pirinjian, Dana and Seza Dominguez, Gloria Kasparian, Hagop and Sonik Hakimian, Sylvia Gozurian, Dickie and Seno Garabedian, Nihal Yakar, Kegham and Roxanne Boghossian, Annie Avedissian, Adrienne Baker, Zaven Kanneian and Janet Yeghissian, Regina Garabedian, Kevork Shirikian, Liz and Ron Ojakian (Lawrence Chang Retaining Wall Fund), Bruce and Ruth Harteneck

† Zohrab Markarian for Ladies Society

Don and Lisa Manoogian, Nayiri Bouboussis, Sinan and Seta Yazejian, Edward and Kristian Minasian, Anto and Hasmig Cingoz, Vartan and Arlene Hovsepian, Hilda and Karen Mener, Sonia Sedrakian, Haig Tartarian, Archie and Nellie Azizian, Zaven Kanneian and Janet Yeghissian, Hagop and Elizabeth Tatoian, Seta Azizian, Ara and Angel Azizian, Levon and Diruhi Tutuncian, Seta and Nazar Jindoian, Nelly and Arka Kargodorian, San Jose Country Club Staff and Board Members, Sarkis and Hera Kestekyan, Carmen and Trigran Antonian, Ara and Hasmig Gregorian

† Deacon Vahe Mener

Joseph Bezdjian, Charles and Seda Chavdarian, Sonik and Hagop Hakimian, Nazar and Seta Jindoian, Edward and Armineh Jamgotchian, Alice Sarafian (Ladies Society), Edward and Kristian Minasian, Lusya Hopyan

News From Our St. Vartan Family

Condolences

A funeral service for **Vahe Mener** was held at St. Vartan Church on June 26, 2023. Our condolences to his wife, Hilda Mener; his brother, Berc (Ani) Mener; and his daughters, Karen Mener and Alis (Mark) Perreira.

On July 13, 2023, a funeral service was held at St. Vartan Church for **Annabelle Taylor**. Our condolences to her children, James (Leana Khoury) Taylor, Janet Hunt, and Douglas Taylor; her grandson, Christopher (Melissa) Taylor; and her great-grandchildren, Cameron, Lucas and Gavin Taylor.

A funeral service was held at St. Vartan Church for **Zohrab Markarian** on July 22, 2023. Our condolences to his wife, Elo Markarian; his daughter, Anie (Jason) Markarian-Salazar; his brother, Armen (Vickie) Markarian; his sisters, Alice Gregorian, Seta (Sinan) Yazejian, and Nayiri Bouboussis; and many nieces and nephews.



**Assumption of
Asdvadsadsni**
the Holy Mother-of-God
& Grape Blessing
Sunday, August 13,
2023



St. Vartan Armenian Church, Oakland

Sunday School Open House

FAITH

KIDS OF ALL AGES

SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 17, 2023
10AM - 1PM

All Families Welcome!

CULTURE



PLEASE JOIN US FOR THIS FUN
AND **FREE** EVENT INCLUDING:

- ★ Activities for kids 5 & up starting at 10:00am
Dancing / Crafts / Faith Lesson
Led by Teachers and Teen Leaders
- ★ Children's Sermon at 11:30am
- ★ Bouncy House after Services
- ★ Pizza and Ice Cream!

LANGUAGE

EACH CHILD ATTENDING WILL RECEIVE
A FREE GIFT. RSVP BY SEPTEMBER 10!

STVARTANOAKLAND.COM

ST. VARTAN CHURCH | 650 SPRUCE STREET, OAKLAND
STVARTANOAKLAND@AOL.COM | 510-893-1671



ST. VARTAN CHURCH
Sunday School
Faith • Culture • Language

THIS EVENT IS SPONSORED BY:
ST. VARTAN PARISH COUNCIL • ST. VARTAN ACYO • ST. VARTAN STEWARDSHIP FUND

St. Vartan Church Stewardship
Support your Church.
Become a Steward of St. Vartan today!

St. Vartan Armenian Church presents the Stewardship Program with the goal of developing and growing our Church. Participation in the Stewardship Program is open to any individual or family. The goal of the program is to fund the church's development programs and carry out parish projects and objectives.

No pledge is too small as every contribution makes a significant difference.

Please donate online at <https://www.stvartanoakland.com/stewardship> or scan the QR with your cell phone camera.



St. Vartan Voice Via Email

If you would prefer to receive the monthly St. Vartan Voice newsletter via email, rather than "snail mail", please contact the church office at stvartanoakland@aol.com.

**Join the
CHOIR**

All Are Welcome

The St. Vartan Choir is looking for volunteer singers. If you would like to become a member of the choir, please contact Choir Director, Armena Petrosova at arminestudio@hotmail.com or text (925) 212-2744.

St. Vartan Cultural Committee Presents

A Book Review of

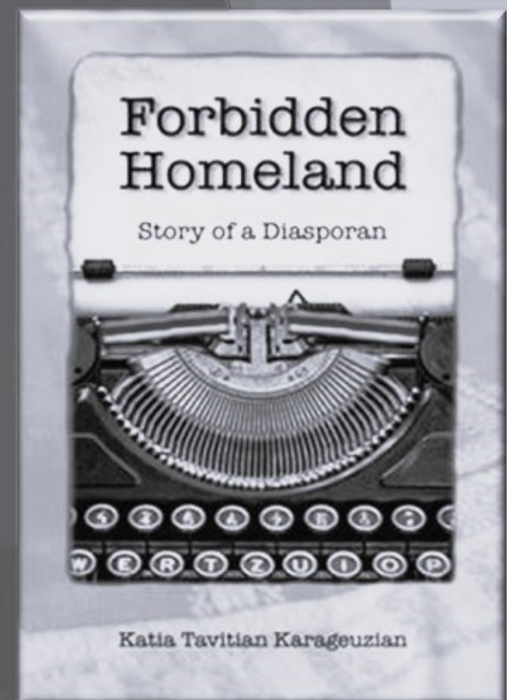
Forbidden Homeland

Story of a Diasporan

By Award Winning Author
Katia Tavitian Karageuzian

Sunday, September 10, 2023, 1pm

St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church
John Marukian Hall
650 Spruce St.
Oakland, CA 94610



\$20 Lunch & Book Presentation

RSVP requested to Liz Ojakian at lizojakian@yahoo.com.

Meet Author Katia Tavitian Karageuzian as she discusses her Golden Literary Titan award winning book. *Forbidden Homeland: Story of a Diasporan* weaves the authors personal diasporic accounts to the events that have been shaping the Armenian reality in the past thirty years and takes the reader with her to uncover hidden truths and connect past with present.



St Vartan Cultural Committee is excited to present

Musical Cabaret Benefit Night!

Brought to you by the Armenian Healthcare
Association of the Bay Area (AHABA)

Saturday, Sept 9, 6pm

St Vartan Armenian Church
Marukian Hall, 650 Spruce St, Oakland
Info (415) 305-1411

Fabulous performances by our own
talented community! Mezze & drinks provided.
All proceeds to medical & psychiatric programs in Armenia.



\$50 advance tickets
paypal.me/AHABAdonate

www.ahabaSF.org



venmo

St. Vartan Church Annual Picnic at Pleasant Hill Park August 6, 2023





Մ. Գևորգ քաջամարտիկ զորավարի, Ադոկտոսի և Ռոմանոս Երզնգողի հիշատակության օր

Մ. Գևորգը՝ Քրիստոսի քաջամարտիկ մարտիրոսը, արի նահատակը, մարտիրոսների պարծանքի թագը և Քրիստոսի հաղթող զորականը, կապադովկացիների գավառից էր, որը հայերը Գամիրք էին կոչում: Նրա անունը թարգմանվում է «մշակ», «հողագործ»: Նա մեծատուն ծնողների առաքինի գավակ էր՝ ազատների և քաջերի ազգից: Մ. Գևորգը տարիքով երիտասարդ էր, վայելուչ էր հասակով և գեղեցիկ: Լինելով արևելյան զորագնդի զորավար՝ արիաբար հարատևում էր Քրիստոսի հավատքի մեջ:

Այն ժամանակվա Դիոկղետիանոս ամբարիշտ արքան հրաման արձակեց դատել քրիստոնյաներին: Այդ պատճառով ատյանում նստեց ամբարիշտ դատավոր Դատիանոսը՝ Նիկոմիդիա քաղաքից, և բոլոր քրիստոնյաներին, ում գտնում էր, չարաչար տանջում էր: Իսկ զորեղ զինվորը՝ Քրիստոսի քաջ նահատակ Գևորգը, փայլում էր որպես պայծառ աստղ ասպարեզում: Նա համարձակ եկավ դատավորի մոտ և ասաց. «Ես քրիստոնյա եմ՝ Քրիստոսի ծառա, և անարգում եմ ձեր կռապաշտ մոլորությունը»: Դատավորը, տեսնելով նրա վայելուչ հասակն ու տեսքը, կանչեց նրան իր մոտ և ողորակյալ խոսքերով համոզում էր ուրանալ Քրիստոսին և զոհ մատուցել կուռքերին, խոստանում բազում պարգևներ: Իսկ Քրիստոսի սուրբ վկան արհամարհեց նրա խոսքերը և ասաց. «Ես քրիստոնյա եմ և Քրիստոսի ծառա»: Այն ժամանակ չէին դադարում ամենքը Գևորգի քաղցրագեղ դեմքին նայելուց, և չէր ախորժում ականջը լսել ուրիշ բան, քան նրա քաղցրախոս բառերը, որոնցով անարգում էր նրանց կուռքերը և դավանում էր Քրիստոս Աստծուն:

Այնժամ զորականներից մեկը գեղարդով հարված հասցրեց Գևորգի որովայնին, և թափվեց շատ արյուն: Սրբին տարան բանտ, կապեցին փայտին, և Տիրոջ հրեշտակը իջավ նրա մոտ և բժշկեց նրա վերքերը: Օրեր անց, հանելով բանտից, սրբին կրկին հարցաքննեցին, թե կուրանա Քրիստոսին, և տեսան, որ հաստատուն է Քրիստոսի հավատի մեջ և անարգում է կուռքերին: Այն ժամանակ պատրաստեցին մի փայտե անիվ, շուրջանակի պատելով սուր սլաքներով՝ հազցրեցին այն Մ. Գևորգին և զլորեցին զառիվայր տեղով, որտեղ ամբողջ մարմինը սրբի կտրատվեց: Տիրոջ հրեշտակը իջավ երկնքից, ազատեց Մ. Գևորգին անիվից և բժշկեց նրա բոլոր վերքերը: Տեսնելով դա՝ անհավատները ամաչեցին, բայց վերցնելով տարան սրբին բանտ՝ մի այրի կնոջ տուն: Մ. Գևորգը նստեց տան պուրակից մեկի պատվանդանի մոտ, և նույն ժամին պուրակ կանաչեղով ծաղկեց և արմատացավ, և տան տանիքի վրա բարձրացավ տասնհինգ կանգուն ունեցող ծառ:

Մ. Գևորգն ասաց այրի կնոջը. «Քաղցած եմ, բեր ինձ հաց ուտելու»: Կինը պատասխանեց. «Իմ տանը հաց չկա»: Սուրբն ասաց.

- Ո՞ր աստծուն ես պաշտում:

Կինը պատասխանեց.

- Ապոդոնին:

Սուրբն ասաց.

- Հիրավի չունես հաց, որ ապոդոնին ես պաշտում:

Եվ կինը դուրս եկավ տնից, որ հաց բերի սրբին: Նույնժամ Ռափայել հրեշտակապետը դրեց սրբի առաջ բարիքներով լի սեղան, և նա կերավ ու հագեցավ՝ գոհություն հայտնելով Աստծուն: Երբ կինը եկավ, տեսավ բարիքներով լի սեղանը, կանաչած պուրակ և բարձրացած ծառը, ընկավ սրբի ոտքերի մոտ և հավատաց ի Քրիստոս:

Մ. Գևորգի քարոզների շնորհիվ շատերը դարձի եկան, որոնց թվում էր նաև Ալեքսանդրիա թագուհին: Մի կախարդի պատվիրեցին, որ երկու բաժակ դեղ պատրաստի՝ սրբին դարձի բերելու համար: Առաջին բաժակը խմելուց հետո սուրբը պիտի մտքափոխվեր, իսկ երկրորդից հետո՝ մեռներ: Բայց Գևորգն առ Աստված ունեցած հավատի շնորհիվ խմում է երկու բաժակն էլ և, ի զարմանս բոլորի, կենդանի մնում: Նա նաև հարություն է տալիս մի մեռյալի: Կայսեր բազում թախանձանքներից հետո Գևորգը վերջապես համաձայնվում է կուռքերին զոհ մատուցել: Սակայն հասնելով կռատուն՝ մեկառմեկ ջարդում է բոլոր կուռքերը՝ ցույց տալով դրանց սուտ և սին լինելը: Այս հանդուգն արարքի համար Դիոկղետիանոս կայսրը 303 թվականին գլխատել է տալիս Մ. Գևորգին:

Ադոկտոսը նահատակվել է 320 թվականին, հայկական Մելիտենեում, Մաքսիմիանոսի ժամանակ: Պետական պաշտոնյա է եղել Եփեսոսում: Չցանկանալով իր աղջկան՝ Կալիսթենեին կնության տալ հեթանոս կայսերը, նրան փախցնում է արևելք: Քիստոնյա լինելու պատճառով, կայսեր հրահանգով գրկվում է կոչումից և ունեցվածքից և վտարվում Մելիտենե: Տեղի կուսակալին չի հաջողվում Ադոկտոսին հեթանոս դարձնել: Անսասան մնալով իր հավատին՝ գլխատվում է: Սրբի կինն ու մյուս աղջիկը՝ Պելոպիան թաղում են նրան: Կոստանդիանոս կայսեր քույրը՝ Կոստանցան, պաշտպանում է Կալիսթենեին, ով հոր մատուցները տեղափոխում է Եփեսոս, ուր հետագայում սրբի գերեզմանի վրա մատուցում է կառուցվում:

Ռոմանոս Երզնգողը համարվում է շարականների կանոնների ստեղծողը: Եղել է սարկավագ Կ. Պոլսի Մ. Սոփիա եկեղեցում: Լավ երգել և կարդալ չկարողանալու պատճառով անարգվել է շատերի կողմից: Մ. Աստվածածինը հայտնվել է նրան երազում և տվել է մի թղթագլան՝ հրամայելով ուտել, որից հետո Ռոմանոսն ստացել է շարականներ գրելու և կատարելու բացառիկ շնորհ: Վախճանվել է 556 թվականին:

SAINT VARTAN ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH
INVITES THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

ARCHBISHOP HOVNAN DERDERIAN

PASTORAL VISIT

and

Divine Liturgy

SAVE THE DATE:

SUNDAY
OCTOBER 22 | **10AM**

WWW.STVARTANOAKLAND.COM

COMMEMORATION OF ST GEORGE (KEVORK) THE CAPTAIN, ST ADOKTOS AND ST ROMANOS THE SINGER

St George the Warrior (Sourp Kevork/Gevorg Zoravar in Armenian) is revered all over the world. He is one of the beloved saints of the Armenian Church, whose life serves as an example of remaining faithful to God even under the harshest circumstances.

Early Christian tradition tells us that St George was born to Christian parents in the late third century. After his father was martyred for his faith, his mother took the little boy back to her hometown Diospolis, now in the modern city of Lod in Israel.

St George became a soldier in the Roman army, and his bravery and discipline made him climb ranks to become a Captain. St George was steadfast in his faith, and, as a Christian, refused to bring the pagan sacrifice to the Roman emperor Diocletianus, which was venerating the emperor as a god. He was tortured and martyred around 303 AD.

While Saint George was being tortured, Alexandra, the King's wife, went to the arena, bowed before George, and professed her faith openly. When she questioned whether she was worthy of paradise and martyrdom without being baptized, Saint George told her, "Do not fear, for your blood will baptize you." She was denounced as a Christian and imprisoned on her husband's orders then sentenced to death.

St George is often portrayed slaying a dragon. Christian tradition recounts that in a certain city, a dragon pestered the inhabitants, demanding two sheep a day. When there were no more sheep in the village, the vicious dragon demanded a human sacrifice.

The inhabitants cast lots, and the daughter of the city's governor was chosen. When they were taking the crying girl to the dragon's den, St George passed by. When he heard what was about to happen, he decided to intervene. He followed the girl into the den, crossed himself with prayer and slew the fire spitting dragon before it could attack. The citizens were in awe and recognised God's powerful works. That day many were baptised and became Christians.

St George sets us an example in bravery, steadfastness and strong faith.

St Adoktos (Adauctus) was martyred in 320 AD. He was from Ephesus and was appointed governor by Emperor Maximin. Maximin asked Callisthene (Kalistene), the daughter of Adoktos, to marry him, but her father did not want to give her to an idolater. For being Christian, upon the King's order, Adoktos was deprived of his title and property and exiled to Melitene. The local governor of Melitene also failed to convert Adoktos to the heathen religion. Remaining steadfast and unshaken in his faith, St Adoktos was beheaded.

His daughter Callisthene disguised herself as a young man and concealed herself in Nicomedia. She later on went to Thrace where she lodged with a family. Callisthene healed their blind daughter and the girl's parents, who considered Callisthene to be a man, asked him to marry her. Then St Callisthene revealed the truth and they praised God.

Callisthene decided to leave in order to follow an ascetic way of life with humility. At the time, she met Constantia (Costantsa) the sister of Constantine the Great. The emperor defended and protected Callisthene and she managed to take back her father's property and also to transfer his relics to Ephesus. She built a Church there in order to pay homage to him.

St Romanos the Singer (the Melodist) is considered to be the author and creator of more than 1,000 hymns or kontakia (hymns performed in Orthodox traditions).

According to legend, Romanos (Romanus) was not at first considered to be either a talented reader or singer. He was however, loved by the Patriarch of Constantinople, because of his great humility. Once, around the year 518, while serving in the Church of the Panagia at Blachernae, during the All-Night Vigil for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, he was assigned to read the kathisma verses from the Psalter. He read so poorly that another reader had to take his place. Some of the lesser clergy ridiculed Romanos for this, and being humiliated he sat down in one of the choir stalls. Overcome by weariness and sorrow, he soon fell asleep. As he slept, the Theotokos (Mother of God) appeared to him with a scroll in her hand. She commanded him to eat the scroll, and as soon as he did so, he awoke. He immediately received a blessing from the Patriarch, mounted the pulpit and chanted extemporaneously his famous Kontakion of the Nativity, "Today the Virgin gives birth to Him Who is above all being...."

The emperor, the patriarch, the clergy, and the entire congregation were amazed at both the profound theology of the hymn and Romanos' clear, sonorous voice as he sang. According to tradition, this was the very first kontakion ever sung. The Greek word "kontakion" refers to the shaft on which a scroll is wound, hence the significance of the Theotokos' command for him to swallow a scroll, indicating that his compositions were by divine inspiration. St. Romanos passed away in 556 A. D.





On August 15 volunteers prepared the St. Vartan Annual Food Festival mailing. Over 3,000 envelopes were stuffed with festival postcards, raffle tickets, return envelopes, and a letter.

The grand prize raffle ticket this year is two \$500 Southwest Airlines gift cards. Second prize is Apple AirPods and third prize is Warrior tickets.

The Charity Raffle prize is \$4,000.



Festival Workday—Help Needed

Kufta Workday

Thursday, September 14
9:30 am

Please let Suzanne Vasgerdsian know if you plan to attend at 925-788-5446.



On-line Bible Study 7 pm

Wednesday, September 6
Thursday, September 14
Wednesday, September 20
Wednesday, September 27

Register for Bible Study and receive a Zoom Meeting Link at:

<https://www.stvartanoakland.com/events>



To prepare Yalanchi/Sarma for Food Festival

Tuesday, October 3	9 am	Roll Yalanchi
Wednesday, October 4	9 am	Roll Yalanchi
Thursday, October 5	9 am	Box Yalanchi

Contact Gail Kezerian, hyegail@pacbell.net, or Beth Rustigian Broussalian, bethbrouss@gmail.com, for more information. Sign-up Genuis information pending.

Calling all Festival Food Server Volunteers!

If you are interested in serving for the upcoming Food Festival in October, please go to the Sign-up Genius Website and look up the sign-up sheet with the email "linda@mcmahonrt.com":

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4AA8A82CA0FFC52-stvartans1>

If you have any questions or want to schedule directly, please contact Linda Gozurian McMahon at linda@mcmahonrt.com or 415-515-4079. Thank you.

St. Vartan Annual Food Festival Church Directory Advertisements

Dear Friends,

Last fall, St. Vartan was able to fully open our doors and host our 67th annual festival after a two-year absence and the event was a huge success. We welcomed more people than ever over the two days, sold more food and goods, and brought the joy of our festival back to the community.

We are already preparing for this year's festival on October 6 and 7, and we are looking forward to once again producing our annual festival directory.

There are two ways you can place an ad in the festival directory:

1) Place a Yellow Page ad for your business or personal service.

2) Place a Personal Message by purchasing space to celebrate graduations, birthdays, anniversaries, remember loved ones, or just to say hello to your St. Vartan family.

The directory will also include a community phone book, organization lists and photos. Directories are free to church members and those who place ads. They will be mailed to advertisers upon request and will be available for pickup at church in October. Call the church office if you would like to place an ad. Ads are due by **September 8, 2023**.

Sincerely, Fr. Krikor Zakaryan and The St. Vartan Church Parish Council

Grandma's Attic is Now Accepting Donations!

Please donate your quality, gently-used items to Grandma's Attic. Grandma's Attic is an extremely popular feature of our food festival which relies on your donations to make it successful. Please bring donations on Sunday mornings, or Mon, Tues, Thurs, or Fri between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm.

Please only bring sellable items in good condition. Grandma's Attic will accept your gently used household items, glassware, pottery, medium sized pictures, rugs, small household decor, almost-new toys, jewelry, purses, holiday items, usable sports equipment, etc. We appreciate your donations, but please use discretion when donating!

We cannot accept:

TVs, computers, or any electronic equipment unless they are in the original box with instructions

VHS tapes, DVDs or books (cookbooks are okay)

Large exercise equipment

Broken or non-working items

Clothing or shoes

Plain glass vases

Stuffed animals

Anything for kids that a child would sit or stand in—toys, strollers, car seats, etc.

If you have any questions, please email Nicole at nvasger@yahoo.com before bringing items. We cannot pick up donations. Thanks.

Festival Donation Requests

Please consider making a bazaar donation to one or several of the categories listed on the chart to the left. Send your check to St. Vartan Armenian Church and mark your donation on the memo line or donate through the church's website at:

www.stvartanoakland.com/donate

Festival Donation Requests

Items Requested	Number of Donors	Item Cost	Items Received	Still Needed
Leg of Lamb	100	50	43	57
Tent	15	250	4	11
Admission Booth	1	250	0	1
Game Booths	5	200	0	5
Newspaper Advertising	4	100	0	4
Case of Wine	10	50	5	5
Case of Armenian Tan	2	50	0	2
Case of Armenian Beer	12	40	1	11
Armenian Coffee	2	30	1	1
Program Guide	5	25	1	4



Kufta & Gata prep for Food Festival

ST. VARTAN ARMENIAN CHURCH 68TH ANNUAL

Armenian Food Festival

FRI, OCT. 6, 2023
5:30-11:00PM

SAT, OCT. 7, 2023
NOON-11:00PM

Celebrate Armenian food, music, dance and culture

Music by Khatchig Jingirian and dancing at 9:00pm

Food served until 9:00pm

dance performances

marketplace • games for kids

vegetarian fare • food to go

grandma's attic • church tours

illustrations by
alysiakezerian.com

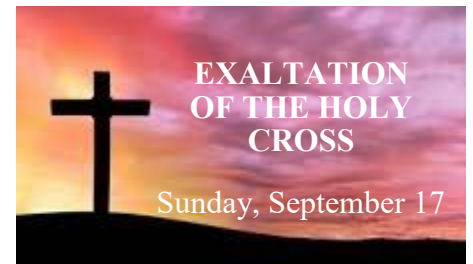


ST. VARTAN ARMENIAN CHURCH 650 SPRUCE STREET, OAKLAND
510-893-1671 STVARTANOAKLAND.ORG

St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church
650 Spruce Street
Oakland, CA 94610

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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.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate
Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan, Parish Priest and President of All Church Organizations
Parish Council Chair: Harout Hagopian
Parish Assembly Chair: Don Manoogian
Choir Director: Armena Petrosova
Organist: Araks Aghazarian
ACYO Chair: Ani Vasgerdsian Brady
Sunday School Superintendent: Karen Mener
Ladies Society Chair: Lisa Manoogian
Cultural Society Chair: Liz Ojakian
Armenian School Principal: Anna Massis
Hokejosh: Nora Hanoian
Hye Social Chair: Annette Kevranian
Boys Basketball Coach: Mike and Daron Boloyan
Girls Volleyball Coach: Annette Kevranian
Newsletter Editors: Arlene Hovsepian and Rachel Harger
Church Secretary: Rachel Harger
Altar Flowers: Sylvia Gozurian, Elo Markarian, Suzanne Vasgerdsian, Carole Chang
Mas Committee: Sylvia Gozurian, Elo Markarian, Hilda Mener
Church Custodian: Wartkes Hagopian

Morning Service—Sundays 9:30 am
Divine Liturgy Service—Sundays 10:00 a.m.

650 Spruce Street, Oakland, CA. 94610
Phone: 510-893-1671
Email: stvirtanoakland@aol.com
Website: www.stvirtanoakland.org

