



OUR CHURCH

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DER (REV. FR.) KRIKOR ZAKARYAN, PARISH PRIEST

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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The Great Lent

Therefore also now, said the LORD, turn you even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn to the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repents him of the evil.

Joel 2:12-13

Fr. Schmemmann describes the Christian theology behind fasting as follows: **"Hunger is that state in which we realize our dependence on something else-when we urgently and essentially need food - showing thus that we have no life in ourselves.** It is that limit beyond which we either die from starvation or, having satisfied our bodies, we have again the impression of being alive. It is, in other words, the time

when we face the ultimate question: On what does my life depend? ... Satan came to Adam in Paradise; (as) he came to Christ in the desert. He came to two hungry men and said: eat for your hunger is the proof that you depend entirely on food that your life is in food ... Adam believed and ate; but Christ rejected that temptation and said: man shall not live by Bread alone but by God." Fasting points the way to the fact that there is something more

to life than just the physical.

Fasting is the most powerful spiritual discipline of all the Christian disciplines. Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform your life. Fasting and prayer can also work on a much grander scale. Through fasting God will hear from heaven and heal our lives, our churches, our communities, the nations and world. Fasting and prayer can bring about revival - a change in the direction of the nations

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Witness the Progress of Our Church

On Friday, January 15, 2010, His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate, with the assistance of Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan and Deacons, presided over the blessing of the Main Dome Cross.



Following the ceremony, the Primate delivered his message and expressed his sincere appreciation to the Parish Priest, members of the Parish Council and the Construction Committee for their dedication during the construction efforts.

Carolyn Nigosian, the Chair of the Parish Council, welcomed the guests of the evening. She expressed her gratitude to the Primate for his special attention to the Parish as well as the Parish Council and the Construction Committee for their support during the construction efforts.

Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan also expressed his gratitude to the Primate for his guidance and support and appreciated the service of the Parish Council and the Construction Committee. The banquet concluded with the Primate's closing message and prayer.

Raising of the Main Dome

On January 16, 2010, the Main Dome Cross was secured on the Main Dome by Chuck Simonian, the metal craft designer who built the Cross for the Armenian Church of the Desert. Then, the entire Main Dome structure was craned up to rest on top of the church sanctuary building. This long awaited and historical event was enjoyed by everyone in attendance.

The expected completion date for the construction of the Church sanctuary is



May of 2010, and efforts continue towards raising additional funds to complete the required site work in order to obtain an occupancy

permit for use of the new Church. If the necessary funds are in place, we anticipate construction of the new driveway entrance, additional parking, perimeter



wall and landscaping during the summer months. This aggressive goal will allow us to begin holding Church services in the new Church by Fall of 2010.



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But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
Mathew 6:3-4

The Great Lent

→ from p.1 of earth and the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Fasting is also one of the most neglected spiritual admonitions. In fact, it has been ignored for so long that it is difficult to find information on the "how-to's" of this life-changing experience.

If you do not already know of the power and importance of fasting, here are some very important facts:

- Fasting was an expected discipline in both the Old and New Testament eras. For example, Moses fasted at least two recorded forty-day periods. Jesus fasted 40 days and reminded His followers to fast, "when you fast," not if you

fast.

- Fasting and prayer can restore the loss of the "first love" for your Lord and result in a more intimate relationship with Christ.

- Fasting is a biblical way to truly humble yourself in the sight of God (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). King David said, "I humble myself through fasting."

- Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life. The Holy Spirit will quicken the Word of God in your heart and His truth will become more meaningful to you!

- Fasting can transform your prayer life into a richer and more personal experience.

- Fasting can result in a dynamic personal revival in your own life-and make you a channel of revival to others.

- Fasting and prayer are the only disciplines that fulfill the requirements of II Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

If you fast, you will find yourself being humbled. You will discover more

time to pray and seek God's face. And as He leads you to recognize and repent of unconfessed sin, you will experience special blessings from God.

Thus the Church begins Great Lent with fasting; the season of greatest celebration (Easter) is preceded by the season of greatest fasting (Lent). A fast not just for the stomach but for the eyes, ears, hands and feet as well; a fast that will help provide your hearts and souls and bodies with the light of God, the light of Jesus' resurrection, the light of hope for everlasting life in the loving arms of our Creator. AMEN



took Holy Communion in the open field of Avarayr. They listened to **Hovsep Catholicos** speak to them on the strength of the Christian faith. They listened to the vibrant **Ghevont Yeretz**, whose memorable speech has since been immortalized as the driving spirit of Vartanantz. And they listened respectfully to **Vartan Mamigonian**, Commander-in-Chief of the Armenia troops, give his historic speech preparing the 66,000 Armenians physically and spiritually for the holy battle.

The Battle started at dawn on June 2, 451. The 66,000 Armenians, under Vartan Mamigonian, encountered an army of 220,000 Persians, reinforced by squadrons of armed elephants, which were used as tanks at the time. The battle was a furious one, but a losing one for the vastly outnumbered Armenians. Brave Vartan Mamigonian fought to the last, and fell on the battlefield of Avarayr, as a

martyr for Christianity, along with eight other generals. At the height of the battle, however, Vasag Suni and some of his followers realized the inevitable outcome, and defected to the Persians. Their traitorous conduct has not been forgiven nor forgotten by Armenians to this very day!

Although the Battle of Vartanantz was a military defeat for the Armenians, it has gone down in Armenian history as the greatest spiritual and moral victory, and is celebrated by all Armenians everywhere with pride and respect as a personification of the freedom of thought, faith, and conscience!

It is the most important national and religious Holy Day. And out of the struggle, there emerged two of the greatest figures in Armenian history: Ghevont Yeretz, spiritual leader, and Vartan Mamigonian, military leader-unsurpassed!

The Battle of Vartanantz

One of the most significant battles for the Armenian Nation was the **Battle of Vartanantz**. The battle took place on June 2, 451 on the field of **Avarayr**, and will long be remembered as the **greatest spiritual and moral victory for all Armenians**.

About the year 450 A.D., when Armenia had lost its own kingdom and was divided between the Byzantine and Persian Empires, Christianity was a strong force in the land.

Thus, it was, that when the **Persian King Hazkert** tried to abolish Christianity and turn the people back to sun worship (paganism). The Armenians proclaimed their willingness to accept the Persian mandate in all respects providing their freedom to practice Christianity remained intact. Persian refusal to accept these views laid the groundwork for further dissension by the Armenian people.

There lived in Armenia at this time, a nobleman, **Vasag Suni**, who with some other Armenian military leaders and noblemen leaned toward the Persian viewpoint. These men, along with other noblemen and **Vartan Mamigonian**, were suddenly invited to Central Persia for consultation with the King, and there, were detained and ordered to accept Sun Worship for their country. This was really part of a clever Persian conspiracy to leave Armenia without leadership

and, hence, to facilitate the Persian plan to converting the common people.

After consultation amongst themselves, these imprisoned military leaders, in a plot of their own, pretended to accept the Persian demands, and thus, were returned to Armenia laden with gifts and accompanied by Persian soldiers and religious leaders who would initiate the re-conversion to paganism.

Back in Armenia, however, the people heard of the faithlessness of their leaders, and did not realize that it was a plot. Furious and indignant, they decided to fight even there own "traitorous" husbands and fathers in an attempt to keep Christianity alive at any cost!

As soon as the Armenian nobles and soldiers set foot on their own land, they overtly passed back to the side of their nation, determined to fight for Christianity to the very end, and chased back the group of Persians who had accompanied them. Realizing that they needed military and moral aid, they appealed to another Christian people, The Greeks of the Byzantine Empire. They were refused, but their decision to fight to the end did not falter. A popular revolt broke out, led by Prince Vartan Mamigonian. Unfortunately, a group of princes, under Vasak of Suni, withdrew from the struggle and made peace with the Persians.

On the eve of the battle, all soldiers

UPCOMING



SUPER BOWL PARTY
Sunday, February 7, 2010
3:30 p.m. - ?

\$15 Per Person Donation
Food & Beverage Included
KIRKJAN HALL



RSVP BY FEBRUARY 4, 2010
818 317 9094 VJ

PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING 2010
HAS BEEN POSTPONED FROM
 February 21st **TO MARCH 2nd, 2010, Tuesday**

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate will preside at the meeting
All the Members are expected to attend!

6:00 pm Dinner \$20 per person at Kirkjan Family Hall
7:00 pm Assembly Meeting at Kirkjan Family Hall

Church Calendar and Events
February 2010

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Choir Practice 11:00 am
7 DIVINE LITURGY AGYO Meeting 2 pm	8	9	10 Ladies Society Meeting 6:30 pm	11 Parish Council Meeting 4:30pm Feast of St. Vartanantz	12	13 Choir Practice 11:00 am
14 DIVINE LITURGY LS Monthly Luncheon	15 Beginning of the Great Lent	16	17	18	19	20 Choir Practice 11:00 am
21 DIVINE LITURGY 11:30 am	22	23	24 LS Executive Board Meeting 6:30 pm	25	26	27 Choir Practice 11:00 am
28 DIVINE LITURGY 11:30 am						

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Dr. Antreas Diran Mesrobian, M.D. who passed away on January 19, 2010. The funeral service was officiated by Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan and was held on January 23, 2010 at Forest Lawn Mortuary in Cathedral City, CA.
MAY GOD REST HIS SOUL IN PEACE.

If you would like to request a Hokehankisd Prayer Service / Requiem Service for the souls of your deceased beloved ones, please contact the Church office Tue. — Sat. prior to the Divine Liturgy Service on Sundays
Church office phone 1 (760) 773-2155

If you would like Der (Rev. Fr.) Krikor to visit for a home blessing or any other reason, please contact the Church office at (760) 773-2155 or e-mail: aacod@live.com

PLEASE, MAKE SURE YOU FILL OUT CORRECTLY SECTION 8 AND 9 IN YOUR CENSUS 2010 FORM

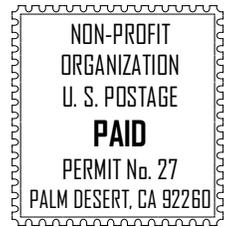
8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
 Yes, Puerto Rican
 Yes, Cuban
 Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — Print origin, for example, Argentinian, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on. ✓

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark one or more boxes.
 White
 Black, African Am., or Negro
 American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe. ✓

Asian Indian Japanese Native Hawaiian
 Chinese Korean Guamanian or Chamorro
 Filipino Vietnamese Samoan
 Other Asian — Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. ✓ Other Pacific Islander — Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on. ✓

Some other race — Print race. ✓
ARMENIAN

ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF THE DESERT
38-900 VISTA DUNES ROAD
RANCHO MIRAGE, CA 92270



THIS COPY GOES TO:

[Empty dotted box for recipient address]

Պահպանող Աղօթք

*Պահապան ամենուն, Քրիստոս,
Քու աջդ թող պահպանէ ինձի
գիշեր ու ցերեկ,
երբ տուն մնամ կամ ճամբայ ելլեմ,
երբ կը քնանամ կամ կ'արթննամ,
որպէսզի երբեք չսասանիմ.
ողորմէ՛ Քու արարածներուդ
եւ ինձի՝ մեծ մեղաւորիս:*

Bahbanogh Aghotk

*Bahaban amenoon, Krisdos,
Koo atchut togh bahbaneh indzee
kisher oo tsereg,
yerp doon munam gam djampah yellerr.
yerp gu kunanam gam gartunnam,
vorbeszee yerpek tchusasaneem.
voghmech Koo araradzneroot
yev indzee medz meghavorees.*

Prayer for Security

*O Christ, who is the keeper of all,
Let your hand guard and shelter me
day and night;
when I am at home and when I am on
the road;
When I fall asleep and when I wake up,
so that I may never fail.
Have mercy on you creatures and
especially on me - the great sinner.*

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Editor Der (Rev. Fr.) Krikor Zakaryan

The deadline for all articles is fifteenth (15th) of each month

Parish Priest/President of all Church Organizations Der (Rev. Fr.) Krikor Zakaryan

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