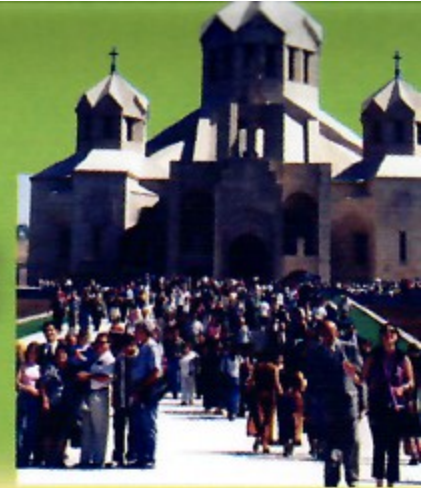


# How the Armenians Became a Christian People



## WE PRAY TOGETHER



Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooy'n Srpo.

Holy Father, we are proud that Armenia was the first Christian nation. Thaddeus and Bartholomew and Gregory came to Armenia to bring the good news about Jesus. We hope they are proud of our faith. Amen.

## OUR LIFE TOGETHER



Ruth was so excited. She was going to sleep at her friend Margaret's house. The next morning they were going to attend church with Margaret and her family.

The next day, when they arrived at church, Ruth and Margaret went to the Sunday School. Margaret introduced Ruth to her Sunday School teacher. "It is so nice that you came with your friend to visit us. What is the name of your church?"

Ruth answered shyly, "St. Mark Armenian Church." Ruth was surprised when the teacher turned to her class and said, "Did you know that Armenia was the first Christian nation?"

Ruth felt so proud that others knew about the Armenian Church.

# The People of God Celebrate



## WE PRAY TOGETHER



Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooyn Srpo.

Dear Lord, as a church family, we remember and honor the special events in your life. Amen.

## OUR LIFE TOGETHER

One day, Johnny and his sister Angele were coming home from school. All of a sudden, their Uncle Toros jumped out from behind some bushes and splashed them with water. Johnny and Angele screamed. Angele said, "Uncle Toros, why did you sprinkle us with water?"



"Come inside, you two," he said. "Medz Mama will explain why."

Johnny and Angele dried themselves off and sat down at the kitchen table. Grandma gave them a cookie and some milk. She began to tell them about this tradition.

"The Feast of the Transfiguration is also called Vartavar. Before we were Christian, Armenians would decorate their altars with roses. Vart means rose. They also sprinkled water on each other. Today we do these things in happy celebration of Christ's love and glory!"

Johnny and Angele could not wait for Vartavar when they could sprinkle water on Uncle Toros!

# GOD'S WORD TO US

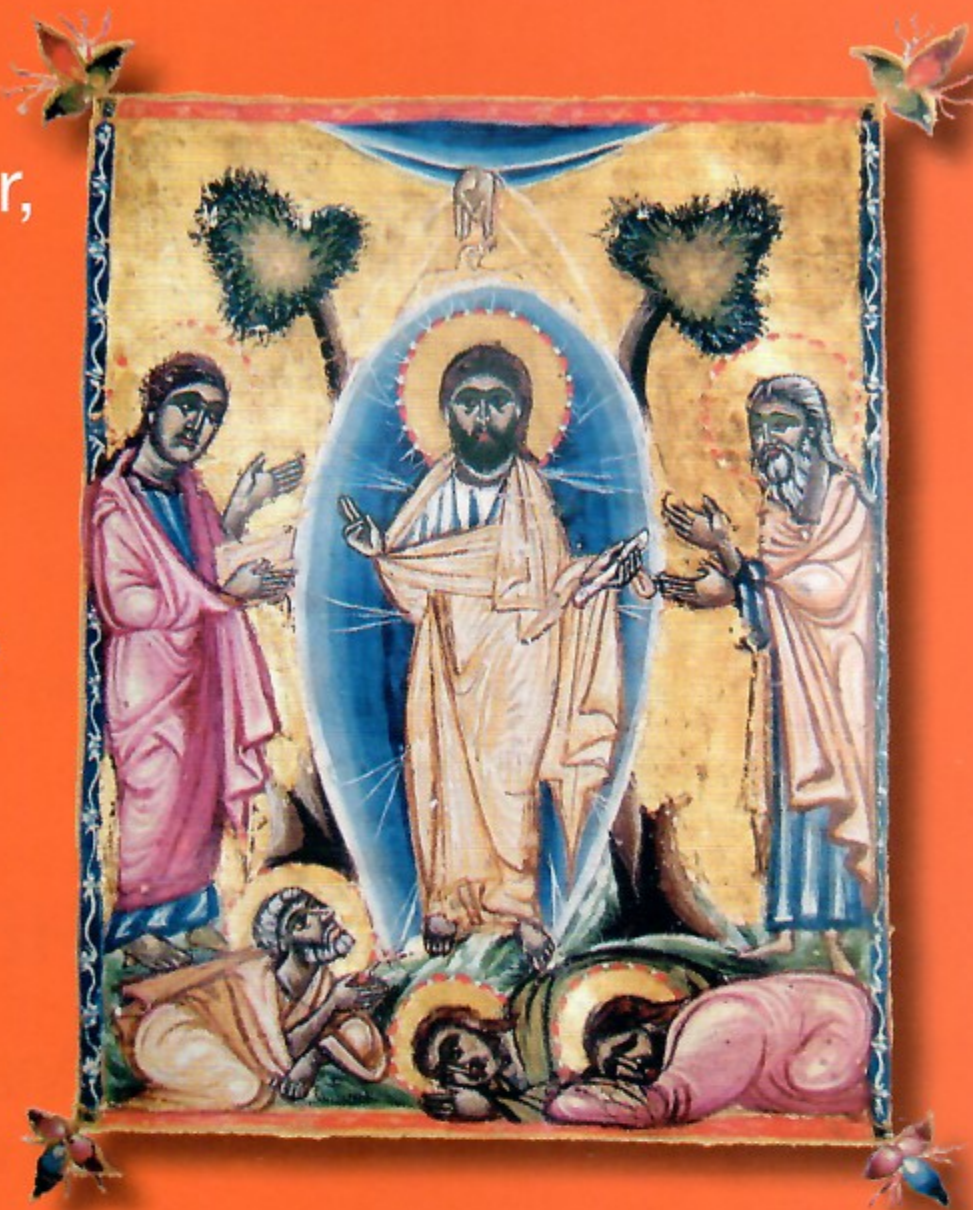
Jesus took three of his disciples – Peter, James and John, and they went up on a high mountain where they could be alone. There, in front of them, Jesus was completely changed. His clothes were sparkling white. Moses and Elijah, prophets from the Old Testament, were with Jesus, talking to him.

The disciples wanted to stay on the mountain to celebrate.

A cloud passed over them. From the cloud, a voice said, “This is my Son. I love him. Listen to what he says!”

As they came down from the mountain, Jesus told the disciples not to say a word about what they had seen. They did not tell anyone, but they wondered about what they had seen and heard.

*Mark 9:2-10*



## WE LEARN ABOUT GOD

On the mountain, something wonderful happened to Jesus. He looked as if a light was shining on his face, and his clothes were dazzling with brightness. This change in the appearance of Jesus is called Transfiguration. Transfiguration is a very big word that describes what happened to Jesus.

The disciples wanted to stay on the mountain to celebrate.

In the church calendar, special events in Jesus' life are called feast days. The church family celebrates feast days in different ways.





# OUR ARMENIAN WAY

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Armenians celebrated the Feast of the Transfiguration, or Vartavar, in many ways. People gave bouquets of flowers to the church. They tied roses on the heads of their animals. They splashed each other with water. Sometimes, they released pigeons into the air. Old customs helped people celebrate the life of Jesus!

## WE CELEBRATE

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Jesus took three of his disciples to a mountain to pray. There something wonderful happened to him. And God's voice could be heard once more saying, "This is my Son."





# FAMILY PAGE

## SHARING OUR FAITH

Today's lesson was about the Feast of the Transfiguration or Vartavar. St. Gregory joined the pagan Feast of Vartavar with the Feast of the Transfiguration so they would be celebrated together. Often pagan feasts were joined with Christian ones. So we celebrate Jesus' glorious transformation on a mountaintop by using older festive traditions, such as sprinkling water on each other. In the Middle East and Armenia, people continue to surprise friends and family with a splash of water on Transfiguration Day!



## LIVING OUR FAITH

During the summer months, many feast days are celebrated. The Feast of Transfiguration is one of them. Other feast days that occur in the summer months are:

- Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother-of-God
- Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (early to mid-September)
- All of these are major feast days

To learn more about these feasts or any other information, visit the Diocesan web site: [www.armenianchurch.net](http://www.armenianchurch.net).

