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Homenetmen Glendale Ararat Chapter
Cultural Division



Get to Know...

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Armenian Holy Cross (Khachverats)

In the Christian liturgical calendar, there are several different **Feasts of the Cross**, all of which commemorate the cross used in the crucifixion of Jesus. While Good Friday is dedicated to the Passion of Christ and the Crucifixion, these days celebrate the cross itself, as the instrument of salvation.

The Armenian Church celebrates this holiday on the Sunday nearest September 14, which is devoted to the Holy Cross (Surb Khach). This holiday also serves as a memorial to those who have passed away.

The Armenian Apostolic Church observes a five-day fast, called the **Fast of the Holy Cross** from September 10 through September 14, in preparation for the **Feast of the Holy Church in view of the Holy Cross**, which they celebrate on September 15. September 16 is observed as the **Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross** (*Khachverats* in Armenian), a feast which continues for several days thereafter. It is counted as one of the five major feasts of the Armenian Church, and the most important of the four feasts of the Holy Cross. According to Armenian tradition, the first one to "exalt" the Cross was the Apostle James of Jerusalem, the "Brother of the Lord". On the Sunday nearest September 14, the liturgy is marked with an *antasdan* service (blessing of the fields) during which the processional cross is adorned with basil (a symbol of royalty) and the four corners of the church are blessed as a sign of the sanctification of the world.

On the Sunday nearest September 28 (always two weeks after the Exaltation) the Armenian Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Cross of Varak (*Varaka Khach*) commemorating the third century placement of an authentic relic of the cross in Armenian soil at Varagavank. This is a cross feast unique to the Armenian Church. On the Sunday closest to October 26, the Armenian Church celebrates the **Discovery of the Holy Cross** (*Kyood Khach*), commemorating the finding of the True Cross by Saint Helena (327 AD).