

**IN CELEBRATION OF THE FEASTS OF
ST. HRIPSIME AND ST. GAYANE AND THEIR COMPANIONS**

**St. James Armenian Church
invites you to**

WOMEN'S GUILD DAY

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2017

**Special *Hokehankisd* (Requiem Service) will be conducted
in memory of our deceased Women's Guild Members**

**MUSICAL PERFORMANCE BY
MOTHER-DAUGHTER DUO**



Ani Sinanian (violin) and Zanna Sinanian (piano)

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COMMEMORATION OF ST. HRIPSIME AND ST. GAYANE AND THEIR COMPANIONS

According to legend, **St. Hripsime** and her 35 female companions formed a group of devout Christian nuns who lived as hermits in a Roman monastery around 300 A.D. Hripsime was believed to be a descendant of the royal family of Rome. She was extremely beautiful and had attracted the attention of the Roman emperor Diocletian, who vowed to marry her.

To avoid his forceful advances and to maintain her chastity, St. Hripsime, her fellow nuns and their leader **St. Gayane**, fled Rome. After traveling to Alexandria, they finally arrived in the vicinity of Vagharshapat in Armenia, where it is said they found an old building of an abandoned wine press and settled there.

The Roman emperor continued his pursuit of Hripsime and the nuns. He asked the pagan Armenian King Drtad to help return them to Rome. However, when King Drtad's soldiers discovered where the nuns were hiding and King Drtad saw the beautiful St. Hripsime, he too fell in love with her and commanded her to marry him. When St. Hripsime was brought before the King, she refused to renounce her Christian faith and accept the King's marriage proposal. She chose the love of Christ over the title of queen with all of its pagan trappings. The King then pressured St. Gayane, the leader of the sisterhood, to convince St. Hripsime to marry him. However, instead of advising Hripsime to submit to the King's demands, St. Gayane told her to resist and stand firm in her faith. Sts. Hripsime and Gayane then escaped from the palace and returned to the winery. Because of her refusal, the King's forces inflicted fiendish tortures upon Sts. Hripsime, Gayane and the other sisters. According to various accounts, the soldiers cut out their tongues, pierced their eyes, chopped up their bodies and then burned them.

The martyrdom of these women took place in the last year of St. Gregory the Illuminator's imprisonment in the pit. Upon his delivery from the pit, in the early 4th century St. Gregory built chapels over the relics of the nuns. Later, during the time of St. Sahag Bartev, these chapels were rebuilt, and during the pontificate of Catholicos Gomidas in the 7th century, two beautiful cathedrals were erected; one of these, the Cathedral of St. Hripsime, remains monument of Armenian architecture.



ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

ANI SINANYAN, *violin*

Ani Sinanyan is a young violinist and winner of many competitions.

She has won 1st Place in the Southwest Bach Festival of 2010, 1st Place in the Armenian Allied Arts Association Competition of 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015, and 1st Place in the Southwestern Youth Musicians Festival of 2010 and 2011.

In the April of 2010, she was a finalist of the Youth Talent Festival and performed in the Carnegie Weill Recital Hall in New York City.

From 2010-2011, Ani was the Concertmistress of the LAUSD Honors Orchestra.

In 2011, she had her Solo Debut Recital in Pasadena CA.

Now, she is the Concertmistress and Solo Violinist of the Verdugo Young Musicians Association.

ZHANNA SINANYAN, *piano*

Growing up in a household of opera singers and actors, Mrs. Sinanyan developed a special relationship with music at an early age. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, Zhanna received her early music training from home, and later graduated from the State Conservatory of Music in Yerevan, Armenia, with an original thesis on "Sense of Musical Rhythm and its Development within the Student."

In 1996, Zhanna began her collaboration with the Russian Composers Union, premiering and recording contemporary compositions as well as performing with the Moscow Percussion Ensemble. Since 1999, Mrs. Sinanyan resides in the United States, where she often performs and teaches piano. Since 2002 Mrs. Sinanyan conducts choir in Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Christian School. From 2016, she began to teach the Holy Martyrs Ferrahian High School as a music instructor. Her recitals both abroad and local have included solo and chamber music performances. She has been praised for her colorful textures and sensitive touch.