

St. James Armenian Apostolic Church (Evanston, IL)

**FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
*VARTAVAR***

**ՏՕՆ ՊԱՅԾԱՌԱԿԵՐՊՈՒԹԵԱՆ
ՏԵԱՌՆ ՄԵՐՈՅ ՅԻՍՈՒՄԻ ՔՐԻՍՏՈՍԻ
*ՎԱՐԴԱՎԱՌ***

**SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2020
ԿԻՐԱԿԻ, ՅՈՒԼԻՍ 26, 2020**



**Morning Service 9:00 am
Առաւօտեան ժամ 9:00**

**Divine Liturgy 10:00 am
Սուրբ Պատարագ 10:00**

**Blessing of the Fields – Antasdan
Անդաստան**

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

Name of the Feast

The Armenian term for Transfiguration is “*Aylagerbootiun*”. The full name of the Feast of Transfiguration is “The Feast of the Brilliant Form of Christ Our God on Mount Tabor”. The Feast is also called “*Vartavar*.” -”The Feast of Roses”

The Bible and the Feast

The Feast of Transfiguration is the mid-summer celebration of the Theophany revelation of Jesus Christ our God on mount Tabor. The Gospel of the day proclaims “He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as radiant and shining as the light” Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter, 1:16-18.

Origins of the Feast

The history of the Feast is abundant with the spirituality of summer. In the ancient lands of Armenia mid-summer is the time of the year when the sun is the most brilliant and the rays are the strongest. The sun is at the highest point above the mountains; the days are the longest; and the days are the warmest and God’s loving grace of water and sun and earth and man’s labor are ripened for harvest.

History of the Feast

The Feast of Transfiguration is rooted in the Summer Solstice feasts of antiquity and Mithra, Zoroaster and the fertility rites of the goddess Anahid. It was said that where ever she had walked “Roses” grew. Her mid-summer feast was called “*Vartavar*” - day of roses and the people celebrated the Sun and threw water, as a sign of fertility upon one another.

The first Armenian Christians, (34 AD), saw in the person of Jesus Christ the fulfillment of their spirituality. He was the true “Light of the world:” John 1:12; “By whom the sun shall appear to us from on high to give light to our darkness and to make light dawn upon them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the ways of peace” Luke 1 :69-79. Christ is the true summer “Sun” Matthew 17:2 whose brilliant love shines upon us. Jesus is the source of living water which gives eternal life, Jn 4:10 &13; 7:37-39. Saint Gregory the Enlightener, a direct successor the Holy Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew, Christianized the celebration of summer by telling the pagan Armenians to believe in Jesus Christ and to “Give your roses to Christ and not to the filthy goddess Anahid”

The Meaning of the Feast

The feast of Transfiguration is the first great jubilee and *daghavar* (tabernacle) feast of the mystery of Jesus after the Feasts of His marvelous and wonderful resurrection and the Feast of the Coming of the Holy Spirit. This Great and Holy Feast contemplates the transformation of Jesus on the mountain, Mt 17:1-8; Mk 2:8; Lk 9:28-36; 2 Pt 1; 16-18; and declares the revelation of the mystery of the eternal glory of Jesus as the divine Son of God. This post resurrection feast fulfills the coming of the Holy Spirit and the postponed understanding of Jesus death and resurrection and glorification, Mt 17:9; Mk 9:9 and celebrates and proclaims the glorious transformation of the body, body and spirit, of all the righteous, after the resurrection, of all the faithful, at the Second Coming of Christ.

Today

This Armenian mid-summer Feast is a special time for our families to celebrate the grace and blessings of summer, of the mountains, water, the sun, roses, and the brilliant Theophany of the divinity of Christ and the harvest of blessings God gives us. The great Theophany, for which we prepare to celebrate, will be, after our own resurrection, at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ who will come again in the Glory of the Father.