

## **For St. James Sunday School Students — 9/20/2020**

### ***Sunday School year continues with Zoom***

Your Sunday School teachers enjoyed seeing many of you at the in-person get-together in Evanston last Sunday for the kick-off of the 2020-21 school year. Thank you to those who were able to participate! As the school year unfolds, our No. 1 priority is to keep you and your families safe and healthy. We will offer both in-person and online “Zoom” experiences, while maintaining social-distance, wearing face masks and taking other precautions consistent with best practices during the pandemic. For our second session, please join us on Zoom at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 20 for a half-hour session.

#### **[ZOOM DETAILS]**

### ***Tuesday, Sept. 22, celebrates St. Shushan***

life



Although her exemplary character and martyrdom are defined by a renowned father and infamous husband respectively, St. Shushan's was driven by her own courageous faith. She was the daughter of the Armenian national hero and saint Vartan Mamigonian and wife of Varsken, a nobleman of Armenian/Iranian descent who renounced Christianity to secure his position with the ruling Persians. Varsken demanded the same from his wife and when she refused, he had her imprisoned and tortured for seven years. To her last breath, she proclaimed Jesus as her Lord and Savior. Strengthening her in her resolve were a relic of Christ's cross and a gospel that she had received as a gift from her grandfather, the celebrated Catholicos Sahag Barteve. She died in 458 AD at the age of 45. She is honored as

well in the Georgian Orthodox Church; the account of her martyrdom is the oldest extant work of Georgian literature. The church has a rich history in Armenia that remains prominent today...Please check out the video [here](#) for more information. *Reflection: Is there anything you have been given by an older mentor that strengthens you in your faith? Do you look to anything physical or concrete that helps anchor your faith in challenging times?*

## **Bible Readings for Sunday, Sept. 13**

### **From Today's Readings**

**Mark 10:1-12** Jesus argues against the ease with which divorce is obtained by Jewish men in 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine. (Deuteronomy 24:1 confirms that a husband could simply write his own certificate of divorce and dismiss his wife from the legal bond.) Since God created men and women to become one flesh in marriage, this was a union not to be broken lightly.

*Discuss/reflect: The Armenian Church takes the importance of marriage so seriously that while it acknowledges that there might be compelling reasons for a marriage to be dissolved, it is a sad event that calls for prayerful reflection. Second marriage rituals have a penitential character. How might knowing God's intent for marriage nourish today's perceptions of that union?*

**2 Corinthians 10:18-11:10** Exasperated by the false teachers who are leading people astray, St. Paul declares that his witness is founded solidly on Jesus Christ. In addition, he has proven his love and dedication by supporting himself, thus avoiding being a burden to the faithful.

*Discuss/reflect: What other "gospels" (vv 3-4) vie as seductively today for your heart as the serpent did for Adam and Eve?*

**Isaiah 14: 3-17** The mighty Babylonian Empire had taken the Hebrews into captivity in a catastrophic episode known as the Babylonian Exile, c 587-537 BC. But these verses eloquently sing of how the mightiest, the most terrible rulers are eventually in their graves, defeated by death. *Discuss/reflect: What's an example of a powerful country, personality, or trend that no longer has influence? For a poignant testimony to the ephemeral rule of empires, read the poem Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley.*



**For a video about churches in Armenia, please click on this link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPeTacNNNws>