

For St. James Sunday School Students — 9/26/2021

Sunday School: 12:30 p.m.

Your Sunday School teachers are excited that the school year is under way. Our No. 1 priority is to keep you and your families safe and healthy. We will maintain social-distance, wear face masks and take other precautions. For our session on Sunday, Sept. 26, we will meet at 12:30 p.m. in the church basement. Bell Choir training will follow Sunday School at the same location. We hope to add virtual Zoom access to Sunday School sessions shortly.

Celebrate the Feast of the Holy Cross of Varak

In the late 3rd century, as the nun Hripsime was fleeing from Roman persecutors, she buried her most precious possession--a piece of Christ's cross-- on Mt. Varak (near Van). After her



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martyrdom at the hands of King Drtad, the sacred relic she had buried was forgotten for centuries. Then, in 660, Totig, a hermit monk who lived on Mt. Varak, saw a vision of a church with twelve pillars on the top of the mountain. In the center of these pillars was a radiant cross. This luminous vision descended over the altar of the monastery of Varak. When Totig and his student Hovel rushed to the church and knelt at the altar, they discovered the holy relic. He

joyously shared the news with Catholicos Nersess (the Builder) who verified the authenticity of the relic, proclaiming the Sunday nearest September 28 to be the Feast of the Holy Cross of Varak. *Reflection: What is most precious to you in your faith?*

Please check out the fun and informative video at this [link](#) about making khachkars, the famous and beloved Armenian "cross-stones"

Bible Readings for Sunday, Sept. 26

From Today's Readings

Matthew 24:30-36 Jesus describes His Second Coming as unmistakable, like a bolt of lightning. (The fig tree is one of the few trees in Palestine that sheds its leaves annually, making it the perfect symbol for a reliable sign of things to come.) He will appear in the sky with power and glory; angels will trumpet a call to the elect from the four corners of the world. *Discuss/ reflect: Why do you think people will mourn (v. 30) when the Son of Man comes? If Jesus returned tomorrow to judge and gather up creation, would you be ready to meet Him?*

Galatians 6:14-18 St. Paul declares that all his praises are reserved for the Cross; through it, the world was crucified to him. Nothing about him is as important as being part of the "new creation." *Discuss/reflect: St. Paul declares that he himself has been crucified (v.14)! Perhaps the cross is as much a symbol of our own death to an old way of being as it is the eternal symbol of Jesus' sacrifice for us. At baptism, we "die" to our old selves and are "born again of water*

and the Holy Spirit.” (John 3:3-5) Think of Jesus’ transformation on the cross from life to death to new life. How might you realize this in your own life?

Isaiah 65:22-25 A vision of God’s ultimate restoration of creation – a return to Paradise -- in which joy, peace and blessing will prevail. Free from grief and oppression, people of God will live long, productive lives. *Discuss/reflect: What about this vision appeals to you most? How might you bring something of this paradise to the world, to your world, now?*

Proverbs 3:18-26 An ode to wisdom with which God laid the foundations of creation. If we adorn ourselves with wisdom, understanding, sound judgment, and discretion (wearing these qualities graciously, like a necklace - v 22 - rather than armor), we will live with serene confidence. *Discuss/reflect: V. 18 describes wisdom as a tree of life on which to hold fast. How would you describe wisdom? Read Psalm 111. Pray over verse 10.*



For a video about making khachkars in Armenia, please click on this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V65Rb3pB-6s>