

# The Big Five: The Major Feasts



## Pray Together

*Hanoon Hlor, yev Vortvo, yev Hlokvooyn Surpo, Amen. O Christ, let the power of your cross, that you lifted up to save the world, keep us from all temptation. Amen.*

*From "Zorootyoon Soorp Khachi," a hymn for Exaltation Sunday*

## Presenting...in Order

Put the following Armenian Church observances in the order they occur during the year. Write the numbers 1 – 5 in the space provided, with 1 being the event that comes first in the year.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Easter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exaltation of the Cross
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nativity/Theophany of the Lord Jesus
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assumption
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transfiguration of Jesus

## Faith Word

### Theophany

The appearance of God in a visible form

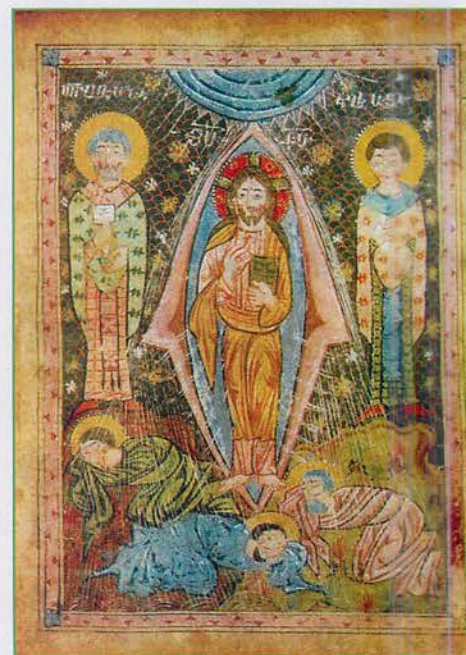
## Five Very Special Days

### *Daghavar doner* **Տաղավար Տօնէր**

The five greatest feasts of the Armenian Church are Christmas, Easter, Transfiguration, Assumption, and Exaltation of the Cross. We call these special days “tabernacle feasts” because long ago people set up large tents, or “tabernacles” where they could gather to celebrate the feast together.

The Holy Nativity and Theophany of Jesus is commonly called Christmas. It is a fixed feast, which means it is always celebrated on the same calendar date, in this case January 6. Christmas is a time of great joy, when we remember that God loves us so much he came down from his heavenly home to walk among us and teach us about how we should live. Read Luke 2:4-14 to see the special things that happened the night Jesus was born.

Easter Sunday is also a very happy time. We rejoice, because after the sad events of Jesus’ betrayal, death, and burial, he came out of the tomb alive. By his resurrection on Easter morning, he showed





us he was indeed God, and we see that he can deliver on his promise of forgiveness and eternal life. Read Matthew 28:1-10 to hear an account of that all-important event.

Fourteen weeks after Easter Sunday we celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration. In Armenian this observance is popularly known as “Vartavar” (also *Baydzaragerbootiun* and *Aylagerbootiun*; these refer more directly to his changed appearance). This feast recalls the day when Jesus went up to a mountain-top with Peter, James, and John. On the mountain, Jesus’ clothing became blazing white, and God told the disciples to listen to Jesus. Read Mark 9:2-13 to see what else happened.

Each August, the Armenian Church shows special respect to Mary, who gave birth to the Baby Jesus. Her special day is the Assumption, which reminds us of her eventual ascension to heaven.

The fifth major feast of the Armenian Church is the Exaltation of the Cross, or “Khachveratz.” On this day, the faithful joyfully celebrate the salvation we enjoy because of Jesus’ death on the cross, and remember how the cross was carried through Armenia upon its rescue from Jerusalem. Jesus’ victory over death on Easter changed the cross from a tool of death into a symbol of life for his people.

## Our Armenian Way

Our Church has many unique and special ways of celebrating our faith heritage. One example is the Christmas hymn “Aysor Don E Soorp Dzununtian, Avedis.” The translation of this joyful song is as follows:

ԱՅՍՕՐ ՏՕՆ Է ԱՅՏՐ ԸՆՆԱՆ

The image shows two staves of musical notation in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the hymn. The second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating the duration of the notes.

Այ - սօր - տօն - է      Սուրբ - ծը - նըն - դեան,  
 Ay - sor - don - eh      Soorp - Dzu - nun - tyan,

ա - - - - - լե - - - - տիս,  
 a - - - - - ve - - - - dees,

“Today is the Feast of the Holy Birth. Glad tidings!  
 Of our Lord, and of His Revelation. Glad tidings!  
 Today the Son of Righteousness, glad tidings,  
 Has appeared among men. Glad tidings!  
 Today the angels of heaven descended. Glad tidings!  
 And with us praised the Immortal King. Glad tidings!”



## FAMILY FOCUS: For Parents



### Lesson Roundup

Today the class learned about the five major feast days of the Armenian Church. They read an explanation of each feast, as well as several Bible passages that show the origin of the observance. The class prepared to teach (next week) a younger grade the meaning of the five major feasts.

### Family Faith Activity

We have so many reasons to be joyful in our Christian faith. Try to perform one of the following activities with your family.

1. Read the following passages aloud at a family meal: Luke 2:4-14, Matthew 28:1-10, and Mark 9:2-13.
2. As a family, review the meaning and history of each major feast day.
3. Mark your calendars for each upcoming major feast and plan to attend as a family.

### A Parent's Promise

Yes, I read the Lesson Roundup \_\_\_ and tried at least one activity as a family\_\_\_.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_

