

The Second Enlightener: St. Gregory the Illuminator



Pray Together

Dear Lord Jesus, teach me to be holy and perfect, so that, receiving the portion of your blessed gifts of Bread and Wine, and now with a clean conscience, I may be united with you, and so have you fill me with spiritual food, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Chapter Checkup

Circle the correct answers.

- _____ was chosen to replace the former disciple Judas.
 - Abraham
 - Philip
 - Matthias
 - Acquilla
- When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, they heard a sound like _____.
 - an earthquake
 - a choir of angels
 - trumpets
 - a violent wind
- At Pentecost, God gave the disciples the ability to _____.
 - speak in many different languages
 - walk on water
 - kill the Romans
 - put Pontius Pilate in prison
- When a nearby crowd heard the disciples speaking different languages, some in the crowd _____.
 - tried to arrest Peter
 - laughed at the disciples and accused them of being drunk
 - lined up to become Christians
 - ran away because they were frightened

Heaven is Near

Read Matthew 3:1-12. John the Baptist is warning people to live the kind of life that would honor Jesus since he would soon be among them. “The kingdom of heaven is near!” he kept telling others.

Today, who could do John the Baptist’s job of setting people on the right road to God?



In the Footsteps of Thaddeus and Bartholomew

Like John the Baptist, Thaddeus and Bartholomew wanted to prepare the way for God’s Word. After Thaddeus and Bartholomew were killed in Armenia, pockets of new Christians remained to continue spreading the Good News. One of these little groups was responsible for the Christian education of a boy, Gregory, whom God would use to start the Armenian Church.

St. Gregory the Illuminator, or Krikor Loosavorich, was orphaned as a baby. His father, a prince named Anak, was a wicked man who murdered Khosrov, the king of Armenia. When Anak was caught, he and his entire family were killed as punishment. Only Gregory escaped, because a kind nurse ran away with him.

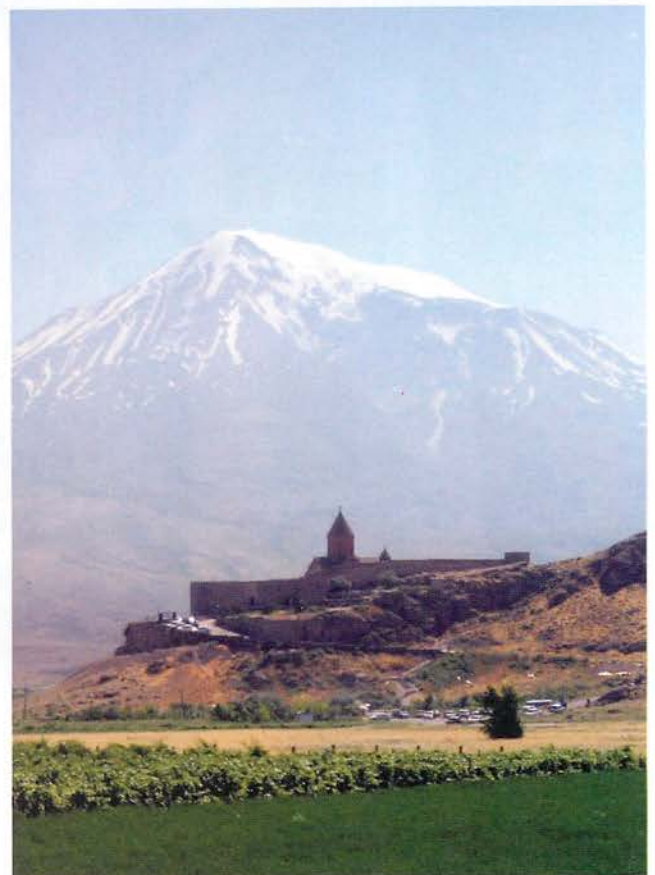
Years later, after Gregory had been well-educated by Christian monks, he went to work for King Drtad, son of the murdered King Khosrov. Drtad did not know that Gregory was Anak’s son. Gregory was so intelligent and loyal that he and King Drtad became great friends.

One day, Drtad asked Gregory to worship his pagan god instead of Jesus. Gregory’s Christian faith meant more to him than his friendship with the king, so he refused. Drtad became angry and had Gregory tortured for many days. From time to time Drtad would ask the suffering Gregory if he was ready to give up his Christian faith and stop the torture by worshipping Drtad’s god. Gregory’s answer was always the same – “NO!”

Finally, Drtad had Gregory thrown into a deep pit, which in Armenian we call “Khor Virab.” Gregory remained there for many years, but he was never lonely because God kept him company the entire time.

One day, Drtad felt so guilty about the way he had treated Gregory and other Christians that he suffered a mental breakdown. Drtad began to believe he was a wild pig and began to act like one!

Princess Khosrovitookht, the king’s sister, was secretly a Christian. Some think it was she who kept Gregory alive by bringing him food each day. She believed that only Gregory could help the king. Gregory was brought from the Khor Virab. He asked God to cure King Drtad. The king very soon recovered, and he at once converted to Christianity. From that day on, Drtad helped Gregory drive away pagan ideas and build churches, and Christianity was made the official state religion of Armenia.



Our Armenian Way

Throughout the history of our faith, the bones of saints have sometimes been preserved as holy relics. These relics inspire us to remember the holy lives of the saints.

Bone fragments of St. Gregory are kept in important churches. A large ornately decorated silver arm containing bones from St. Gregory's arm is brought out every seven years for the blessing of the Holy Muron (oil). This oil is used at baptisms and certain other occasions.



Faith Word

Repent

To be sorry for sin and pledge to change

FAMILY FOCUS: For Parents



Lesson Roundup

Today your fifth-grader learned about St. Gregory the Enlightener, founder of the Armenian Church. The children studied Gregory's early life and his role in the promulgation of Christianity in Armenia.

Family Faith Activity

1. Say a prayer for all those who have been imprisoned for their Christian faith.
2. Plant a sunflower, pumpkin, or other easy-to-grow seed in a clear container. As it grows, note that like the plant that comes from the tiny seed, the Armenian Church grew to its present size through the seed of the Word, planted a long time ago by a few people.
3. Collect money from each family member and send it to your Diocese for the express purpose of sending Armenian Christian material (Bibles, prayer books and readers) to Armenians around the world, in the teaching spirit of St. Gregory.

A Parent's Promise

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

Signed _____