



On July 23, 2017, the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church celebrated the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ. On the occasion of one of the five main “Tabernacle” feasts of the Armenian Church the Divine Liturgies were conducted in the churches of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia.

From the morning, liveliness prevailed in the churches. The faithful in Tbilisi and in the regions of Georgia inhabited by Armenians were rushing to the churches to attend the Divine Liturgy and participate in the celebration of one the most beloved feasts – the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ or Vardavar.

In the Saint Gevorg Cathedral, the Primate of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia, His Grace Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Following the liturgy, the Bishop read a sermon on the sacrament of the day. Highlighting the Divine sacrament of the day, the Primate urged the attendees to start a new life with Christ, which will bring goodness, love, solidarity and spiritual enlightenment to humanity. The Primate exhorted the people present to

enrich life with values of forgiveness, compassion and good deeds.

Following the “Guard Us” prayer and the blessings offered by the Primate and the clergy, the celebration took place in the courtyards of the two Armenian churches in Tbilisi. Although now a Christian tradition, Vardavar's history dates back to pagan times and includes spilling water on each other. The traditional game of pouring water on each other began in the courtyards of the churches. To great surprise and amazement of tourists who also joined the celebration, adults and children, guests and participants of the liturgy, all the faithful took part in the traditional game of pouring water with rose petals.

On the occasion of the feast Matagh (Thanksgiving Animal Sacrifice) was distributed to the faithful in the courtyard of the Cathedral, which has already turned into a nice tradition. This year the tradition has not been broken and at the initiative of Matagh was distributed to the faithful. The children and adults also enjoyed ice-cream.

The celebration after the Liturgy on the occasion of the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ took place in the Surb Prkich (Saint Savior) Church in Batumi, the Surb Grigor Lusavorich Church (Saint Gregory the Illuminator) in Akhaltsikhe, the Surb Khach (Saint Cross) in Akhalkalaki, the Surb Sargis Church in Ninotsminda, and in the churches in nearby villages.

It is noteworthy that the villages of Tsalka region inhabited by Armenians have their own traditions for celebrating church feasts. The village of Ayazma traditionally celebrated Vardavar, which brought together the faithful from different villages, at the initiative of the local Pastor, Rev. Father Ghevond Topashyan a concert program was presented and people drenched each other with water.

The believers returned to their homes restored and with bright spirits, encouraged by the priests to start a new life with Christ.



