

The Armenian Diocese in Georgia always celebrates the Feast of St. Sarkis the Captain, his son Mardiros and his 14 soldiers-companions with great enthusiasm and love. The day is celebrated on different days every year, and this year it was celebrated on January 27. One could notice the people's excitement ahead of the celebration. The Feast of St. Sarkis the Captain is one of the unique holidays of the Armenian Church that brings not only Armenian youth, but also young foreigners around the Armenian Church, and this year was no exception.

On Friday, January 26, 2018, staying true to the already traditional march, Armenian youth of Tbilisi gathered in the yard of the St.Etchmiadzin Church in the Avlabari



neighborhood. Following the Evening Service, the procession of pilgrims, led by Rev.Father Virap Ghazaryan and Rev.Father Manuk Zeynalyan, with the participation of deacons, marched with iconic images of St. Sarkis and gonfalons (one of which was painted and donated by famous artist Susanna Mkrtchyan) towards the ancient St. Sarkis Chapel located in the Kharpukh district, built in 1883.



The participants of the march stopped and prayed near the ruins of the Shamkhoretsots Surb Astvatsatsin Church and continued on their way to the chapel.

In the area near the Cathedral of Saint George the participants of the march were joined by faithful of all ages, led by Rev.Father Samvel Torosyan.

The Armenian faithful celebrate with special love the Feast of St. Sarkis the Captain. The wish of the faithful, most of whom are young people, to enter the Chapel, lit candles and pray despite the rain and cold, was an eloquent testimony. A crowded procession



of faithful celebrated the pilgrimage and headed for the Saint Gevorg Cathedral, simultaneously singing Armenian church psalms, joining other hundreds of faithful.



The Cathedral of Saint George was crowded. The Primate of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia, His Grace Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan presided over the evening service on the eve of the feast, with the participation of the clergy. In attendance were not only Armenians, but faithful of different nationalities.

The Diocesan Primate preached about the mystery of the day, how together with his 14 soldiers-companions Captain St. Sarkis was martyred



for the sake of Christian faith. The Primate highlighted that by the order of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, the Feast of St. Sarkis the Captain and his soldiers-companions is proclaimed day of blessing of the youth. His Grace wished that for all youth, who lit candles and prayed with hopes and dreams of a brighter future, St. Sarkis the Captain would be intercessor before God and bless all youth. The Bishop wished everyone health and happiness and peace to Georgia, Armenia and Artsakh (Karabakh).

Captain St. Sarkis is the patron saint of love and youth. Following the church services, young people traditionally received salty cookies; the appearance of the future bride or bridegroom in a dream is related to eating of the salty cookie.

On January 27, on the Feast of St. Sarkis the Captain, Rev.Father Samvel Torosyan celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Saint George in Tbilisi.



