



Samtskhe-Javakheti and Tsalka's General Prelacy of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia solemnly celebrated the Feast of St. Sarkis the Captain, his son Mardiros and his 14 soldiers-companions. Evening Services (Nakhatonak) were conducted, Divine Liturgy was celebrated, and a special ceremony of blessing of young people was offered everywhere, by the order of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.



On January 26, 2018, on the night preceding the Feast of St. Sarkis the Captain, the patron of youth, the students of Youth Center of Akhalkalaki, accompanied by Rev. Father Tatev Marukyan, Pastor of Akhalkalaki and nearby villages, led by a horseman, made their way to the Holy Cross Church in Akhalkalaki, where a solemn Evening Service was held. Father Tatev properly delivered a sermon and interpreted the symbol of the day, congratulated the entire congregation on the occasion of the



feast. Following the service, a special ceremony of blessing of young people was offered. Young people received salty cookies.

The pilgrims visited the Holy Cross Church in Akhalkalaki and the St. Sarkis Church in Diliska till late. And in the morning,



on the Feast Day, the deacons of the Holy Cross Church in Akhalkalaki, the students of the Sunday school adjunct to the Church, a group of pilgrims, accompanied by Rev. Father Tatev Marukyan, holding icons of St. Sarkis and gonfalons, singing Armenian Church psalms, made their way to the St. Sarkis Church in Diliska, where they were welcomed by Rev. Father Tigran Mkhitaryan, Pastor of Diliska and nearby villages. The pilgrims attended the Divine Liturgy.



On January 27, the Feast of St. Sarkis the Captain was unprecedented in the St. Sarkis Church in Diliska. The Primate of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia, His Grace Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan visited the church and celebrated the Divine Liturgy.



In attendance were Georgian MP Henzel Mkoan; Chairman of the Regional Assembly of Akhalkalaki Nairi Iritsyan; Chairman of Ninotsminda Municipality Assembly (Sakrebulo) Smbat Kyureghyan; Mayors Anivard Mosoyan, Yurik Unanyan, other officials, guests and pilgrims from around Javakheti.

During the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Vazgen 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; he



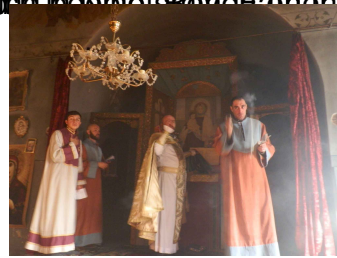
conveyed to the young people the good wishes of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; and conducted a special ceremony of blessing of young people.

Following the Divine Liturgy, the Primate of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia sanctified and blessed the icon of the Apostle St. Thaddeus and extended his blessings and appreciation to the benefactors for their church-devoted activities.

The Feast of St. Sarkis the Captain was properly celebrated in other churches of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia.



Following a long and glorious tradition, the Holy Synod of the Church in the Republic of Georgia has decided to celebrate the feast of



of St. Sarkis the Captain, the patron saint of the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, on the 15th of October in the city of Samtskhe-Javakheti.



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