

On the fourth Saturday of the Great Lent the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church commemorates the Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.

On 10 March, 2018, at the commemoration day of the Forty Holy Martyrs, Divine Liturgy was conducted by Rev. Father Virap Ghazaryan, the pastor of the Saint Etchmiadzin Church, in Avlabari, Tbilisi. In memory of the perished Forty Martyrs the candles decorated with flowers burned in the church.



During the Divine Liturgy, Rev. Father Manuk Zeynalyan in his sermon properly preached about the mystery of the feast. He presented the history of the Forty Holy Martyrs, the brave and frisky young men, who lived at the beginning of the 4th century. They were from various towns and cities of Lesser Armenia and served as soldiers in the imperial



regiment in Sebaste. They were able to meet the threat of Christian faith with courage and bravely remained steadfast in their Christian faith, with deep and close union, as one soul. The Forty soldiers martyred but did not betray their faith.

Through the example the Forty Holy Martyrs Rev. Father urged the attendees to remain faithful to the faith of Christ despite all the hardships of life, to live in love, be kind and ready for sacrifice, overcome temptations and live in order to deserve the Kingdom of Heaven.

The martyrs' relics are kept in Sebaste, where a church consisting of forty domes dedicated to the Forty Holy Martyrs was built later. The church was standing until Timur Lang's invasion.

A table, decorated with 40 candles during the Service, was symbolizing the faithfulness of the witnesses to Christian faith and their martyrdom,



which was seen with the bright crowns. One candle was left without a flower. It was the candle of a martyr, who could not withstand suffering. It was symbolizing his loss of earthly and heavenly life.

At the conclusion of the Service, the Fathers traditionally consecrated vegetable oil, which the faithful took home.





