

St. Sarkis the Warrior

Traditions

Saint Sarkis is one of the most beloved Armenian Saints to modern Armenians as he is the Armenian Patron Saint of love and youth. On his feast day young people pray to Sarkis asking him to make their prayers audible to God.

One of the most unique elements of this celebration is the specially-prepared salty cookie. The night before St. Sarkis day young people go to bed after eating the cookie (they have no right to drink water afterwards) in order to see their future spouse in the dream. By the way, most of young people who follow this tradition are girls, who expect “a prince riding the white horse ” to give them water in their dream.

On the night preceding the feast of Sarkis faithful people place a tray full of porridge before the door believing that while passing near their door at dawn Sarkis will leave his footprint on it, symbolizing the fulfilment of their dreams.

On the feast day of Sarkis, Divine Liturgy is celebrated in all churches named after him, following a special liturgy ceremony of blessing to youth is offered. On the night preceding his feast day, faithful people place a tray full of flour before the door believing that while passing near their door at dawn, Sarkis will leave the footprint of his horse on the flour symbolizing the fulfilment of their dreams.

Celebrations are held in churchyards across Armenia and the Diaspora, and include national games and the participation of choirs, dance ensembles, and horsemen symbolizing St. Sarkis.

Folk Legend

Many legends are telling us about St. Sarkis. One of them helps us to understand why he became a patron saint of young lovers.

Returning with a victory after a battle, a group of soldiers led by Sarkis celebrated in the Royal Palace. Tired warriors had pretty much of food and wine, so they went to sleep after dinner, and the apostate emperor who hated Christians, ordered forty young girls to kill those soldiers in their sleep. All of them complied with the order of their King, except for one. A young woman was fascinated by Sarkis, she kissed him and he woke up. Seeing that the emperor had betrayed his fellow soldiers the commander immediately saddled his horse and broke away from the city, taking his savior with him. Thus love has saved lives and St. Sarkis became the patron of all lovers.