



## **A LIVING FAITH Lesson about the ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**

The Armenian Genocide—the first genocide of the 20th century—took the lives of 1.5 million Armenians, who were massacred by Ottoman Turkey’s “Young Turk” government beginning in 1915. The deportation and mass extermination of Armenians continued until 1923.

Planned and executed during World War I, the Armenian Genocide saw the virtual elimination of Armenians from their ancestral homeland. Those who were not killed immediately were led on horrific death marches, like the one through the Der Zor desert in Syria. The mass exodus of surviving Armenians from Anatolia resulted in the dispersal of the Armenian people to every corner of the world. Today, the large Armenian diaspora comprises over 4 million people (roughly equal to the number of Armenians living in the modern Republic of Armenia).

The Armenian Genocide began on April 24, 1915, when Ottoman authorities arrested and killed some 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in Constantinople. Those arrested included Armenian doctors, lawyers, parliamentarians, authors, and artists. Armenian civilians—including the elderly, women and children—were then forcibly removed from their homes and sent on death marches for hundreds of miles, with no food or water.

To this day, the Republic of Turkey continues to deny that the Armenian Genocide took place, although historians and scholarly authorities throughout the world recognized the Genocide as a tragic fact of history.

For years, Armenian communities around the world commemorate each April 24 as “Armenian Martyrs Day,” which they observe with religious and cultural memorials. This continues to this day.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the genocide martyrs were canonized during a special service at the Mother See of Holy Etchimiadzin as the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide on April 23, 2015, (*see above picture designed for this day*). This made the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide the first saints canonized in the Armenian Church in hundreds of years. With the canonization, the Armenian Church’s newest feast day, the Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide, is celebrated on April 24.