

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Tabernacle Feast:

This year we will be celebrating the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on Sunday, September 13. According to Armenian Church traditions, the first one to elevate the actual Cross of the Lord, after His ascension, was the Apostle James (*Hagop*), the "Brother of the Lord." The feast, however, is traditionally associated with the liberation of the Cross of the Lord by Emperor Heraclius (610-641 AD) from captivity in Persia where it had been taken by the Persian armies after they invaded Jerusalem.

Basil has always been associated with the celebration of this feast. Some traditions say that this association is because basil is a symbol of royalty, befitting the Savior who was crucified as a king. Others preserve a beautiful story of the miraculous growth of basil at the foot of the Cross of the Lord after the cross had been removed. Basil continued growing there despite the fact that pious people continuously cut it and took it home.

On the Sunday of the Exaltation of the Cross, the Armenian Church liturgy includes the service of the *Antasdan* (blessing of the field or four corners). The purpose of this ceremony is to bring fruitfulness and fertility to the fields and gardens. In ancient times the ceremony of Andastan was conducted outside the church, in the fields and gardens. According to the church calendar the "world" is symbolized by the round central part (adyan) of the church. The processional cross is adorned with basil, and the four corners of the church are blessed as a sign of the sanctification and renewal of God's creation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As we enter the season of the Cross, let us reflect upon the greatest love of all that led the immortal God to die for His Beloved—the men and women of His covenant. Next time you make the sign of the cross or you look at a cross, give thanks to God for His love to you and me, and think about how we are, or should be, reciprocating that love.

Growing Basil-(Rahan)

Choose if you want to grow your basil from seeds or from a seedling. A seedling is a young plant that has already started growing and can be purchased from a local nursery or home improvement store. Growing basil from seed is not difficult, but if you are a novice gardener, starting with a seedling might be the better choice. If you are growing basil from seeds, you can first grow indoors in late winter, then transplant to your garden outside in the spring after the last frost.



Planting Basil

Pick a location that will receive at least six to eight hours of direct sunlight a day and is not in danger of temperatures below 48 degrees Fahrenheit. Basil does well in warm and dry weather.

If you are planting a basil seedling, your first step will be to dig a hole in your garden or pot for the seedling to be placed in. If you are using a pot, remember to place rocks at the bottom of the pot for adequate drainage and add enough potting soil to fill almost to the top of the pot. The hole should be large enough to fit the entire basil seedling soil base. You will now need to remove the seedling container. To do this, rotate the container between your hands back and forth until you can easily remove the container without damaging the roots. If your seedling container is organic and can be planted directly in the ground, then you will skip this step. Next, place the seedling in the ground and cover the top of the seedling soil base with an inch or two of potting soil. Press down firmly but lightly on the potting soil so the seedling is firmly in the ground. Finally, you can now water your new plant.

If you are growing basil from seed, note that transplanting basil grown from seed can be somewhat difficult as basil is delicate and fragile. To overcome this, try to place the seeds directly in the ground or pot where your basil will actually grow, therefore a transplant will not be necessary. Planting basil seeds is almost the same

as planting seedlings. If growing in a pot, fill the pot almost to the top with potting soil. If growing directly in ground, ensure you ensure the soil is weed free and moist before planting. You should mix in at least six inches of potting soil into the surface, if possible. Sprinkle the basil seeds two inches apart on top of the potting soil and then cover with another inch of potting soil. Water immediately.

Watering Basil

When watering the plant, do not water the leaves but only the base of the plant as the leaves are easy to damage and do not need water themselves. Water as needed, every day or every other day, to ensure the soil is moist but not damp

The faithful Sing...**'Amen Alleluia!'**

Dominical Feast/Deroonagan Don

The general title applies not only to the commemoration of Christ's redeeming (economy) characteristics, as well as those days that are observed in honor of the Holy Mother of God & the Holy Cross, because these feast indirectly honor the Lord.

Next come the five Tabernacle Feasts, and thirdly, various feast observed on permanently assigned days— Some of these feasts are considered **'Movable Feasts'** others are considered **'Fixed Feasts'**.

Armenian Christmas/Nativity	January 5 & 6	F/T
Naming of the Lord	January 13	F
Sunday of Lent & Holy Saturday	Dates change	M
Palm Sunday	Dates change	M
Presentation of the Lord and Annunciation	February 14	F
Easter /Holy Week	Dates change	M/T
Pentecost	50 days after Easter	M
Ascension of the Lord	40 days after Easter	M

Tabernacle /Daghavar

There are five major dominical feasts, which have a week of fasting as well as navagadik, merelotz, and last a number of days. Each one of these constitutes the beginning of a distinct period in the year. There is not a definitive explanation as to why they are called Tabernacle feasts. Some suppose that, as in the Old Testament, the feast known as Tabernacle was an elaborate feast, as are the **'Dominical feasts'** /(Deroonagan Don) for Christians. It is possible to suppose that the festivals resembling fairs were organized by setting up actual tents or tabernacles during these major Dominicals, from which the title originated. The feasts are:

Epiphany	Asdvadzahaydnootium
Resurrection	Harootiun Dyarn
Transfiguration	Baydzaragerbootiun / Vartavar (Festival of Roses)
Assumption	Verapokhoom
Exaltation of the Holy Cross	Khachveratz

Devotional Feast: also include Feast of Holy Etchmiadzin & Genocide Remembrance/Martyrs Day