

FEASTS OF THE CROSS

HOLY CROSS OF VARAK

- In Armenian: *Varaka Khatch*
- Celebrates the discovery of the piece of our Lord's cross on Mt. Varak near Lake Van in the late 10th century.
- St. Hripsime on the run with her persecuted companions and some very precious cargo
- They hide among the rocks of Mt. Varak in Armenia.
- Emperor Diocletian pursues her there, causing her to flee and leave the relic with local priests there who hid it.
- Armenian King Tiridates then pursues her and ultimately tortures and martyrs her and her companions.
- The relic of the Cross lost forever?

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- The relic of the Cross was discovered in 653 AD in a church that was at the top of Mount Varak
- Catholicos Nerses the Builder orders the construction of Sp. Nshan Church
- Feast of the Holy Cross of Varak established on the Sunday nearest September 28
- The Hymn: *Nshanav Amenahaght Khachit* ("By means of the most powerful sign")
- Great example of how liturgy develops

NSHANAV AMENAHAGHT KHACHIT

“By the sign of your all-victorious cross, O Christ, lover of mankind, keep us from the unseen enemy, for you alone are the King of Glory, blessed forever. On it you stretched out your spotless hands and shed your blood for the salvation of the universe for you alone are the King of Glory, blessed forever. At your second coming when the holy sign shall appear, once again make your servants worthy of renewal for you alone are the King of Glory, blessed forever.”