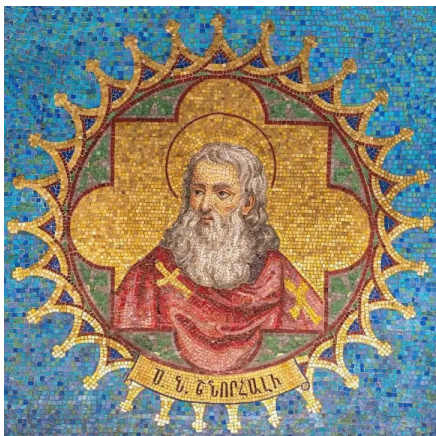## SAINT NERSESS THE GRACE-FILLED

St. Nersess was born in 1102, his father being Prince Abirad and his grandfather, the great church writer, Krikor Makisdros. He studied under Stepanos Vartabed in Garmir (Red) Monastery and was ordained at 18 years by his brother, Catholicos Krikor III Balavouni in the City of Hromgla. By the age of thirty, he was consecrated a bishop. He served as the personal aide and right-hand man to his brother, the Catholicos, whom he succeeded in 1166. Merely to list all St. Nersess' works would be a tedious task. He is most famous for his 'General Epistle' which was directed to the Armenia people, eloquently guiding them in their faith, for his many letters, orations, acrostics, poems, such as "Lament for Edess," a moving masterpiece on the destruction of that city, commentaries and ecclesiastical studies.

A great musician as well as writer and poet, St. Nersess enriched the Book of Hours with many songs and the Book of Sharagans [liturgical hymns] with a wealth of sacred hymns, adding almost a third to their number. His book, Jesus-Son is used by devout Armenians and is second only to Nareg. St. Nersess was an ecumenist as well as an astute theologian and beloved leader. The title 'grace-filled' was preciously an educational rank but Nersess added a new dimension to that title and is remembered for his loving nature and paternal care of his flock, the members of the Armenian Church. Along with St. Gregory of Nareg, he is a pillar of Armenian literature, especially of the Silver Age. St. Nersess is perhaps the most beloved of all Armenian saints and is respected not only among the Armenians but universally. His final resting place has been a place of pilgrimage for all Christians without distinction.

WRITE AN ACROSTIC

G _____
O _____
D _____
L _____
O _____
V _____
E _____
S _____
M _____
E _____

RAISING SAINTS

AUTHORITY

Gospel Reading: Mark 11:27-33

In today's Gospel reading, the Pharisees and scribes approach Jesus and try to trick Him, asking Him where His authority comes from. Jesus answers with a question which the Pharisees cannot answer, and so he too does not answer.

Authority is given by God to certain people to keep the world in order. The same is true in the church. God has placed deacons, priests, and bishops in positions of authority to help administer God's will in the world and the church. One such man was St. Nersess the Grace-filled.

St. Nersess worked tirelessly to educate the Armenian people, bring order to the church, and unite the Armenian Church with the Latin Church (Roman Catholic Church) and the Greek Church (Byzantine Church). His efforts were not in vain, because through his interactions with the other churches, he helped the Armenian Church's theology and understanding of Christ blossom.

St. Nersess also wrote many hymns and songs to help teach our faith to believers. He used catchy tunes and phrases that made Christ easier for the faithful to understand and we still sing until today.

St. Nersess was given a position of authority, which he did not misuse or neglect. He used the gift, given to him by God, for God's glory and we are enjoying that blessing still.

What job or position have you been given by a parent or adult?

Did you do what was expected of you?

ARMENIAN WORDS TO KNOW FROM HOLY BADARAK

հազարք => ha-zark => thousands

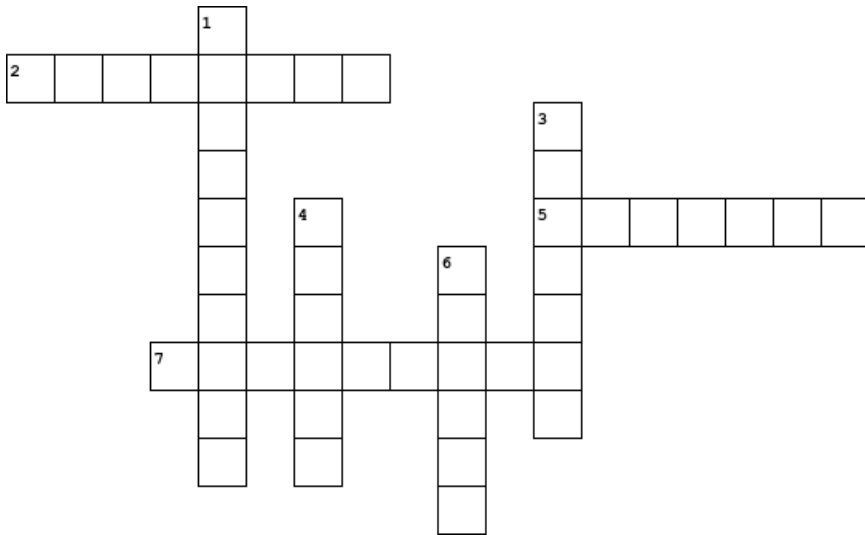**հազարք** հազարաց հրեշտակապետք կան առաջի քո։
Hazark hazarats hreshdagabedk gan arachee ko.
Thousands of thousands of archangels stand before you.
(An example is on page 24 in the Liturgy Book)

CROSSWORD PUZZLE
St. Nersess the Grace-filled's Life

Across

2. Armenian for hymn or
church song.

5. Letter he sent to all faithful,
"General _____".

7. Someone who works to
bring churches together.

Down

1. His brother was _____
of the Armenian Church.

3. Century St. Nersess lived.

4. Studied at Red Monastery.

6. Father of St. Nersess; Prince
_____.

St. Nersess Shnorhali

Առաւօտ լուսոյ, արեգակն արդար,
առ իս լոյս ծագեա։

•

**Morning filled with light,
Sun of righteousness,
shed on me your light.**