



YETTEM ԵՂԵՄ

Հրատարակութիւն Եղեմի Ս. Աստուածածին Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ
A Publication of St. Mary Armenian Church Yettem, California
Rev. Fr. Mashdots Keshishian, Parish Priest

August 2021

Assumption of the Holy Mother of God

The greatest feast exalting the Holy Mother of God is the Feast of the Assumption. It is also one of the five major feast days or *daghavars* of the Armenian Church (along with Theophany, Easter, Transfiguration, and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross).

Historic data tells us that St. Mary lived in Jerusalem about fifteen years after the resurrection and then died. Eastern tradition tells us that at her death an elaborate funeral took place. The apostles, with the exception of St. Bartholomew, buried her with great reverence in the Garden of Gethsemane. For three days and three nights angelic singing was heard over her tomb. Then the apostles saw a vision of Jesus coming down from heaven and taking his mother up from the grave to be with Him in heaven.

When Bartholomew arrived, he wanted to see Mary for the last time. The apostles took him to the tomb, and to their amazement, found it empty. They were convinced that her body had been taken up into heaven by the Lord. This belief was sanctioned by the church between the 9th and 12th centuries.

The Armenian Church observes this feast for nine days as ordered by St. NersesShnorhali, who also composed most of the *sharagans* (hymns) of the feast. The *sharagans* dedicated to *Asdvadzadzin* are among the most poetic and beautiful of our hymnal. On this day, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the blessing of grapes takes place.

Even though there is no law that we offer to God all first fruits with blessings, it is a good custom. Since it would be impractical to bless each fruit separately, grapes, as the noblest of fruits and the essence of joy-inducing wine (also a symbol of communion), are blessed in place of all other fruits, in keeping with established ritual. The day of the blessing of grapes is the feast of *Asdvadzadzin* (Mother of God) not because of any theological connection, but for the convenience of the season and the grape harvest. In the southern provinces where fruits ripen earlier, the custom of observing the blessing of grapes at *Vartavar* (Transfiguration) and even earlier dates has been adopted.

In the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem, there is the Church of the Virgin Mary which contains her tomb. The Armenians and Greeks oversee this church. It is a lovely church, and one enters by means of a long, broad staircase which leads down into the church proper. No other denomination may celebrate Divine Liturgy there without the permission of the Armenian and Greek churches.

Why does the Armenian Church do the blessing of the grapes on the Day of the Assumption of the Holy Mother-Of-God? Let's remember, the grapes have spiritual meaning in them. First of all because when Noah came out of the ark after landing on the Mountain Ararat when the Great Flood was over, the first thing he planted on the earth was a vineyard. Jesus himself said: "I'm the true vine" (John 15). What is made out of grapes? Wine! And what does wine symbolize? It represents the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dears, the blessing of the grapes takes place on the Day of the Assumption of the Holy Mother-Of-God, as Saint Mary was the one to give birth the true wine, our Jesus Christ!

When the wine runs out during the wedding at Cana, Jesus delivers a sign of his glory by turning water into wine - meaning that Jesus Christ came to sweeten our lives, converting the worries and difficulties that pressure our souls like water, into sweet wine.

Parish Notes

CONDOLENCES

On behalf of our St. Mary Parish family, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Joseph Donabed Jr. who entered his eternal rest on Thursday, July 8th. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Donabed family. Joe's funeral was held on *Thursday, July 15th at 10:00 AM at Yost & Webb Funeral Home in Fresno.*

BULLETIN SPONSORSHIP

THIS AUGUST 2021 BULLETIN
IS SPONSORED BY
ED AND GEORGIA DAVIDIAN
IN HONOR OF THEIR GRANSON,
EDWARD NICKOLI DAVIDIAN'S
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS

July 18th – Marceen, Nick and Shant Farsakian, Mark and Linda Wall, and Larry and Wendy Farsakian in honor of their brother, Alan Farsakian's Deacon ordination.

July 18th – Brian and Adrienne Poochigian in honor of their son, Jackson's ordination to rank of Acolyte.

July 18th – Richard and Lillian Safrastian in honor of their sons, Pete and David's 25th birthday.

July 25th - Alan, Marceen, Nick and Shant Farsakian and Mark, Linda, and Ben Wall in memory of their father, Sam Souren Farsakian.

HOKEHANKIST REQUESTS

July 25th

Souren Sam Farsakian

Four years after his passing
Requested by Alan, Marceen, Nick and Shant
Farsakian and Mark, Linda, and Ben Wall

HOKEHANKIST DONATIONS

(June 06, 2021 – July 25, 2021)

For Repose of George and Phyllis

Tamouzian's Souls

June 6th – Charles and Lori Sarabian

For Repose of John Maranian's Soul

June 27th – Myron and Debbie Sheklian

For Repose of Souren Sam Farsakian's Soul

July 25th – Mark and Linda Wall

PARISH COUNCIL CORNER

During his pastoral visit to Yetteem in July, His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Surpazan shared an interesting thought that stuck in my mind. In his remarks, he talked on how the Federal Government stimulus payments are received and quickly spent. He instead encouraged those listening to think of the day's events on July 18th as a long-lasting stimulus for our St. Mary Parish.

July 18th in Yetteem was an important and powerful day for our community. It was a day of celebration. A day to remember and be thankful for those individuals and families who first settled in Yetteem. A day to appreciate the foresight of our forebearers to build a physical structure in which to worship. It was a day to recall past anniversaries that we have shared before. It was an opportunity to honor with a Hye Spirit Award a parishioner who has, and continues to serve, his parish. It was a time to remember our own family members who joined others in forming the strong bond of believers that we cherish today. Many of you have shared comments on how the day moved you personally, how it was a day like "old Yetteem", how it renewed your spirit, and referring to the day as "magical".

What will be the long-term benefits from this day of "stimulus"? On that day, three individuals were ordained to serve and/or continue to serve the Armenian Church and our St. Mary Parish. Two young boys not only a decade old stood on an altar next to others who have served for twenty, thirty, and forty plus years. Another individual made a commitment to heed the call to serve at still another level. A baby, the great-grandson of one of the builders of our current church, was elevated and blessed by His Eminence at the same altar his great-grandfather was once ordained. This is our future.

What is the "take-away" from that momentous day? Each of us now must take that renewed energy to strengthen our personal faith and strive to do our part to build up our parish as we look forward to still more anniversaries. Our future remains bright!

Myron Sheklian
Parish Council Chairman

LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

July was a quiet month for Ladies Society which makes August and September even more special. We are looking forward to gathering again. We start with our monthly meeting in August and finish with the annual Sister Church luncheon in September. In between we have the roundtable gathering at the diocese and our annual Grandparents' Day brunch. You won't want to miss one of these events!

August 7th at 11:30 AM is our next monthly luncheon meeting in the church hall. If you are not a Ladies Society member, come and enjoy fellowship and laughter with us. If you are a member and have not been in a while, come join us and experience the powerful fellowship of our members.

August 13th at 11:30 AM, Surpazan and the Western Diocese's Ladies Society Central Council invites you to be their guests at the Western Diocese headquarters for a roundtable gathering with a light lunch to follow. If you would like to attend, please let me know. Reservations are required for the lunch.

September 12th is Grandparents' Day. Once again, Ladies Society is hosting our annual brunch featuring our *oh so* delicious beeshig. Cost is \$15/adult and \$10/children. Reservations are requested. (See the enclosed flier for more detail.)

September 18th, St. Gregory Ladies Society of Fowler is hosting the annual sister church luncheon. Keynote speaker is Malia Mooradian who has her degree in divinity from Fresno Pacific University. She is a member of St. Gregory and leads a women's bible study that includes many of the St. Gregory ladies. Reservations are required and mailed to me by Tuesday, September 7th. (See enclosed flier for all the details.) You do not have to be a Ladies Society member. ALL women are invited to attend. Come join the fellowship of Armenian Christian Women throughout the Central Valley.

This month please take the time to read our featured article to learn about our third Mother's Day honoree, Marilyn Zerounian, a well-deserved honor. In last month's article featuring Lucille Margosian, I incorrectly stated the land for the church hall was donated by her grandparents Khacher and Shahtane Majarian. They donated their ranch land which the church continues to lease out today. The land for the hall was donated by Humayak and Bertha Sheklian. My apologies to the Sheklian family.

Birthday wishes for August go out to Mari Louise Menendian, Georgia Davidian, Gina Ananian, and Debbie Sheklian. We wish them all God's blessings.

Linda Farsakian-Wall
Chairlady

DONATIONS

Donations made in honor of Alan Farsakian's ordination to a Deacon on Sunday, July 18th.

John and Janet Gomes
Armen and Rose Hagopian
Mark and Linda Wall

Donation made in honor of Charlie Ananian's Hye Spirit Award on Sunday, July 18th.

Scott Harness

GRAPE DELIVERY

Please deliver your grapes to the Majarian Hall by 10:00 AM on Saturday, August 14, 2021 for Asdvadzadzin.

RAFFLE WINNERS

Our seventh drawing for our St. Mary Armenian Church raffle was held on Sunday, July 25th. Congratulations to...

(\$150) Linda Kaloostian
(\$100) John Kaprielian
(\$50) Sharon Kaprielian

Our seventh raffle drawing will be held on Sunday, August 15th. It's not too late to take part in the fun! If you don't have tickets or need additional ones, please contact Tina Peters at (559) 967-2593 by phone or text.

WAYS AND MEANS

Ways and Means next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 5th via Zoom at 7:00 PM.

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next meeting will be held via Zoom on August 26th at 6 PM.

Our church office hours are Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 – 2:30 PM. The office phone number is (559) 528-6892. If you are in need of something beyond these hours, you can email fathermashdots@stmaryyettem.org or text/call (818) 293-9098 or email St. Mary Parish Council Chairman Myron Sheklian at myron@sheklian.com or text/call (559) 280-7315.

Father Mashdots is available for pastoral care, spiritual guidance, and support. Please inform Der Hayr of those who may be sick at home, hospitalized or may simply want to talk.

Why Do We Bless Grapes?

The custom of blessing grapes can be traced back to Old Testament times. Of all produce, grapes had a special place of honor and were considered the "first fruits" because they were the first produce of harvest. Special services of thanksgiving were conducted by priests in the temple, a tradition that prevailed to the time of Christ.

With the birth of Jesus, these dedications took on a new meaning. Jesus Christ was the first born—or the first fruit—of Mary and, as such, was offered to God in the temple. (Luke 2:25-30) Mary is seen as the image of humanity fully obedient to God and ultimately sanctified by doing God's will. Therefore, on the feast remembering her dormition (falling asleep in Christ) and Assumption (ascending to heaven), we celebrate the blessing of grapes. (source: armenianchurch-ed.net)

COOKBOOK

A second edition of the "Treasured Recipes from the Garden of Eden" has been made available. These cookbooks make a great gift. If you are interested in purchasing a copy, call the church office at (559) 528-6892 or Debbie Sheklian at (559) 733-4417. The cost of the cookbook is \$30 or \$30 plus shipping if mailed.

ARTSAKH AID

The parishes of our Diocese play an instrumental role in the rebuilding of our homeland and showed immense support to our homeland during the tragic war in Artsakh. To date our parish and individuals have contributed about \$8,200 to the effort.

As we move forward with these efforts in supporting the humanitarian efforts and strengthening Armenia and Artsakh, we ask that you make your future donations to **St. Mary Armenian Church** and write "**Armenian and Artsakh Relief**" on the memo line. In this way, we can forward and direct donations to go to Diocese-endorsed programs.

ST. MARY MEMORIAL WALL

The St. Mary Memorial Wall was started in 2001 and has been a huge success. Currently there is **space for 28 additional names** at a **donation of \$200/name**. Contact Jim Soxman: ph. 559-936-2227 or email: jimbeasoxman@sbcglobal.net.

ALL services are livestreamed on our webpage at www.stmaryyettem.org. There are links on the "Camera Tab" for INSIDE and OUTSIDE services. The Holy Badarak is streamed on our Facebook page each Sunday beginning at 10:30 AM.

The St. Mary Armenian Church of Yettem Facebook page and website will keep you informed about our church schedules, events, and miscellaneous happenings. Make sure you stop and visit often as we are always adding lots of pictures and information.

PAYPAL

You may access PayPal through the St. Mary Yettem website (www.stmaryyettem.org) and click on the "Donation" button on the bottom of the Home Page. You may donate for general donations, yughakins, hokehankists, pledges, membership dues, in lieu of flowers, or pay for altar flowers you have ordered on behalf of the church.



PLEASE DELIVER YOUR GRAPES
TO THE MAJARIAN HALL
BY 10:00 A.M.
ON SATURDAY,
AUGUST 14, 2021

ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH

AUGUST 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 St. Vahan of Goghtn	3	4	5 Ways and Means meeting via Zoom at 7:00 PM	6	7 Ladies Society meeting at 11:30 AM in the Majarian Hall
8 Barekendan of the Fast of Assumption	9	10	11	12	13	14 Showers of Radiance of Holy Etchmiadzin
15 Assumption of the Holy Mother-of-God Asdvadzadzin	16 Remembrance of the Dead	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Sts. Joachim & Anna, Parents of the Holy Mother-of-God	25	26 Parish Council meeting at 6:00 PM via Zoom	27	28
29	30	31				

5

Sunday Schedule:

Morning Service (Matins) 9:30 AM
Divine Liturgy 10:15 AM

Father Mashdots can be reached at:

559-528-6892 – Office
559-528-6897 – FAX
818-293-9098 - Cell

Marilyn Sousamian Zerounian



Marilyn was born May 20, 1939, in her parents' home in Goshen, CA. She was the second child born to Hagop and Varsenig Sousamian. Her name on her birth certificate is Mary. But her aunts Ester and Margaret would have nothing to do with it and renamed her Marilyn. She has an older sister, Sylvia Yahnian and a younger brother, Michael Sousamian. The family eventually moved to a farm in Visalia where Marilyn got a taste of hard dedicated work. She helped her father drive the tractor, milk the cows, and care for the animals. She also helped her mother in the kitchen where she learned the art of cooking.

Marilyn attended Elbow Elementary school and was in the first graduating class of the newly named high school, Redwood High School. This spunky, spit fire, played the drums and cymbals in the Redwood High School marching band.

Following the footsteps of her grandparents and parents, Marilyn grew up in the St. Mary Yettem church. Her grandfather was one of the carpenters of the original church built in 1911. Her parents received the Benefactor's Award for their dedication to the church. Marilyn was baptized, attended Sunday school and Armenian school, joined ACYO, and was married all at St. Mary's.

The church is also where she met her husband, Pete Zerounian. One Asdvadzadzin luncheon, Marilyn along with her ACYO pals, were serving lunch. Pete had just come back from the service and attended the event. As fate would have it, the food ran out before the servers could get a meal. Pete and Richie Sheklian offered to drive the "kids" to Dinuba to get something to eat. Pete asked Marilyn to sit by him in the car and this was the beginning of a long and beautiful romance. Marilyn and Pete were married 8 months later in April 1959 at St. Mary Yettem. They had three children, Lori, Jimmy, and Janel.



Marilyn joined Ladies Society in 1963 and has been a faithful member for 58 years. She served on various committees and volunteered every chance she could. She served on the mas making committee with her mother and sister, on the Memorial luncheon committee, and the visitation committee to name just a few. Marilyn joined her mother as a member of the church choir when she was 19 years old. Today, you can still hear her sweet voice singing the badarak. Marilyn's dedication to our church did not stop there. She and Pete were one of the founding members of the Mr. and Mrs. Club where she served as the corresponding secretary. The couple also served on the Ways and Means Committee.

Marilyn is a dedicated mother to her children. She served as a room mother, a band mother, a majorette mother, and a 4-H mother as a sewing teacher. She sewed dresses for the girls, even matching dresses for Janel and Janel's best friend. When she wasn't sewing for them, she was teaching them how to sew. She taught her children the important lessons "No one is better than you, and you are no better than anyone else. We are all equal." She often told her children, "Azdvaz medz e." Meaning "God is big" would always help them. She encouraged her children, supported them, and told them they were capable of achieving their goals.

We honor and thank Marilyn for her dedication to Ladies Society and our church.

GRADUATE

Congratulations to Edward Nickoli Davidian who graduated from Kingsburg High School, June 3, 2021. Nickoli is the son of Eric and Michele Buckner Davidian and grandson of Ed and Georgia Davidian.



Ways and Means Committee announces.

Bake Sale

Sunday

August 15, 2021

Feast of the Assumption

Asdvadzadzin & Grape Blessing

Immediately after the day's worship

your favorite Armenian delicacies

will be available

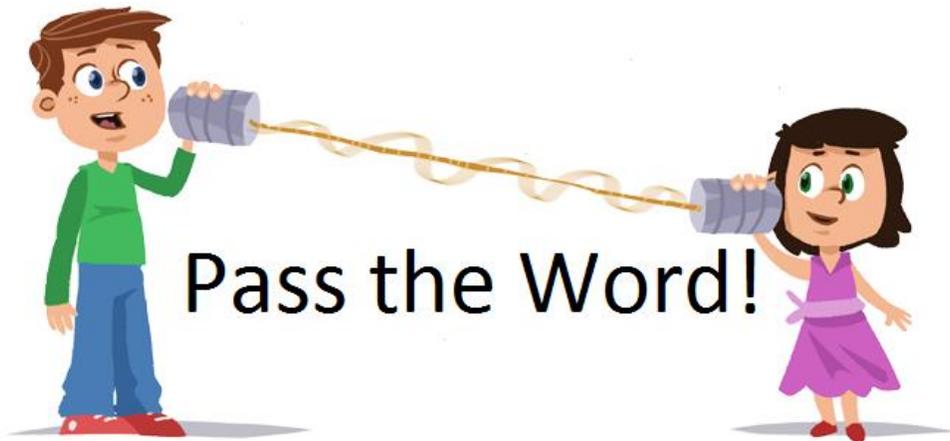
✓ *Cheoreg*

✓ *Simit*

✓ *Nazoog*

✓ *Bread Sticks*

✓ *Plus lots more*



St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church of Yetteem

Asdvadzadzin Blessing of the Grapes

Ս. Աստուածածնի Վերափոխման Տօն
Խաղողօրհնէք

Sunday, August 15, 2021

Divine Liturgy Celebrated

at 10:15 AM



Lunch will feature chicken kebab, pilaf,
salad, carrots, dinner roll and dessert
\$20 for Adults \$12 Children under 10
Please RSVP to (559) 528-6892 or email
lunches@stmaryyetteem.org by August 10th



COME READY TO
SING, LEARN, PLAY &
PRAY BECAUSE...

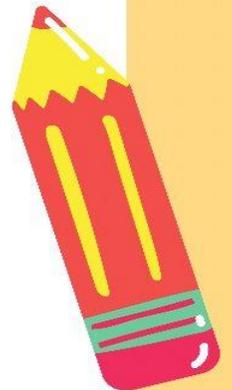


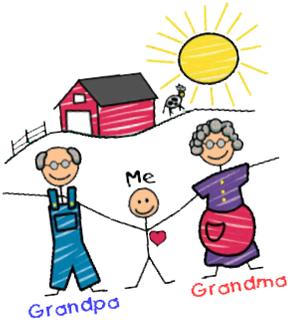
SUNDAY
SCHOOL IS
BACK!

FIRST CLASS OF THE YEAR IS
SEPTEMBER 12TH @ 11AM

REMEMBER: SUNDAY SCHOOL
MEETS EVERY 2ND & 4TH SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER- JUNE

Contact Tracy Valencia
With Any Questions @ 559.824.0913





St. Mary Ladies Society
Invites you to a Brunch
in Celebration of



'Grandparents' Day'

Sunday, September 12, 2021

Immediately following church services in the Majarian Hall



∞ Enjoy a Delicious Brunch
featuring—Beeshee and
Traditional Grandparents Day foods ∞



****Cost **Adults(\$15)**Children(\$10)****

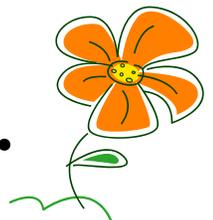
-To Reserve a Table or Seat(s)-

**E-mail: lunch@stmaryyettem.org —or—
Call the Church Office — (559) 528-6892
by September 4**

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED



Celebrate our dear Grandparents...



St. Mary Yettem Celebrates 110 Years



On Sunday, July 18, 2021, about 150 parishioners and friends of St. Mary Armenian Church in Yettem gathered to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the founding of the church. On this special occasion, His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian conducted ordinations of acolytes, a deacon and bestowed a Hye Spirit Award. His Eminence Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian, former Primate of the Western Diocese also journeyed from Southern California to be present for this historic day.

Young Hagop Pegor Keshishian and Jackson Poochigian were ordained as Acolytes. Alan Farsakian who was ordained as a Sub Deacon on July 7, 1991, was elevated to the rank of Deacon - thirty years and nine days later at the exact same altar. Life-long member Charlie Ananian who has faithfully served the parish holding candle, attending Sunday School, chairing the ACYO, singing in choir, assuming Parish Council responsibilities, and maintaining the church grounds for decades, was the recipient of this year's Hye Spirit Award.

His Eminence Archbishop Derderian was the day's celebrant assisted by Parish Priest Reverend Father Mashdots Keshishian, Yettem Deacon Randy Tellalian, Deacon Allan Jendian (Fresno) and Deacon Steve Adams (Fresno). The large choir was led and accompanied by Mari Louise Menendian.

His Eminence delivered the day's message that began with sharing the word in Matthew 18:10-14. His Eminence encouraged us to renew our calling and to carry on the mission of the church and prayed for the founders and pastors of St. Mary Yettem. During a point in the sermon, a young child (the great-grandson of Garabed Simonian, one of the original builders of our current church) made a little noise. His Eminence called the parents and the young boy up to the altar for a special blessing and reminded the congregation that a young cry should be seen as a blessing and a sign of hope from a new generation.

Following services, a banquet luncheon was served to those who remained in the Majarian Hall. The program included songs from Sunday School students and congratulatory remarks from those present, and messages read on behalf of family and friends unable to attend. Deacon Alan Farsakian shared a moving thank you that included his family's multi-generation service to the Armenian Church. Hovnan Surpazan Hayr presented thank you gifts to all of the honorees and then invited Archbishop Hovsepian to close with his remarks and to offer the closing prayer.





Yetteem Scenes – July 2021 – Vartavar and Making Monti





Please join us for an afternoon of fellowship and fun
as we resume the annual...

Sister Churches Luncheon

hosted by

St. Gregory Ladies Society

Saturday, September 18, 2021

Social: 11:30 AM

Lunch: 12:00 Noon

Donation: \$25 per person

St. Gregory Armenian Church Markarian Hall ■ 220 S. Third Street ■ Fowler

Keynote Speaker: Malia Mooradian

Make check payable to your ladies' organization and mail to your representative by Tuesday, September 7th. (Limited seating)

First Armenian Presbyterian Church ~ Grace Chavoor 5278 E. Townsend Fresno, CA 93727

Holy Cross Armenian Church, Turlock ~ Patricia Aydenian 4183 St. George Place Turlock, CA 95382

Holy Trinity Armenian Church ~ Evelyn Hamamjian 2903 W. Decatur Fresno, CA 93711

Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church ~ Donna Robinson 2864 W. Wellington Lane Fresno, CA 93711

St. Mary Armenian Church, Yettam ~ Linda Farsakian-Wall 1445 S. Silvertale Street Visalia, CA 93277

St. Paul Armenian Church ~ Annette Moushigian 9036 N. Recreation Fresno, CA 93720

St. Gregory Armenian Church ~ St. Gregory Ladies Society Attn: Janice Hendrix P.O. Box 246 Fowler, CA 93625

Name _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

Enclosed is my \$ _____ check for _____ reservation(s).



Lessons From on the Cross – The Second Saying

The second saying that Jesus said on the cross was “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Many of us had the Corona Virus and are still alive. We saw how many lived their last moments as they hoped in front of death to be saved from all their life’s sins.

Many of us are suffering with Christ on the cross, but we should think also about the last moments of our life and how we want to live. Like the criminal on Jesus’ left side who did not accept the right punishment? On the contrary, he wanted to skip from pain, and he mocked the love that Jesus was giving. Or like the right-side criminal who looked to his life sincerely and saw how he was living his life in sin and brigandage - forgetting that death could come in any moment but against this reality? This second criminal obtained the free salvation and asked Jesus to remember him in His Kingdom.

Jesus accepted the mocking of the left side criminal with silence. But to the right-side criminal, He gave salvation because he accepted his sins and took the right punishment which was given to him. In his last moments, he hoped to be saved. Therefore, Jesus assured him that the kingdom of heaven is prepared for him and those similar.

Did you know that God is not annoyed by forgiving us when we return to him, but unfortunately, we get annoyed by asking forgiveness from Him. Let us today be with suffered Jesus asking him for something essential. Help us to realize that any pain in this world is short-lived and in the Kingdom of Heaven there is no pain, and we should live our life with this hope.