



The Armenian Diocese in Georgia has celebrated the first major feast of 2015, the Feast of Nativity and Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ. On the evening of January 5th, a Candlelight Divine Liturgy was held in all the churches of the Diocese.

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, under the leadership of Bishop Babgen Salbiyan, the Vicar General, the festive Divine Liturgy was held at Akhalkalaki's Surb Khach (St. Cross) Church of Samtskhe-Javakheti's general prelacy. Nairi Iritsyan, vice president of the local assembly also attended the liturgy.

The Prime Minister of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Archil Khabadze and Batumi Mayor Giorgi Yermakov visited Surb Prkich (St. Savior) Church in Batumi and congratulated the parish on the Feast of Nativity.

The Divine Liturgy was held by the leader of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia, His Grace Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan in Tbilisi's Saint Echmiadzin Church.

The Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality of Georgia, Paata Zakareishvili, State Religious Affairs Agency President, Zaza Vashakmadze

, Georgia's General Assembly members Sergo Ratiani and Ruslan Poghosyan, the head of the Tolerance Center at the Public Defender's Office, Beka Mindiashvili

, Deputy Ambassador of RA to Georgia Vahagn Afyan, the editor of "Georgia" newspaper Van Baybutyan, diplomats from the embassy, politicians and public figures visited the Armenian Church and attended the Divine Liturgy

on the occasion of

the Feast of the Nativity.

During the Divine Liturgy the leader of the Armenian Diocese read the Message of His Holiness, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, on the Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ. The good news of the Nativity of Christ child and Theophany filled the church.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy His Grace Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan delivered the ceremony of Jrorhnek (Consecration of Water). Yuri Yeremyan, committed Christian and devoted son

of his nation,

became once again the "godfather of the Church Cross"

His Grace Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan expressed his gratitude to the Georgian government representatives and thanked them for their congratulations to the parish in connection with the Feast of the Nativity. His Grace referred to the relations of two Christian nations and to the amity of Armenian and Georgian Churches.

After that the Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality Paata Zakareishvili and State Religious Affairs Agency President

Zaza Vashakmadze

addressed the parish and congratulated them on behalf of Georgia's Prime Minister on the occasion of the Feast the Nativity and Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Then Ruslan Poghosyan expressed best wishes to his compatriots.

After the festive Divine Liturgy the government officials accompanied by the Head of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia, attended the traditional Armenian Gata (pastry) Festival organized by the Association of Armenian Women in Georgia, "Shushanik", President Susanna Khachaturian, at the Hayartun Center of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia.

The guests proposed a toast to the centuries-old friendship between the two nations. They wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and tasted the Armenian gata prepared warmly by Armenian women.

The festival was accompanied by the joyful performances of the Hayartun Center's creative groups and solo performers.



