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Intercession of the saints?

Dear friends:

A letter recently received from one of our readers following our latest publication, shows how certain deeply rooted beliefs continue to mark the Armenian spiritual culture, as they do in many other “Christian” traditions. V.S from Gyumri writes the following:

Let me talk about an issue that I didn't understand at all. It concerns the worship of icons and the saints. Who says we are worshiping them? Even if we are remembering the saints in our prayers, it's only for the intercession of the saints, but never worship. Never! And one more fact, nothing can fade the glory of Jesus Christ!...

I sent a personalized reply to this person via our staff operating from the Endanik Centre in Gyumri. In it, I stressed the implications of the unique and perfect work of our Lord Jesus Christ as the God given Mediator. His divine and human natures preclude any intercession from the deceased saints, even though we certainly owe them respect for their example of faith (those who were truly sanctified!) and should in fact follow their example (Heb. 13:7). I wonder, though, what influence plays on this unbiblical belief – the typically old Armenian belief that Jesus did not take upon him a fully human nature (traces of *monophysitism*). For if at Christmas Christ did not fully come in the flesh, except for sin, then certainly he cannot be a good enough Mediator, and so other substitutes are needed...

Reading and understanding the Bible

This letter stresses once again the urgent need that Armenians have to discover God's Word in their mother tongue, and not in an obsolete idiom or one flawed with all kinds of translation approximations, even errors, based on “canonized” traditions that no one ever dared to challenge. This was actually one of the greatest achievements of the Reformation, starting with Luther's translation of the New Testament in German 500 years ago (1522). Any ordinary person able to read should have access to God's Word, meditate on it and faithfully transmit it to his or her offspring: a truly covenantal attitude of faith in the God who perfectly reveals in Scripture who He is as Creator and Redeemer of the world. Our recently completed translation of the





New Testament and Psalms from the original Hebrew and Greek should have already gone to the printer. However, since the latter is currently overloaded with work, the publication had to be delayed by another two months or so. Rather than moaning about this disappointing state of affairs, we are pushing the translation of the rest of the Old Testament, and are happy to report that our translator from Hebrew to Armenian has already completed the book of Genesis ! We continue to covet your prayers and support for this huge task that necessitates patience, dedication, and continued funding... Will some of us be able to travel to Armenia in May 2022 to attend the official release of Our New Testament and Psalms printed in 6000 copies, giving it the publicity it deserves towards the Armenian public? Nothing is certain at this point in time, we must surrender this project in the hands of our gracious Lord, as any of our human enterprises (James 4:15).

“Our translator has already completed the book of Genesis !”

Planning ahead

Christians for Armenia also wants to pursue the broadcasting of shorter podcasts translated from French: these past 8 months we have clearly seen that they attract listeners and elicit comments. We are thankful to those of you who contributed to this new outreach and would like to plead with you to renew your support, as it would be of little value to have started a range of programs one year, and be forced to discontinue it the year after.

As a committee, we plan ahead, always bearing in mind that the outcome of our projects and planning is not in our hands, but we have to use the resources at our disposal with great care and wisdom. When our Lord and Savior comes back to judge the living and the dead, may each of us hear him tell us: *Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master* (Matt. 25:21).

In the meantime, let us all enter into the joy of the coming in the world of our master: Merry Christmas to all of you!

Rev Eric Kayayan



Khatchkars are typical Armenian crosses carved in stone or wood

The deserted site of Ani, former capital of an ancient Medieval kingdom of Armenia.



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