

St Stephen's Anglican Church

Mays Chapel, Maryland



St Isaac the Great

Be mindful, Lord, of thy holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and bless it with shepherds who will lead it as St Isaac the Great led the ancient church in Armenia: causing an alphabet to be created, and the Holy Bible to be translated into the tongue of the people, that they might know wisdom and instruction, and perceive the words of understanding; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all glory, dominion, and honor, now and always and unto the ages of ages. *Amen.*

Pontiff St Isaac the Great (Catholikos St Sahak Partev, "Isaac the Parthian") is one of the most prominent saints in the Armenian Apostolic Church, which was founded by the Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus. St Isaac was born c. 345; he became Patriarch in 387 and reigned until his death 52

years later, in 439. To preserve Armenian culture and national unity, which were threatened by the division of Armenia between Persia and the Byzantine Empire, St Isaac enlisted St Mesrop Mashtots to create an Armenian alphabet. The two then proceeded to translate the Bible, beginning with the Book of Proverbs: "To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding" (Proverbs 1:2).

The Feast of St Sahak Partev is a moveable feast tied to the beginning of Great Lent. It's complicated, but fortunately the Armenian Apostolic Church switched to the Gregorian calendar in 1923, so there isn't the problem of accounting for the difference between Western and Orthodox Easter. Basically, the commemoration of St Sahak occurs on the Saturday before Sexagesima Sunday.

St Isaac the Great is the patron saint of Isaac the lectern eagle.

*Sahak Partev Catholikos
by Francesco Maggiotto (1750-1805)*

