

The Apostles Fast

Saints Thaddeus and Bartholomew

St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew are credited with establishing the Armenian Orthodox Church.

St. Matthew and St. Luke both indicate that they were apostles in their respective gospels (Matthew 10:2-5, Mark 3:16-19, and Luke 6:14-16). Interactions between both St. Thaddeus and Christ and St. Bartholomew and Christ are recorded in the Gospel of St. John. St. John recounts when Bartholomew (also known as Nathaniel) first met Christ (John 1:46-51), and St. Thaddeus asks Christ in John 14:22 “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?”

There are not many early records about the establishment of the church in Armenia. However, according to the Armenian Church, during the time of Christ, King Abgar, the King of Mesopotamia, was ill with leprosy. Some of his messengers asked Jesus to heal King Abgar while He was in Jerusalem. However, Thomas wrote a letter to these messengers saying that someone will come once Christ has ascended into the heavens. Therefore, after Pentecost, St. Thaddeus came to Armenia to heal him. Because of this miracle, the king and the royal court converted to Christianity, making King Abgar the first Christian monarch. After this miracle, the king sent St. Thaddeus to other family members, including King Abgar’s nephew Sanadrug. After the nephew, Sanadrug’s daughter Santukht and many people from Inner Armenia were converted. After this, St. Thaddeus established a Bishop (Zachariah) to oversee Armenia while he continued to preach in different parts of Armenia and Persia.

In c. 49 or 50 AD, St. Bartholomew joined St. Thaddeus in preaching to the Armenians. When he first arrived, St. Bartholomew is said to have converted one of the pagan temples to a church for St. Mary. Alongside St. Thaddeus, he introduced the faith to many people in Armenia, including the Thagooshee, referring to the queen of Armenia, and other government officials.

Later on, after King Abgar passed away and some political turmoil, Sanadrug turned away from Christianity. St. Thaddeus was determined to remind Sanadrug of the Gospel. However, upon his arrival, St. Thaddeus was martyred in Armenia in 68 AD. Three years later, St. Bartholomew was martyred in 71 AD.

St. Thaddeus’ feast day is celebrated on the second day of Epep (July 9), while the feast day for St. Bartholomew is the first day of Tout (September 11/12).

May their blessings be with us all.

Sources:

- Coptic Reader Synaxarium
- [A brief historical sketch of the holy Apostolic Church of Armenia : Jacob, P. H : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)
- [The Armenian Church: Its History, Rites and Ceremonies - Jacques Issaverdenz - Google Books](#)
- [St Thaddeus and St Bartholomew – Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection \(armenianchurchsydney.org.au\)](#)