

Second Sunday of the Holy Cross – Independence

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian
St. Sarkis Armenian Church, Carrollton, TX
September 24, 2017
Gospel Reading: Mark 10:1-12*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

This past Thursday, September 21st, Armenians celebrated the 26th anniversary of Armenia's independence from the Soviet Union, and on September 17th, Americans celebrated Constitution Day, the day when the constitution was officially ratified and took effect in the newly independent United States. But we have also heard in the news this past week, of independence movements in other places in the world, particularly for Kurdistan and for Catalonia, Spain.

However, to fully understand independence, we need to understand what it means to be “dependent”. The word *depend* comes from the Latin words *de* which means “from” and *pendare* which means “to hang”, which is also from where we get the English words pendulum and pendant. So the idea of being dependent or depending on someone or something, as it is in virtually all Indo-European languages, is to hang from something.

When we depend on someone, we trust and believe that whom we depend on will provide us with a benefit. That could be help, supplies, nutrients, guidance, advice, protection, security, comfort, or even life. So when we are independent, we understand that all these things will not come from somewhere else, but we must produce them ourselves.

The American dream is all about independence, and as Americans, and Texans, we take pride in our independence and freedom from being subject to others. But independence can also bring stress, anxiety and worries into our lives. Because when we are independent, we tend to do everything, relying solely upon ourselves, and we forget to turn to God for help.

A man was one day moving his library upstairs. As he was going up with a load of books, his little boy came in, very anxious to help his father. So his father just told him to go and get an armful, and bring them upstairs. When the father came back, he met the little fellow about half-way up, tugging away at the biggest book in the library. He couldn't manage to carry it up. It was too big. So he sat down and cried. “His father found him, and just took him in his arms, book and all, and carried him upstairs.”

Many of us find ourselves in the boy's position. We take a heavy load and get stuck half way on our journey, yet, if we allow God, our Heavenly Father, to come and help, He will. He

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will pick us and our burden up, and take us to our destination. We must remember Christ's words, "Come to me all who are tired and heavy burdened and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)

Unfortunately we replace God with other things, thus, becoming dependent upon those things. We become dependent on money, medicine, food, technology, gossip, people's opinions, people's approval, praise, pornography, gambling, shopping, sex, and work, just to name a few. We think these things will help and provide for us and lead us to a life of peace and tranquility, but they will only lead us to ruin. The first one we must turn to is God. We must only be dependent upon God and nothing else, because Christ reminds us, saying, "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

There was once a sign seen in a textile mill, which said, "When your thread becomes tangled, call the foreman." A young woman was new on the job. Her thread became tangled and she thought, "I'll just straighten this out myself." She tried, but the situation only worsened. Finally she called the foreman. "I did the best I could," she said. "No you did not," said the foreman, "To do the best, you should have called me." This is what we must remember when our lives become tough. We must first call upon God for help and depend upon Him, it is then that our lives have a sense of peace and purpose in them.

Amen.