

On September 16, 2017, it was a real celebration in the Dadesh village of Akhalkalaki, a region with alpine lush greenery and healthy climate of the mountains. Local villagers, children and adults alike, people who had fled their native village long ago, together with their families, friends and relatives had arrived to attend the solemn re-consecration service of the Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother of God) Church, decades after its first consecration.

The re-consecration ceremonies had started from the previous day. The youth of the village, extending their appreciation to Russia-based Tumasyan family, who are from Dadesh village, and their relatives and friends from Russia, who had been supporting them, in honor of their fellow villager had organized a reception, pieces of sacrificed lamb were distributed to the attendees. The day became a truly festive day. It was a way of respecting the pious deed: the erecting of the Khachkar commemorating Armenian Genocide in the church courtyard, providing their fellow villagers with the opportunity to live according to faith in God, say prayers, get married with the blessing of God, and be baptized with the Holy Muron.

The Primate of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia, His Grace Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan; with the participation of Very Rev. Fr. Babken Salbiyan, the Prelate of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Tsalka's General Prelacy of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia; consecrated the church. Following the Opening of the Doors (Drnbatsek) Service, the Primate blessed the Holy Table, the 16 columns and basin for baptisms with the Holy Chrism.

Among the attendees of the solemn ceremony were Members of the Parliament of Georgia Henzel Mkoyan, Samvel Manukyan and David Chichinadze; member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Hayk Babukhanyan; Mushegh Lalayan, RPA Vice President. In attendance also were representatives of local self-government bodies, guests from Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Russia.

Albert Maranjyan, Rafik Srmikyan, Karen Grigoryan and Edgar Kurginyan, the organizers of restoration, construction and the improvement of the adjacent territory, attended the re-consecration service.

Mr. Ludwig and Mrs.Valentina Tumasyan had eagerly arrived to the native village to present the fellow villagers with the renovated church, after 50-year absence.

Following the services, the Primate of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia congratulated the residents of Dadesh on the opening of the church, expressed his gratitude to the worthy children of the village, who had left their homeland, but continued making contributions to welfare of their village, native people and the Church with dedication. The Bishop offered his blessings to the benefactors and transmitted writ of appreciation and mementos with icons.

Rev. Father Tatev Marukyan celebrated the first Divine Liturgy in the Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother of God) Church. The candles were lit for the first time. During the Divine Liturgy, the faithful received the sacrament of Penitence and Holy Communion for the first time. Following the Divine Liturgy the first baptism ceremony was held. Little Monte was anointed with Sacred Chrism.

Following the services, Matagh (Thanksgiving Animal Sacrifice) was distributed to the faithful. A concert featuring performances by the song and dance ensembles of the Akhalkalaki Culture House was held. The event ended with a reception organized by the benefactor at the

ceremonies hall of the village.

The Dadesh village is located 13 km away from Akhalkalaki (towards southwest). The ancestors of present residents settled in the Dadesh village in the 1830s, after migrating from the Ashkhala village of Erzerum, Mush and Kars. At first they settled in the Chifik and Chamdura villages, then moved to Dadesh in 1845-46, where prior to their migration had lived the natives, 14 Armenian families, and the Kurds. The Surb Astvatsatsin Church is the remarkable building preserved in the village. A new wider church of the same name was built near the old one in 1867; it had been closed since the Soviet era. The renovation of the church had been underway since 2014, and was finished in 2017. It was sponsored by the residents of Dadesh.



















