

# Grape Anniversary

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Yesterday was Yn. Anna and my wedding anniversary. But wait, before there are too many smiles and “aaaws”... I totally forgot about it! So, why am I saying this to you now? Well, to confess my sins publically, to lessen my guilt and to win over Anna. But, there is also a less honorable reason, I want to try and justify my behavior and see if I can't get some support!

Here is the rationalization that I used with Anna, which I suspect many of you husbands out there have tried at one time or another: “Anna, we are married every single day of the year, what makes August 16 any different? Aren't we to love each other all the time?” Right guys, have you ever used this? Can I have some support?

Well ok—I have to admit-- I don't fully believe my rationalizations either. Deep down, I know that is important to celebrate anniversaries, mother's days and father's days, so that we don't take for granted the ones we love. Yes we should love our husbands and wives, moms and dads and tell them every day, but we don't. So at least on one special day we take the time to recognize and love those who are indeed special to us every second of every day.

So why really am I talking about this in church? Of course because the same rule that applies for all our loved ones here on earth, applies even more so to our beloved Father in heaven. Today's special holiday, the Assumption of Mary and Blessing of the Grapes, celebrates on one day the mind blowing love and care which our Lord provides for us his creatures every minute of every day.

Where holidays like the transfiguration and Easter resurrection recall great miracles of God intervening in the world, today's blessing of the grapes reminds us that, as I titled the last issue of Avedis, “God has no off switch.” His miracles are all around, from grapes to galaxies, he is so overwhelming present and part of everything, so omnipresent in creating and sustaining life, that we tend to take Him for granted.

Holidays like today's must be celebrated yearly because they remind us not to waste too much time asking God for miracles, for His miracles are all around us. Today's blessing of the grapes is the Armenian Church's way of helping us sharpen our eyesight to see God's everyday miracles. In case we get too busy and anxious in life, too abstract and ritualistic in our church, we bring bunches of grapes (a whole truckload in old country days) into the church.

Who can't look closely at a grape and realize that this is a brilliant piece of art with brilliant design. You dug a hole and dropped a dead seed into the ground, God turned it into this beautiful sweet fruit. You leave the grapes to get old and dry, God gives raisins. You leave them to get old and wet, God turns them into wine which lifts spirits and is a taste of the kingdom to come! How can't we look at a grape and remember that we are totally dependent on God, his creation to survive and to thrive!

God's miracles are all around, if he removed his grace, took back what he created, our world would end. God's grace is like our heartbeat, our breathing. It is so much a part of every second of every day that we take it for granted, only noticing it when we have a problem.

So then, it's very important to celebrate holidays so we don't take for granted those we love. We celebrate anniversaries on one day to recognize how our husbands and wives are special to us every second of every day. We celebrate the blessing of grapes today, but only to recognize God's blessing on every single moment of every single day. His gifts-like his love-totally surround us, because his gifts are his presence...He who is holiness, He who is blessing, He who is Love, now and always and unto the ages of ages; amen.