



# State of New York

## Executive Chamber

### Proclamation

Whereas, the Empire State is strengthened by its communities of people representing various ethnicities and faiths, who benefit from the freedom and democracy upon which our Nation was founded; as a global leader in many areas of basic human rights, New York State has a prominent role in acknowledging longstanding institutions that teach valuable lessons from which our greater society benefits; and

Whereas, the Armenian Apostolic Church, founded by the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew, is such an institution; this year marks the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conversion of the Armenian King Drtad by St. Gregory the Illuminator in 301 A.D. and King Drtad's subsequent declaration of Christianity as the official state religion of Armenia, making it the first nation to declare Christianity as the official state religion; and

Whereas, Armenia's conversion led to the creation of the unique Armenian script by Saint Mesrob in 404 A.D., and the bestowal of exquisite ecclesiastical gifts upon the architectural heritage of the world, like those found at Ani and Aghtamar; the conversion also resulted in the manuscript illumination of masters such as Thoros Roslin and Momig, and impressive theologians such as Gregory of Nareg and Nerses of Lampron; and

Whereas, Armenians have paid a dear price for their faith, beginning in the fifth century, when they were led in a religious battle against the Persians by the great prince Vartan, who died defending Christianity; today, the unbreakable spirit embodied by Saint Vartan prevails among Armenian Americans; their continuous struggle was witnessed in the martyrdom of an estimated 1.5 million Armenian Christians in the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923, a tragedy which former President and New York Governor Theodore Roosevelt called "the greatest crime" of World War I; and

Whereas, Armenian Americans have constituted a vital part of New York life since the 1830's; the first Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church in New York City was offered in 1889, and New York State is now is home to one of the largest Armenian-American communities in the United States; all the people of New York State share in this noble commemoration and join with the Armenian-American community as it honors this defining event in their history;

Now, Therefore, I, George E. Pataki, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim June 17, 2001 as

### ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH RECOGNITION DAY

in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this eighteenth day of May in the year two thousand one.

Governor

Secretary to the Governor