

Christmas, Nativity and Baptism

The Armenian Church celebrates the Birth of Christ on January 6, which is the day that Christmas was celebrated by Eastern Christians. The Roman Catholic Church adopted December 25 as Christmas to coincide and supplant the pagan feast of the Saturnalia. The Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches celebrate Christmas on January 7, which is actually December 25 according to the Julian Calendar (which is 13 days behind the Gregorian Calendar we use today). Technically, in the Armenian Church January 6th is the Feast of the Theophany (Revelation of Christ). Thus, the Armenian Church celebrates simultaneously three major manifestations of God made Man: the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan by St. John the Baptist. This feast is one of the five major (Tabernacle) feasts of the Armenian Church, in conjunction with which there is the blessing of the water and doves are released in the church yard recalling the descent of the Holy Spirit as a dove at Christ's Baptism. (Mt. 3:16).