



Հրատարակուի Ամերիկահայոց Արեւելեան Թեմի Ազգային Առաջնորդարանի
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Մէկ Ազգ, Մէկ Մարմին

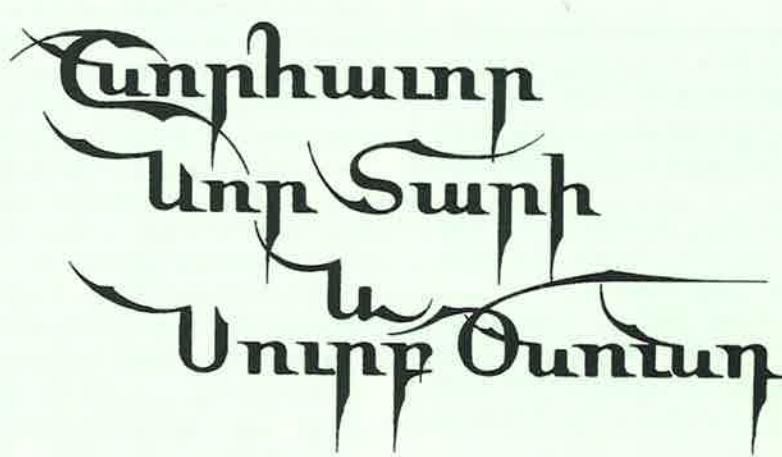
Ժողովուրդի մը տոկունութիւնն ու ուժանութիւնը երեւան կու գան մասնաւորաբար տաղնապներու շրջանին: Հայ ազգը իր պատմութեան ընթացքին անցած է բազմաթիւ փորձութիւններէ: անոնց նորագոյնը կը հանդիսանայ լիբանահայ գաղութի աղէտը:

1975-ին, տարօրինակ զուգահեռութեամբ, Յեղասպանութեան վաթսունամեակի նախօրեակին սկսած լիբանանեան ներքին հակամարտութիւնը վերածուեցաւ զինեալ բախումի եւ քաղաքացիական պատերազմի: Սակայն, շնորհիւ հայ քաղաքական թէ՛ ազգային կազմակերպութեանց հեռատեսութեան, լիբանահայ աւելի քան քառորդ միլիոն հաշուող մեր զանգուածը նուազագոյն վնասով կրցաւ դուրս գալ աղէտէն: 1976-ի զինադադարը, հազիւ խաղաղութեան յոյսեր ներշնչած, փուլ եկաւ 1978-ի ամրան եւ պատերազմը վերսկսաւ շատ աւելի սաստիկ եւ մանաւանդ շատ աւելի մեր «տան» մօտիկ: Եւ այս անգամ, մութ ձեռքեր, չիլ հաշիւներէ տարուած, յաջողեցան հայկական թաղամասերը պատերազմի թատերաբեմի վերածել մարդկային թէ՛ նիւթական ահաւոր կորուստներ պատճառելով Պէյրութի Հայ ազգաբնակչութեան: Յարդ անծանօթ կը մնան իսկական դրդապատճառներն ու նպատակները լիբանահայութեան հասցուած այդ հարուածին: Հարցը ունի իր ներքին, լիբանանեան, եւ արտաքին, միջին Արեւելեան, ծալքերը որոնք ժամանակի ընթացքին անխուսափելիօրէն պիտի քակուին, եւ աշխարհ տեղեակ պիտի ըլլայ անոնց:

Սակայն, ինչ ալ ըլլան անոնք, յստակ է այն՝ որ լիբանահայ գաղութը ներկայիս կ'ապրի դժնդակ օրեր, կը մղէ գոյութեան եւ վերապրելու պայքար: Ամբողջ գաղութը, իր բոլոր դաւանական եւ քաղաքական հատուածներով, ձեռք ձեռքի տուած, լծուած է վերականգնումի եւ վերանորոգման գործին: Կորուստն ու ցնցումը, որուն ենթարկուեցաւ լիբանահայութիւնը, անտարբեր չէին կրնար ձգել հայ զանգուածները Հայաստանի թէ՛ Սփիւռքի մէջ: Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոս Վազգէն Ա. ո'չ միայն քաջալերական խօսքերով, այլ գործնական միջոցներով, իր անձին իսկ օրինակով, օգնութեան հասաւ: Կիլիկեան Աթոռի գոյգ Կաթողիկոսներու, Խորէն Ա. ի եւ Գարեգին Բ. ի նախաձեռնութեամբ կազմուած Լիբանանի վերականգնումի Կեդրոնական Մարմինը ողջունուեցաւ էջմիածնայ Կաթողիկոսին եւ Մայր Աթոռի ներկայացուցիչներուն կողմէ որպէս համազգային նկարագրով «միակ իրաւասու» մարմինը հայ աղէտեալներու կենսական գործը կազմակերպող եւ հոգացող:

Հովանաւորուած Հայաստանեայց Առաքելական Եկեղեցւոյ երկու Կաթողիկոսութեանց, Հայ Կաթողիկէ եւ Հայ Աւետարանական համայնքներու հոգեւոր պետերուն կողմէ, եւ գործակցութեամբ բարեսիրական ու մշակութային միութեանց եւ ազգային ու քաղաքական կազմակերպութեանց, լիբանանի մեր արեւակիցներու օգնութեան գործը ստացած է համահայկական նկարագիր եւ տարողութիւն:

Եւ չէր կրնար տարբեր ըլլալ: Հայ ժողովուրդը, որքան ալ ցրուած ըլլայ ի սփիւռս աշխարհի, կը կազմէ մէկ ազգ, մէկ մարմին, մէկ ամբողջութիւն, փոյթ չէ թէ ան կ'ապրի Մայր Հայրենիքի հարազատ հողին վրայ թէ օտար, հիւրընկալ երկիրներու տակ: Հայ ազգը մէկ է, իր բոլոր խաւերով, աշխարհաշար. էջ 4



Dear fellow Armenians,
With the advent of the New Year and Christmas, we wish all of you many happy and blessed days of peace and fulfillment.

During this holiday season, the Christian world is full of enthusiasm and anticipation. This wave of joy, although sometimes superficial, reaches out to the remotest corners of the world. Even as 1978 comes to an end, tearing yet another year from our lives, we welcome 1979 with new hope, new expectation, and renewed enthusiasm. Together with St. Nerses the Gracious we beseech our Creator: "You who renew everything old; Renew me; And adorn me with newness."

Just as the earth needs cultivation, and water needs to flow, every man needs renewal. While we cannot renew our bodies, we can renew our hearts and souls through the teachings of our Christian faith. This type of renewal gives meaning to the New Year and makes it a significant step in our pilgrimage towards God.

These thoughts are crystallized when they are seen in the context of the mystery of the Nativity and the Epiphany of our Saviour, Christ. Didn't He choose to become man so that He would give man the dream of becoming divine? Didn't the Lord want man to be renewed from his corrupted image and receive again the beauty of the ideal?

For many centuries we have sung the Christmas hymn composed by Moses of Khoren which says, "Great and marvelous is the mystery. . ." Yet, we have made very little effort to grasp the great mystery of this truth. Let us transcend the voices and with open mind, clear heart, and eyes of the soul journey to Bethlehem to see the simple and good shepherds stand in awe before this great and marvelous mystery. Together, with the heavenly angels, they glorify God and bring the good tidings to the world that, "Today, in the city of David, a Saviour has been born to you." A King whose palace is a stable, his throne a manger, and his purple mantle, swaddling cloth.

Why did God choose to be born so poor, meek, and abandoned? Why did God strip Himself from His heavenly glory and choose to be born in the poorest conditions of a stable? And why was "there no room to lodge at the Inn" for Joseph and Mary? [Luke 2:7]. An answer to all these questions is that Christmas is an excellent invitation to forget our egos, bow to the cradle, respect and love the poor and create the opportunity for everyman to have a reason for rejoicing on Christmas morn.

Jesus was born poor, yet He enriched our lives. Therefore, no one should celebrate Christmas alone if he can share what he has with those who are in need. The Son of God says, "Here I stand, knocking at the door. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sit down to supper with him and he with me."

Christmas is all around us in America. Christmas trees, symbolizing life everlasting, emit warmth and joy. This year every Christmas tree seems to bring to mind the mighty cedars of Lebanon, the biblical land of milk and honey which today has become a valley of sorrow and suffering. Lebanon, for many years now, has been a theater of confrontation for the many factions of the Middle East. Armenians everywhere—in Armenia and the Diaspora—hope and pray the tragedy will soon end and peace will prevail, and Lebanon will again become a peaceful country. Alas, the dove of peace is still wounded and the rainbow is not yet apparent in the horizon. During this season of renewal, let us pray that the New Year brings the longed for peace, and that "There be abundance of corn in the land, growing in plenty to the tops of the hills; may the crops flourish like Lebanon, and the sheaves be numberless as the blades of grass." [Psalm 72:16].

In moments of abundance and over-consumption, let us keep in mind our unsheltered brethren. Each time we make our children happy with a new toy, let us remember those children whose only toys have been guns and grenades. In our moments of peaceful satisfaction, let us remember those who thirst for water.

On the eve of the Resurrection, two disciples, on route to a village called Emmaus, met a stranger. They asked him to spend the evening with them. They sat down with him and when he broke the bread and offered it to them their eyes were opened and they recognized Him as the risen Lord.

Let us open our hearts and be ready to welcome the unknown guest, our blood brother, and when we break bread together, God will be revealed among us. With this spirit of genuine brotherhood we wish everyone a blessed Christmas. "Chrisdos dznay yev haydnetzav."

Prayerfully
BISHOP MESROB ASHJIAN

Joint Communiqué

By the invitation of His Holiness Vazken I, Catholicos of All Armenians, the delegation of the Great House of Cilicia arrived from Antelias, Lebanon, to the Holy See at Etchmiadzin, to have consultations and to organize the task of assisting the disaster-stricken Armenian communities of Lebanon in a national drive according to a jointly devised plan.

The delegation of the Great House of Cilicia was composed of the following: His Grace Bishop Datev Sarkissian, dean of the seminary at Antelias; Attorney Khachig Babigian, deputy of the Lebanese Parliament, chairman of the National General Assembly of the Catholicosate and of the Provincial Council of the Diocese of Lebanon; Mr. Vartkes Der Garabedian, Secretary of the National Central Council.

The planned consultations took place on Nov. 9-11, at the Reception Room of the Great Hall of Holy Etchmiadzin, between the members of the above mentioned delegation and representatives of the Mother See.

The representatives of the Mother See were: His Eminence Archbishop Sion Manoogian, chairman of the High Religious Council; His Eminence Archbishop Gomidas Der Stepanian, locum tenens for the Diocese of Ararat and a member of the High Religious Council.

Mr. Hovhannes Topoozian, member of the High Religious Council; and Mr. Artoon Hadidian, editor of the monthly, "Etchmiadzin."

After the Nov. 9-11 deliberations, in an atmosphere of brotherly love, the two delegations decided unanimously to publish the following joint communiqué for the knowledge of the Armenian people.

A. To welcome the Central Body for the Rehabilitation of Lebanon, organized in Beirut on October 27 through the initiative of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, of which His Holiness Khoren I and His Holiness Karekin II, Co-adjutor Catholicos, are the presidents, and His Beatitude Hemaik Gedigian, Patriarch of Catholic Armenians, and H. Sagerian, head of the Armenian Evangelical community are the vice-presidents.

B. To welcome the willingness of His Holiness Vazken I, Catholicos of All Armenians, to sponsor the national fund raising drive for the war-stricken Lebanese Armenian community.

C. The Mother See and the See of the Great House of Cilicia will organize the fund raising, in their respective dioceses, through the diocesan-religious bodies, setting up a special fund-raising body under the presidency of the prelate of the diocese and with the active participation of the representatives of all the Armenian religious communities, national organizations, charitable and culturally important associations.

D. To invite the Central Executive of A.G.B.U. to have its representative in the Central Body for the Rehabilitation of Lebanon.

E. In order to give national character to the task of assistance, ask the Catholicos of the Mother See and the See of the Great House of Cilicia to set an honorary list of well-known philanthropists and national figures to assist in the fund-raising effort for the impoverished Lebanese Armenian community.

E. The Central Body for the Rehabilitation of Lebanon will periodically keep these individuals informed of its activities, taking into consideration their helpful advice.

F. To consolidate and transfer the amounts raised in Armenia and in all the communities in the Diaspora to the Central Body for the Rehabilitation of Lebanon, organized in Beirut, which is the solely authorized body to allocate these funds for the needs of the Lebanese Armenian community; to reconstruct religious and educational institutions and to rebuild the economic life of the community.

G. The Holy Father of All Armenians and the Holy Fathers of the Great House of Cilicia will follow up the process of centralizing and distributing the funds raised, and through their blessings and advice will lend support and encouragement to the successful outcome of this task.

H. The Holy Father of All Armenians and the Holy Fathers of the Great House of Cilicia will maintain

PARISH ROOTS:

STS. VARTANANTZ, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church of Providence, R.I., like many of its sister churches, traces its history to the political aftermath of the 1933 schism.

After years of hopelessness, it became necessary to provide a permanent house of worship for a large segment of people who were denied their spiritual rights. A duly elected Board of Trustees took action and decided in favor of the present structure at 402 Broadway. A down payment was made on December 4, 1939, and the church and all its buildings were purchased. The deeds were drawn in the names of the following people: Aram Nalbandian, Apkar Toomasian, Karekin Donabedian, Boghos Sahagian, Asadour Barsamian, Sarkis Saroian, and Charles Sahagian.

Since there was some uncertainty as to a new name, it was unanimously decided to name it All Saints Church, as it still stands in the records today. The former St. James Episcopal Church was consecrated and renamed Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church on June 23, 1940. Mrs. Mary Markarian was the godmother. The first resident pastor was Rev. Yeghishe Gasparian.

In succession, pastors were the late Rev. Mateos Manigian, 1933-1934; the late Rev. Hoosig Nakhnikian, 1936-1939; the late Rev. Yeghishe Gasparian, 1939-1950; the late Very Rev. Nishan Papazian, 1950-1958; the late Rev. Ghevont Khosroffian, 1958-1960; Very Rev. Oshagan Minassian, 1960; the late Very Rev. Arsen Simoniantz, 1960-1961.

A new era was ushered in when Fr. Mesrob Tashjian, with a background in seminary training, became the first priest to be ordained at St. Vartanantz Church. As Pastor of Sts. Vartanantz, he became an outstanding religious leader whose meaningful and stirring messages became an inspiration to all. On Sunday, May 9, 1965, parishioners marked the 25th anniversary of the founding of the parish with a Mass of thanksgiving. His Grace, Archbishop Hrant Khatchadourian was the celebrant.

As the years went by, it became evident that additional room was needed. A building committee was formed to look into the possibilities and we were soon on our way. Upon completion of the school building, it was decided to use the facilities for a daily Armenian nursery school which flourished for several years under the direction of Der Mesrob.

The school building's mortgage was ceremonially burned before parishioners and guests as the parish



observed its 35th anniversary at a banquet at the Cranston Hilton on Saturday, November 15, 1975. Archbishop Karekin Sarkissian, now His Holiness Karekin II, was present on this auspicious occasion.

Many innovative religious and educational programs were instituted during Rev. Dr. Mesrob Tashjian's pastorship. These programs which have left an indelible imprint on the parish are: Bible Study classes, Adult Armenian Language courses, Armenian Weekly School for children, lectures on Armenian Church history. Sunday School and Armenian Church Music and Choir conferences and seminars have also been planned and executed under his guidance.

In addition to the Pastor and the Board of Trustees, the Senior and Junior Ladies Auxiliaries, the Armenian Arts Society, the ARF, the ARS "Arax" and "Ani" Chapters, the AYF Seniors and Juniors, and the Sts. Vartanantz Church Soccer Team function as an arm of the church. These organizations lend their support to the two major functions held annually: the Bazaar held at Rhodes Ballroom in Cranston and the Blessing of Grapes and Madagh Picnic held on the Sunday of the Assumption of St. Mary at Camp Haiastan in Franklin, Mass.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate what Fr. Tashjian has said many times in many different ways, that the future of a parish depends as much on the laity as its clergy. Where we go from here, depends on each and everyone of us!

Angel H. Perethian



Dr. Ashjian (left), representative of the Armenian community in the Cypriot Parliament, and currently a member of the Cyprus delegation to the U.N. General Assembly, listens as Mr. Zenon Rossides, Cypriot Ambassador to the U.N. speaks with Bishop Mesrob Ashjian, during a reception hosted by the Prelacy in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Ashjian. Bishop Ashjian introduced the guest of honor noting that, "since our names are the same and our parents came from Adana, there is a good possibility that we are related."

contact with each other through correspondence and/or visits of their representatives, and in case of need, by consultation. They will undertake new nationwide measures to realize the above mentioned goals.

I. The Mother See of Etchmiadzin, the See of the Great House of Cilicia, the other hierarchical sees and all the Armenian churches and the faithful people in Armenia and the Diaspora will pray tirelessly for the establishment of peace in Lebanon and a brotherly harmony between all Christian and Moslem communities with God's blessing.

November 11, 1978
Holy Etchmiadzin

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Editor.....**Hasmig Mergian**



CROSSROADS



BISHOP ASHJIAN ATTENDS "OKLAHOMIAN" EVENT

Four years ago, about sixty Armenian students, many from Iran, residing within a fifty-mile radius of Oklahoma City, decided to form an Armenian group. Thus was born the "Sassoun Armenian Cultural Association." This Association recently celebrated the first anniversary of its cultural and social center, with a dinner and program.

Bishop Mesrob Ashjian, who had become acquainted with many of the members of the group during his term as Prelate of the New Julfa diocese in Iran, was invited to attend.

When asked of his impressions of the Oklahoma community, Bishop Ashjian commented that he had never seen so much accomplished in so short a time, by so few persons, in a relatively isolated region. The Prelate also noted that the authenticity and quality of the cultural program rivaled any he had seen elsewhere in America.

The highlight of the evening was a cultural program which demonstrated the many facets of the community and the wide range of activities that the Sassoun Association sponsored for its members. In addition to having established a modest but tastefully decorated community center, the Association sponsors a choral group, a dance group, and publishes a bi-weekly bulletin entitled, "Sassoun." The Association has also organized an Armenian library, a sports group, weekly debates and social gatherings.

At the Association's first formal dinner, over 100 persons from the Oklahoma City area as well as from Tulsa (about 100 miles away) enjoyed an entertaining program of songs, recitations, dances, and music. It is interesting to note that the "audience" and the "performers" were almost one, that is to say that the program and other aspects of the evening were the result of a concerted effort of the entire Oklahoma City community, which in Bishop Ashjian's expression, had become totally "Sassounized."

On Monday, November 13, some twenty families gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. M. Aghakhanian in Tulsa, to meet Bishop Ashjian. The members of the Tulsa Armenian community differ from those of Oklahoma City in that they consist of families who have established themselves permanently. The twenty families form a very close knit group which is about to embark on the organization of a Tulsa Armenian community center.

Bishop Ashjian noted that, with the dedication of the Oklahoma City "Sassounsi" group and the determination of the Tulsa community, it will not be surprising if Oklahoma is transformed into an active center of Armenian community life.

FIRST ARMENIAN CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT CELEBRATES ITS 53rd ANNIVERSARY

On October 7 and 8, 1978, the Armenian community of New Britain and Hartford, Conn., marked the 53rd anniversary of St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, the first Armenian church in Connecticut. The celebration coincided with the first official visit of Bishop Mesrob Ashjian to the community. A dinner took place Saturday evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sarkis Dodakian in honor of His Grace Bishop Ashjian. Attending were the pastor of the church, Rev. Sahag Andekian, and the entire Board of Trustees. After dinner Bishop Ashjian arrived at the church and with the singing of "Hrashapar" by the 20-voice choir, proceeded up the main aisle, beautifully flanked by floor stand candelabras, potted palms and fresh chrysanthemums. After a brief service and welcoming speech by Der Hayr Andekian, His Grace gave his blessings and greetings.

On Sunday morning the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by His Grace, assisted by Rev. Andekian and beautifully sung by a full choir led by Choir Director, and organist Miss Shirley Kevorkian. The Badarak was enhanced by the ordination of two deacons and three sub-deacons. Those elevated to deacon were Vrouyr Frankian and Kevork Essaian. The three *Tubirs* who received their *Oorars* were Christopher Sagherian, Wayne Vahe Dodakian and Hrant Shamasian. It was the first multiple ordination that His Grace had performed and said it gave him great pleasure to see so many young people from one community to qualify for such honors and hoped they would always remain worthy of the degree and be of assistance to their church. A special Requiem Service was also performed for the founders of the church.

Immediately after Badarak a banquet took place in the main ballroom of the Howard Johnson Hotel in New Britain. In addition to the guest of honor, His Grace Bishop Ashjian, several city and state dignitaries attended, as well as Rev. Antranig Baljian from near-by Indian Orchard. Mr. George Atamian was Master of Ceremonies, Mr. John Krikorian did the introductory honors and attorney John Bagdasarian conducted the candlelighting ceremony. Mr. Asadour Santourian enchanted the audience with his excellent operatic voice. He was accompanied on the piano by Miss Susan Shabazian. Also on the program were Vrouyer Frankian, Miss Susan Shabazian, Mrs. Sossy Makdesian and Ovsanna Essaian. The highlight of the afternoon was the inspiring speech by His Grace. The program came to a close by the entire audience singing "Giligia."

Prelacy Announcements

OUTREACH gives special thanks to Lionel, husband of Maro Ajemian and George and Anahid Ajemian Avakian, who financially made possible the printing of our eighth issue in memory of the renowned pianist, Maro Ajemian.

On Friday, February 9, 1979, the Chilingirian String Quartet will perform at St. Peter's Church in the Citicorp Center at 54th Street and Lexington Ave., New York City. This new quartet from England is quickly moving into renowned musical circles. The concert begins at 8:00 PM. Tickets can be obtained by writing St. Peter's Church or by contacting the Prelacy which will have a limited number of tickets available.

DETROIT'S ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Archbishop Hrant Khatchadourian, former Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, was the guest celebrant at Detroit's St. Sarkis Church on Sunday, October 15, 1978.

It was fitting that Archbishop Khatchadourian perform the Holy Badarak, for it was he who, 16 years earlier, consecrated the new Armenian Church.

During his sermon, the Archbishop repeatedly alluded to the historical ties that bind the Armenian Churches and Schools together in an irrevocable union that has been highly instrumental in the preservation and perpetuation of our Church and Nation. He accented the need for the continuance of cooperation between all of the organizations whose activities have as their hub the Church and School.

"It is vitally important that both institutions (Church and Schools) receive the attention and help of the entire community, for both fulfill key requirements of many individuals and families," the high-ranking cleric stated.

In keeping with the festive mood of the parishioners, Archbishop Khatchadourian commented, "I am the first bionic clergyman in the long history of the Armenian Church." His comment drew roars of laughter. His reference, of course, was to the pacemaker which assists the function of his heart.

It was like old homeweeke for the hundreds of churchgoers who affectionately remembered their former Prelate, with warm handshakes, embraces and expressions of friendship.

Archbishop Khatchadourian reminded the gathering of the increasing hardships that were daily confronting our brothers in Lebanon.

"Pray for them," he said, "that they may soon find peace and return to some semblance of sanity in their adopted homeland where war and its accompanying destruction have all but totally destroyed the once popular Middle Eastern country."

"We must be prepared to again aid their growing needs. We must be ready to open up our homes and hearts to the many destitute families that will doubtlessly be granted refugee status and emigrate to the United States and other free nations of the world."

The somber note was a grim reminder that affluence, freedom and peace, were the exception, and not the rule, for the majority of nations. It again pointed out the need for the Armenians of the diaspora to be strong—to be united—to be ready for the exigencies that have become commonplace for the Armenian people.

The program was highlighted by the bestowing of two awards for outstanding service to the Armenian Community. The awards, commendation letters from the Prelacy, were presented by Albert Sarkissian. The two talented recipients were Ms. Margaret Lafian and Ms. Ann Movsesian, who have performed their services—almost without interruption—for more than a decade. Ms. Lafian is an accomplished singer, pianist and a member of the Hachig Kazarian Ensemble and Ms. Movsesian, is a singer with a voice of exceptional quality and clarity.

The Armenian Church: A Sacred Trust

by Michael Najarian

The building of a church is a response to the indomitable will of the Son of God. Almost 2,000 years ago as written in the Book of Matthew, Christ said to one of His favored disciples, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

The Armenians were not in the presence of the living Christ, but it would seem that they were there in spirit when he spoke those words. The Armenians emulated the words of Christ. The Armenian landscape has been sanctified by hundreds of magnificent churches and cathedrals built by devout Armenians.

The Armenian Church is not only a church. It is a complex institution that has served many roles for the Armenian people throughout the centuries. The church is first and foremost, a holy place in which Christians assemble to worship God and to hear His words. In the past it was also a prolific fount of Armenian culture and faithfully served to preserve and spread this way of life. Through the

illustrious works of its revered saints, Sahag and Mesrob, the Church spread the Armenian alphabet to all who wanted and needed to speak and read it. The church also served to protect and defend the Armenian nation against her enemies representing her through the many tragic and trying periods in our history.

The early leaders and parishioners of St. Gregory are worthy of our honor today. They have carried out not only the words of Christ but have acted in the finest tradition of the early fathers of our Armenian Apostolic Church who lived and died to maintain the Armenian Church and its beliefs so that all Armenians could walk the path of freedom and exercise their right to follow in the footsteps of Christ and his Holy Apostles.

You, who follow in their footsteps, must accept the fact that there is more to this church than its construction or its mere existence. A church is not but a building of wood, brick, and mortar. You are the church. You are its face, its reflection, and its

(Continued on page 4)

Sacred Trust

(Continued from page 3)

shadow. The Armenian church lives within you and through you. This church without devout parishioners is a body without a soul. This church without a dedicated and creative leadership and active, involved workers is a ship without a rudder, floating aimlessly on the vast sea of humanity. This church without an understanding of its many complex roles, all of which have been painfully and painstakingly developed to serve the Armenian people, is like an adult with the mind of a child, unable to fully comprehend itself in relationship to its environment, unable to live and grow to its fullest potential.

The Armenian Church today is at the threshold of a new and challenging era. It can flourish like the grapevine in the summer's warmth or it can shrivel like the delicate lily at the first frost.

The Armenian Church has had a glorious past. It has walked in the path of the angels. Its future depends on all of us rededicating ourselves to making the Armenian Church a vital and creative force in the lives of the Armenian people.

The Armenian Church irrevocably binds us to Christ and all of Christendom. It binds us to the Armenian nation and the Armenian language. It brings us into a communion with all Armenians who believe as we do, that Armenia can and must again be a nation, free, strong, and unfettered as the wind.

This church is your spiritual link to the present and past; to the Great and Illustrious House of Giligia and to Holy Etchmiadzin; to St. Gregory the Illuminator, and to Saints Thaddeus and Bartholemew; to Jerusalem where Christ was crucified and resurrected, and finally to Bethlehem where the savior, Christ was born unto the world.

Those who founded St. Gregory, have given you an undying, immortal relationship with the Armenian people and with the Christian world, and for that all of us should be most grateful.

The night I opened your gracious invitation to be present at your consecration dinner was earlier spent in the Prelacy office in New York. On the way to La Guardia Airport for my return to Boston, my driver, a former distinguished member of the executive council, and I were discussing the Church and a number of concerns I had relating to it, some of which were discouraging for me. In essence, my feelings were, who needs these headaches?

My driver said to me in very soft words, "Michael, the church is the jewel of the Armenian people. You and I must protect it. If we don't, who will?"

And that is what I again want to reemphasize to you. You have been given a sacred trust. You must protect your church and make it grow. None of us has the right to let the church falter or fall into a state of disrepair. The Armenian church was here long before any of us were born and it will be here long after we are gone. The Armenian Church is eternal.

But what if there were no church? What would we do? Where would we go? Where would we baptize our children? Where would we bury our dead? Where would we sanctify our marriages? Where would we go to pray?

We are here today sharing each other because there is an Armenian church in North Andover. Being a Christian is no easy task. Being an Armenian is even more difficult as we have learned through the centuries. Being an Armenian Christian and a member of the Armenian Apostolic Church, God, we ask, who needs that cross to bear? There is frustration, there is self-centeredness, there is fatigue, there is disillusionment. But there is also joy and happiness, there is satisfaction at seeing a task done and done well. I think we can all agree, clergy and lay people alike, working for the church is not easy. But what is easy today? Taxes? Raising children? Paying the mortgage and the fuel bill? Getting a raise?

If everything were easy and we were perfect, free of all negative characteristics, pure, saintly, selfless, and loving toward each other, there would be no need for the church. We would all be immediately eligible to cruise with the angels and saints on a snowy white cloud. Despite what you may have heard about the collective sanctity of the Armenian people, we Armenians are humans with all of humanity's frailties and weaknesses. We have our joys and sorrows and our likes and dislikes.

FORUM

MY OWN CREED

Some Armenians, tormented by the future of the church and the Armenian people at large, have often asked the same question of me: "Father, you, as a priest and a spiritual leader of your community, one who knows the people intimately, and is well aware of her needs and national requirements, what do you think of unity? Do you think that there are possibilities of understanding, cooperation, and national agreement amongst us? In other words, can you tell us what the future of the Armenian people will be? Can you please give us your opinion?"

I have always given the same answer, in the way of a creed, expressing all my thoughts and feelings concerning the issue.

I believe in the singleness, greatness, and perpetuality of the Armenian people. I believe in our own vernacular as one of the most beautiful languages in the world, in our art and literature, and in our national cause binding us together.

I believe that the Armenian people have been a talented and creative from their beginning, and that they have a historical mission to perform for the future of the coming generations.

We are an ancient people, belonging to the Indo-European or Aryan branch of the human race. We have had a magnificent past and a glorious history. We have a subtle language and an enviable culture. It is natural that we should feel proud of being Armenian.

I believe that our existence has been a relief for the human civilization, because we have been a chosen people by God, gifted with highly appraised virtues, able to contribute to the progress and improvement of the world status.

I believe, the Armenian people have a brilliant future, which they will obtain through unified efforts, through the serious and effective toil of her organizations; for, without cooperative efforts we cannot defend our country, we cannot defend our national rights, and we cannot confront the assimilation that is taking its toll in the diaspora.

All our national organizations, whether political parties or compatriotic and cultural associations, have to work together in order to keep the integrity of the Armenian people. They must use all their ability and potential means, having always as their ultimate goal the general good of the people. Each and every organization is part of the whole, and none of them can survive without the help of the other.

History shows that the nation which knows how to defend her existence and freedom, which knows how to stand up like one person and fight against the enemy, demanding justice, that nation has the right to live, and, to have a place on this earth.

But the nation that does not know how to swing a sword against its enemies, that does not know how to fight injustice, that does not know how to confront national trials and tribulations, is destined to be destroyed. Nations can survive only if they have a strong feeling of unity, and an instinctive valor of self-defense, national dignity and ethnic values.

I believe that the Armenian people have many advantages and innumerable merits. For this reason, she has specific obligations towards her own people, and towards the world in general. It is obvious that we have given our share toward civilization by translating the Bible, creating great masterpieces of architectural monuments, by establishing a golden age of art and literature, and by giving famous individuals in the fields of art, science, and technology.

I believe in the useful role of our church, which has kept and protected the Armenian culture; that we should not despise the services of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which has shown many achievements in the past and is ready to perform a new role today for the good and benefit of our nation. Both Sees are important for our survival. We should not scorn our political and cultural organizations as well, for each has a specific duty to perform for the preservation of our nation.

We, American-Armenians, should realize that we are citizens of the United States of America, the richest and strongest nation in the world; and, as such, we enjoy all the blessings and freedom of this country. Therefore, we should contribute to the growth and well being of this country of abundance and opportunity in any way we can.

I believe that the Armenian people, equipped with the wisdom and experience of the past centuries, and with a firm commitment to justice and freedom, will live and prosper and will impress her existence on the world, in spite of the numerous obstacles and difficulties blocking her path. Armenians will always stay Armenian, loyal and faithful to their wise and brave ancestors, who shed their blood for light and faith, for country and church, for freedom and peace of the world.

O, Armenian people, go forward with hope, faith and with united efforts; for, the future, sooner or later, will be yours.

Rev. Fr. Sahag Vertanesian

Թերթիս ընթերցողները ջերմորէն կը հրահրուին գրելու իրենց նախասիրած հարցերուն մասին, հայերէնով կամ անգլիերէնով: Յօդուածները 750 բառէ աւելի պէտք չէ ըլլան: Հաճեցէք Ձեր գրութիւնները ուղարկել Առաքրիչի խմբագրութեան, Առաջնորդարանի հասցէին:

Readers are invited to submit articles for publication in the Forum. Articles may be in English or Armenian, but should not exceed 750 words. Mail typewritten manuscripts to: Editor, OUTREACH, Armenian Apostolic Church of America, 138 East 39th St., New York, N.Y. 10016.

We need the church. We need its love and the exquisite and inspiring beauty of its divine liturgy. We need its compassion and understanding. We need its message of hope and salvation. We need the warmth, affection, and friendship of the people we work with in the church to help us become better humans, better Christians, and better Armenians.

The Armenian Church will always live and the Armenian people will never die. It is this immortal combination which has given us St. Gregory Church of North Andover and for that we in the Executive Council thank each and everyone of you.

Michael Najarian, a member of the Prelacy's Executive Council, delivered this speech at St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church in North Andover, Mass., on the eighth anniversary of the consecration of the church.

Հար. էջ 1-էն
հազրական բաժանումներով, քաղաքական տարբեր հոսանքներով, կրօնական յարանուանութիւններով, այլազան միութիւններով: Այս բոլորը կը միանան հայ կոչումին տակ, որպէս ոգի, տեսլական թէ գոյութիւն: Մէկ է հայուն պատմութիւնը, մէկ է նաեւ հայ ժողովուրդի ապագան:

Որպէս սփիւռքի կարեւորագոյն գաղութ, լիբանահայութեան բարգաւաճումը թէ թշուառութիւնը խոր անդրադարձ ունեցան եւ պիտի ունենան մեր ժողովուրդի ճակատագրին վրայ: Անոր վերականգնումը պիտի զօրացնէ հայկական սփիւռքը. ի սէր եւ ի շահ մեր գաղութին, օր առօր պէտք է վերականգնել աղէտահար սակայն կանգուն լիբանահայութիւնը: Անոր ցաւը մե՛ր ալ ցաւն է, ինչպէս անոր հրճուանքը՝ նաեւ մերը:

Մէկ ՄԱՐՄԻՆ, Մէկ ԱԶԳ, Մէկ ՅԱԻԵՐԺԱ-ԿԱՆ ՀԱՅՈՒԹԻՒՆ: Թ.Պ.