

Please return.



# Outreach

Հրատարակութիւն Ամերիկայի Արեւելեան Թեմի Ազգային Առաջնորդարանի  
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## STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Moushegh Ishkhan



Over the simple and holy manger, there is no bright star.

How could such an immense light be doused by clouds?

Where could it go without a trace?

Now, meteors shoot across our skies dripping blood.

But the Star of Bethlehem stays in the mind like a smile of divinity.

And we, who have lost the road, wait, wait for it to hand again over Bethlehem.

(1957)

Reprinted from "Anthology of Armenian Poetry," by Diana Der Hovanessian and Marzbed Margossian, N.Y. 1978

## ՊԱՏՄԱԿԱՆ ՋՐՕՐՀՆԷՔՆԵՐ

ԽՄԲԳ. ԾԱՆՕԹ. «Աուրիս»ի այս քիտով, որ նուիրում է Ամանորին եւ մեր փրկչին՝ Յիսուսի Քրիստոսի Մննդեան եւ Աստուածայայտութեան տօններուն, հետաքրքրական եւ շինիչ կը նկատենք, մեր ընթերցողներու ուշադրութեան յանձնել շուրջ 76 տարին առաջ՝ 1906-ին «Լոյս» կրօնական շաբաթաթերթին մէջ հրատարակութեան տրուած հետեւեալ յօդուածը, որ մեզի կը բերէ ծուէններ մեր աւանդութիւններէն եւ պատմութեանէն Հայաստանեաց Եկեղեցւոյ Զրօրհնէքէն, որ կապուած է մեր Փրկչին մկրտութեան խորհուրդին:

Երբեմն Հայերն այ առ հասարակ եկեղեցիէն դուրս, ջուրի եզերք մը կ'երթային ահագին բազմութեամբ՝ Զրօրհնէքի հանդէսին համար: Հիմա գրեթէ խափանած է այդ սովորութիւնը, թէեւ տեղ տեղ կը շարունակէ զեռ, որոնց ամենէն նշանաւորն է հիմա Թիֆլիզի Հայոց կատարած հանդէսը՝ Կուր գետի ափերուն վրայ: Բայց ստոնց պատմականներէն երկու հատին նկարագրութիւնները շատ հետաքրքրական են ժամանակի բարձրուն եւ կրօնական ըմբռնումներուն տեսակէտով: Հայոց կաթողիկոսներէն մէկը Գետապարտ տիտղոսով ճանչցուած է պատմութեան մէջ. ա'ն, որու մասին պատմութիւնը բացառապէս ուշադրաւ տեղեկութիւններ պահած է մեզ: Աստուծոյ մէկն է Զրօրհնէքի հրաշապատում գրուածը, ո'ր Պետրոս Ա. Կաթողիկոս երեւան կուգայ իր փառքերով. այդ ազնուական շքեղ անձնաւորութիւնը՝ որ Լուսաւորչի Աթոռին շուրջ լարուած թակարդները ոչնչացնելու համար քիչ չյոգնեցաւ՝ երկար ճամբորդութիւններով ու պանդխտութիւններով: Պետրոս Ա. 1022ին իր հարստութեան, իր անձնական ճոխութեան եւ մանաւանդ իր Կաթողիկոսութեան

## ԱՂՕԹ-Ք ԶՐՕՐՀՆԵԱՑ

Ս. Բարսեղ Կեսարացի

ԾԱՆՕԹ. ԽՄԲԳ. Յառաջիկայ սրբազան տօններուն առիթով եւ իր շահեկանութեան համար, մեր ընթերցողներուն կը ներկայացնենք հատուած մը, Քրիստոնէական Եկեղեցւոյ մեծագոյն դեմքերէն՝ Ս. Բարսեղ Կեսարացի Հայրապետի աղօթքէն, որ կը կարդացուի Յունուար 6-ին, Զրօրհնէքի պահուն:

Դուսն, ո'վ Տէր, չորս տարրերէն յօրինեցիր աշխարհը եւ չորս եղանակներով բովանդակ տարին ամբողջացուցիր: Քեզմէ կը դողան իմանալի գորութիւնները. Քեզ կ'օրհնէ արեգակը եւ կը փառաւորէ լուսինը. Քեզ կը գովեն հոյլը աստղերուն: Քեզի կը հնազանդի լոյսը եւ Քեզմէ կը սարսիս խորութիւնները, եւ Քեզի կը ծառայեն աղբիւրները: Քեզ կ'օրհնեն Հրեշտակական գորութիւնները եւ Հրեշտակապետները խոնարհութեամբ կ'երկարակեն: Սերովբէներն ու Քերովբէները բարձրութեանդ մէջ անմատչելի լոյսերով կը պարփակուին՝ Անպարագրելի եւ Տէր Աստուած, անճառելի եւ անպատմելի: Երկիր իջար մարդու նմանութեամբ, ծառայի կերպարանք առնելով՝ որովհետեւ քու անասման գիտութեամբը չէիր հանդուրժէր, մարդասէր Տէր, տեսնել մարդը բռնադատուած բանասրկուին կողմէ, եւ եկար փրկեցիր մեզ: Կը խոստովանինք քու շնորհներդ, Կը յայտարարենք քու ողորմութիւնդ, Չենք ծածկեր քու բարեգործութիւնդ:

Դուսն, Յորդանանի ջուրերը սրբեցիր քու Ս. Հոգիդ զրկելով, վերջապէս գլուխը ջախջախեցիր: Այժմ կ'աղաչենք մարդասէր Աստուած, որ զրկես քու Ս. Հոգիդ այս ջուրին վրայ: Օրհնէ եւ մաքրէ զայն, եւ տուր անոր Յորդանանի ջուրերուն շնորհը ու ըրէ զայն՝ Օրհնութեան աղբիւր Մեղքերու լուծում Հիւանդութեանց բժշկող Ախտաւորներու առողջութիւն Հրեշտակական գորութեամբ լեցուած ընդդիմութեան գորութիւն: Դուսն Տէր Աստուած, անապատի դառն ջուրը Մովսէսի գաւազանով քաղցրացուցիր եւ ծարաւած քու ժողովուրդդ յազեցուցիր: Դուսն Տէր, Եղիայի միջոցաւ ջուրով եւ կրակով ազատեցիր քու ժողովուրդդ Բազալի ծառայութեանէ: Դուսն Տէր, Եղիսէի ժամանակ չորցած աղբիւրները բոլորեցիր եւ երաշտէ փրկեցիր քու ժողովուրդդ: Դուսն, ինքնին Տէր, մտեցիր այժմ Ս. Հոգիովդ եւ օրհնէ այս ջուրը, որպէսզի սա ըլլայ Տուներու շնորհութիւն Հիւանդներու բժշկութիւն Հոգիներու փրկութիւն Մարմիններու առողջութիւն եւ օգտակար՝ մեր ամէն պէտքերուն. որովհետեւ ողորմած եւ մարդասէր եւ Տէր Աստուած: Պիտի վախճան ասկէ բոլոր անոնք, որոնք չարութիւն կը խորհին քու ծառայներու մասին, որոնք քու փառաւորեալ, եւ սքանչելի անունդ պիտի օրհնեն այժմ եւ միշտ եւ յաւիտեան:

այսչափը. գետն իսկ գարհուրած, կանգ կ'առնու. իր հոսանքները կը կապուին, Հայոց Հայրապետին աղօթքով: Եւ այն սպիտակ աղանձին, զոր Յոյները վարժեցուցեր էին Զրօրհնէքի հանդէսին գետի վրայ իջնելու, «որով խաբէին զանրնտելան՝ եթէ Հոգին էջ ի նմանութիւն աղանձոյ», երբ կուգայ իջնել ջուրին վրայ՝ յանկարծ արծիւ մը կը խոյանայ, կ'առնէ աղանձին՝ մե'ծ ամօթի մէջ ձգելով շարամիտները, որոնք վերջապէս կը բռնադատուին ակամայ հաւաստելութե' գովելի է Հայոց հաւատքը: Այս գրուցախառն պատմութիւնը, որ պատմիչներու բերնին ջուրերը առատացուցած է, կրնայ սքանչելի ընդլայնումներու ծրագիր մը ըլլալ՝ ժամանակին բարձրը ուսումնասիրելու համար նախնեաց կրօնաբանական կալուածին վրայ: Բուն դէպքը սակայն թէ Պետրոս Ա. Կաթողիկոս 1022ին Զրօրհնէքի մեծ հանդէս մը կատարած է Տրապիզոնի մէջ, պատմական է, եւ այդ դէպքէն ի վեր 883 տարիներ անցած են եւ անկից մնացած է պատմութեան մէջ Գետապարտ տիտղոսը Կաթողիկոսին համար, եւ Գետապարտ կողմը այն խաչին համար, որով Պետրոս

## PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

Missak Medzarents

Give me, my God, that kind of happiness that has no self. Let me gather it like flowers in other people's eyes.

Give me, oh Lord, an impersonal joy which like a child's sparkler tints the onlooker's face.

Give me, oh Lord, an impersonal joy to hand like ribbons braided with bells on each door I pass.

Let me build altars out of words of those I love and echo them like cymbals of brass.

Give me an impersonal joy to share like the stars dispersed across the skies.

Let it be happiness that does not drown laments of those in pain

and not the kind of joy confined within my self alone.

Let every loaf upon my plate be blessed with a crossed pair of joys.

And like the sun going west let me spread sunlight, Lord.

Let me lower it on waters as one lowers nets and plant it in earth's furrows like a plow

and like the rain shower it over the thirsty crowd.

And having found it, let me stay the hunter of the ideal. Give me the grace to know its true worth

like the sailor on the life raft. Let me gather it from the souls of common and uncommon man

and give it back.

(1907)

Reprinted from "Anthology of Armenian Poetry," by Diana Der Hovanessian and Marzbed Margossian, N.Y. 1978.

Կաթողիկոս օրհներ է ջուրը: Այս ամենէն ետքը, կը մնայ նաեւ սա տպաւորութիւնը դիտող միտքերու վրայ՝ թէ ժամանակը ինչե'ր ստեղծեր է Հայ. Եկեղեցւոյ Կաթող. Աթոռին շուրջ լարուած թակարդները փճացնելու եւ անոր աթոռակալներուն կորովի ջանքերը պահելու եւ նոյն իսկ յանիրաւի բամբասուած Կաթողիկոսի մը պատիւը փրկելու համար: Այս ալ հրաշք մըն է:

«Լոյս», 1906, էջ 42-43



### SHANT'S SPECIAL CHRISTMAS

Christmas was always Shant's most favorite time of year. He loved going Christmas shopping with his Mom. He would stare in innocent wonder at all the bright decorations in the store windows, listen with glee to the non-stop Christmas music melodiously flowing from the loudspeakers, examine all the shiny new toys ... what great fun Christmas was! Shant also loved to pay his yearly visit to "Santa's Workshop" in the Mall, to make absolutely sure that Santa knew exactly what he wanted for Christmas. And of course, Shant loved to help his Mom and Dad set up the Christmas tree in their living room. Whenever they did this, it was Shant's job to hang all the decorations on the lower branches of the tree, a job that he executed with great enthusiasm. Most of all, though, Shant loved Christmas morning, when he would be the first one in the house to wake up, and head straight for the living room to open the gifts that Santa had left for him under the tree.

One year, when Shant was six, he learned in Sunday School that Christmas was also Jesus' birthday. He learned how God's Son was born in a stable because there was no room at the Inn, and how the wonderful Star of Bethlehem had led three Wise Men to his birthplace, so that they could give him strange and wonderful gifts. Learning all this, Shant felt a little sad, because for all the years that he had been celebrating Christmas, he had never once been told that Christmas was Jesus' birthday. Now that he knew, he really couldn't understand why, on Christmas, everyone gave gifts to *him* instead of to Jesus.

On this particular Christmas Eve, Shant got the idea in his head that he, like the Wise Men, would look for Jesus and give Him a birthday gift. So, while Shant's Mom and Dad were watching T.V. in the living room, Shant got up out of bed, and dressing very quietly so as not to alert them, snuck out of the house, taking only his piggy bank, to go and look for Jesus.

Of course, Shant had no idea where to look, but remembering all the hustle and bustle in the stores when he had gone shop-

ping with his Mom, he felt sure that's where Jesus must be. And so, his little jaw set with determination, Shant buttoned up his coat, wrapped his scarf tightly around his neck, got in his bike and set out for the Mall.

"So many people," he thought as he entered the huge shopping mall a few blocks from his house, "surely this is where I will find Jesus."

Going from store to store, Shant asked each person he passed: "Excuse me, do you know where I can find Jesus?"

"Dont bother me, kid, I gotta get home and wrap these damn gifts," was the reply of one man with a great scowl on his face who was rushing through the Mall with an armful of packages.

"Get lost, punk, what are you anyway, some kind of Jesus freak?" said another in response to Shant's question.

At one store, a woman behind the counter even chased him away. "You tryin' to ruin my business or something? Go away," she said, "if I ever see you back here again, I'll wring your neck."

Shant was on the verge of tears. As one after another of the people in the Mall either swore at or completely ignored him, Shant could only think of how wonderful Christmas was *supposed* to be. Why then was everyone so mean to him?

Rounding a corner of the Mall, Shant's face brightened as he saw "Santa's Workshop". "Of course," he said to himself, "Santa would know where I can find Jesus!"

As he neared "Santa's Workshop", he saw that Santa was anxiously looking at his watch.

"Oh my," thought Shant, "Santa's getting ready to deliver his gifts. I'd better hurry and ask him where I can find Jesus."

As he approached the great throne-like chair where Santa usually sat to receive his little visitors, he saw Santa get up and shrug his shoulder. "Sorry kid," Santa said, "my shift's up. I gotta get outa here and have a drink. This job's for the birds."

Saying this, "Santa" pulled off his false white beard and long, flowing wig and headed straight for the nearest exit.

Shant was dumbfounded. Santa was a . . . a . . . a fake! Shant turned, and with tears flowing freely now, raced for the door that would let him escape from this horrendous nightmare into the darkness of the cold, cold night.

But the nightmare was just beginning. When Shant went to where he had left his bike, it was not there. Someone had stolen it — on Christmas Eve.

Crying, Shant began to walk home. He was so sad and confused, he did not even think of taking a dime from his piggy bank and calling his Mom and Dad to come and get him. All he could think of was getting home to the warmth of his parents' arms.

As he walked along the dark, deserted streets toward his neighborhood, a light snow began to fall, and with it, a calmness and serenity that made Shant begin to forget his ordeal and warm his heart. Suddenly, the calm was shattered by the growling of a dog. Looking up, Shant saw a large, fierce dog poised to lunge at him. Terrified, Shant ran blindly through the falling snow, hoping, praying, that the dog would not catch him; his only thought: the thought of escaping the sharp pointed teeth that could rip him to pieces. When he could run no further, he stopped, gasping for breath. The dog was gone. He had given up the chase! But Shant's relief lasted only for a few seconds, for, looking around, he realized that he had gotten himself lost.

Frightened now, afraid he would never get home, Shant's heart was beating wildly in his little chest. Up ahead, he saw a group of boys, a little older than himself, walking on the opposite side of the street. Again relief flooded him. Again it was short lived, for as Shant approached the boys to ask directions, they saw his piggy bank full of money, and knocking him to the ground, smashed his little bank and took the money Shant had meant to give to Jesus.

Cringing on the newly-fallen snow, cold and lonely, lost and afraid, Shant prayed: "Please, Lord Jesus," he whispered, "I am so alone and so afraid. All I wanted to do was give you a present for your birthday."

(Continued on page 3)

### ՀԱՅ ԳԻՐՔԸ ՊԱՏԻՒԸ

#### ՀԱՅՈՒՆ

Ամանորի եւ Ս. Ծննդեան տօներուն առթիւ դուռն քեզի Հայերէն գիրք մը նուիրէ, գիրք մըն ալ քու բարեկամիդ նուիրէ:

Այսօր իսկ հեռաձայնէ եւ կամ գրէ Ազգային Առաջնորդարանի գրա-խանութրը, եւ ապազրէ հետեւել գրքերը-

1. Այր ու Բնն - Մ. Մինասեանի կոթողական հատորը՝ որ Հայոց Աերուբենի գծային բանաստեղծութիւն մըն է: 25.00 Տոլար:
2. Փակուած Վարագոյրի Առջիւ - Վաստակաւոր դերասանապետ Մանուէլ Մարութեանի հանդիպումները՝ վերջին դարու Հայոց Պատմութեան մեծերուն հետ: 15.00 Տոլար:
3. Զարթօնք - Ե. Հատոր - Մալխասի համով հոտով գործը, ուր իր վախճանին կը հասցնէ Հայ Ազատագրական շարժման իր պատմութիւնը 15.00 Տոլար:
4. Մովսէս Խորենացի, Հայոց Պատմութիւն, Երեւան, 1982: 7.00 Տոլար:
5. Ծերենց, Թեոդորոս Ռշտունի, Պատմավէպ, Պէյրուս, 1982: 7.50 Տոլար:
6. Վահէ Օշական, Ահապագ, Ն.Ե. 1980: 30.00 Տոլար:
7. Լուսիկ, Թեհրան, Լ.Ա. 1980: 10.00 Տոլար:
8. Աստուծոյ Խօսքը կեանքը Մարդուն, 24 էջ, 1.00 Տոլար:
9. Օրացոյց եւ Աստուածաշնչական շաշու Ընթերցուածներ, 1983, 1.00 Տոլար:
10. Օրացոյց - 1983 - Կաթողիկոսարան, Անթիլիաս, 2.00 Տոլար:

Մինչեւ Դեկտեմբեր 31 առաքման ծախսը ներառեալ է: Մեր հեռաձայնի թիւը - 212-689-7810 Մեր Հասցէն

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(Continued on page 4)

### CHRISTMAS DECEMBER 25TH OR JANUARY 6TH

It is a known fact that even though the entire Christian world observes Christmas on December 25th, the Armenian Church alone, has kept the traditional date of January 6th.

Many ask which date is the correct one? "Ours" or "theirs?" Would it not be preferable to follow the rest of the Christian world's tradition and celebrate the joys of Christmas with them especially since it is difficult and impractical both in Europe and America, to shut down businesses and be absent from work place after the European and American Christmas and New Year have passed, in an anti-climactic mood. Many think in this fashion, but others hold an opposing view, especially our youth, who feel that a movement should be created to keep traditional holidays to their designated calendar days. This view is specifically expressed in the Armenian community of the U.S. where the various Armenian Church jurisdictions observe traditional holidays in an inconsistent variety of celebration dates.

It will be a difficult task to bring about consistency in all churches and congregations, especially in the present circumstances. Nevertheless, this should not prevent us from examining the historical roots of Armenian Christmas celebration practices.

Let us point out at the outset that neither the January 6th nor December 25th Christmas are dates based on historical documentation.

The early Church fathers clearly point out that until the third and fourth centuries, no specific date for Christmas had been established; this was a later addition. The early church, soon after its establishment, observed the Resurrection of our Savior every Sunday. The Easter celebration enjoyed more ideological depth and popularity, and it has remained so in the Middle East. Subsequently, when church ritual became more refined, the Church preferred to assign special dates to those holidays which concerned events in Christ's life on

earth. Of these, the most popular holiday naturally centered on the feast of Epiphany. But, it is unclear as to when this holiday began to be observed. In those days, great discrepancies in observations occurred between countries and churches. For example, in Egypt some observed Christmas on either May 20th or on January 6th. It is a known fact however, that the celebration of the feast of Epiphany on January 6th became a popular observation in Egypt, Palestine, Asia Minor, etc. According to its early established church rituals, the Armenian Church followed the practices of Jerusalem, which had initially adopted the January 6th date, and has preserved that date up to the present.

But how were these dates established in the first place? It is irrelevant to note here the complex problems which occupied the minds of our Church fathers right up to the time of Shnorhali and Datevatz. The heart of these problems centers on the date of the Service at the Temple of Zechariah which fell on September 27th, according to the Greek Calendar, and according to the Armenian Calendar, on October 9th, from which were derived the December 25th or January 6th dates. For the sake of logic, these two dates should be examined in light of their pagan roots.

As a matter of fact, in ancient times, in the East, the Winter Solstice was celebrated on January 6th, in compliance with the edict of Pharaoh Amenhotep. On that day the blessing of the waters and Sun God holidays were observed. In that atmosphere of a crowded pantheon of Pagan Gods, it is noted that the God Ion, Dionysius or Osiris would be easily confused with the Sun God. On that same day, brooks and rivers were blessed with appropriate rituals. It is not difficult therefore to imagine that in the East, a more suitable date than January 6th could not be established, and create a parallel between the birth of Christ, the Dawn of Righteousness and the blessing of the waters with the Epiphany and the ritual of the

Blessing of the Waters of Jordan.

But, of this was the accepted tradition, then how was the December 25th date established in the West? There are two theories concerning the issue:

- a. As a result of an arrangement of Calendar dates and events; and
  - b. To obstruct a pagan holiday
- Those who agree with the first theory, claim that:
1. The Crucifixion of Christ coincides with the first day of the Earth's calendar (March 25, according to tradition) which also coincides with the Spring Equinox. In accordance with the same tradition, the Feast of the Annunciation date coincided with the date of the Crucifixion; therefore, arriving at the Christmas birth date, on December 25th, 9 months hence.
  2. December 25th falls on the Winter Solstice when daylight hours begin to be longer. Six months prior to this date, was the birth date of John the Baptist; that is to say, on the 25th of June when the hours of daylight begin to be shorter. As John the Baptist himself said: "He must become greater, I must become less." (John 3:30).

The second theory concerning obfuscating the pagan observations of December 25th, presents a more serious concept. This should not seem out of the ordinary; since during the third and fourth centuries Christianity was competing with Paganism. Not only was it necessary for the new religion to be disseminated, but it was necessary to relate it to daily life, and to uproot Paganism and its practices which had taken deep root in the social customs and life of the people. For this reason, it was not sufficient for the preachers of the day to pour fire and brimstone upon the heads of the populace. Besides delivering their sermons, it was important to organize the task of launching a concerted effort and campaign directed

(Continued on page 4)

**SHANT'S CHRISTMAS**

(Continued from page 2)

Please don't let me die here. Please, God, I'm so afraid, don't leave me alone."

"Don't be afraid Shant. I am here. You are not alone," said a voice from the darkness.

Silhouetted against the night sky, his face a darkened shadow.

"Are you Jesus?" Shant asked, his voice trembling both from fear and cold.

"No, Shant, don't you recognize me? It is I, Father Massis. Where have you been? Your parents are at their wit's end from worrying about you, and I have been looking all over for you."

"Oh Father," cried Shant from relief as he recognized his parish Priest and ran into his strong, waiting arms. In his relief at being safe once again, Shant blurted out the whole story of his horrible ordeal to Father Massis: "Last Sunday, we learned in Sunday School that Christmas was also Jesus' birthday and that Wise Men travelled from the East to bring him gifts. I felt bad that on Christmas I always got gifts and never once gave one to Jesus. I thought I could find Him and give Him one. First, I went to the Mall, because that's where all the people who celebrate His birthday spend the most time. I couldn't understand why everyone was so mean to me when I asked them where I could find Jesus."

"Then I went to ask Santa, because I felt sure he would know where I could find Jesus, but Santa was a fake too, just like all those people who were supposed to be celebrating Jesus' birthday. They didn't care about Him, they cared only about themselves."

"When I ran outside to go home, someone had stolen my bike, and when I started to walk home, a dog chased me and I got lost. And just now, some mean boy smashed my piggy bank and took the money I was going to give Jesus for His birthday."

"All I wanted to do was find Jesus to give Him a gift on Christmas," Shant concluded still sniffing, wiping a last tear from his eyes onto the sleeve of his coat, "I guess it was a stupid thing to do. I hate Christmas, and I don't think that there even is a Jesus."

"Come with me Shant, and I will show you where you can find Jesus," was all that Father Massis said, taking Shant by the hand and leading him down the street.

A few minutes later, when Father Massis and Shant stepped into the glowing warmth of the foyer of Holy Resurrection Church, Father Massis told him to wait while he called Shant's parents to let them know he was safe.

When the Priest returned, he led the boy to the Church's beautiful Main Altar, and kneeling down in order to look at the boy in the face and reaching out his hand to tenderly stroke the boy's hair, he said, "Shant, it was not at all stupid of you to want to find Jesus and give Him a gift on His birthday. You could not find Him because you looked in the wrong places. Jesus is not in the "things" of Christmas. He is not in the stores, nor at the parties, nor can He be found among the storefront Santas. Rather, He is in the Spirit of Christmas — in the love that people have for one another; in the faith they gave in Him; in the joy they feel in His saving grace and in their togetherness as they worship Him."

"Jesus can be found in many places. But you must start by seeking Him in your heart through prayer. Then you must listen to what He has to say by reading your Bible. Only then will you find Him through your faith."

"As for gifts, He seeks only one: your unreserved love. Nothing — not money, not gold, not all the fine jewels in the world — is as precious to Him as that."

"So, Shant, if you look for Him in the right places, like here, in Church, or in your heart, or in the good things of this world, and if you offer Him the right gift, you will never fail to find Him. But don't ever stop looking for Him in your prayer. Don't ever hold back the giving of your love from Him. Worship Him sincerely and often and listen to His Word. This is the only way anyone can find Him."

☆☆☆

For Shant, Christmas was never the same again. It was still his most favorite time of the year, and he still loved it more than anything; but now he loved it for a different reason. He loved it now because when he looked in the right places, he could always find Jesus — even at Christmas.

**ՄԵՐ ՊԱՏԱՍԽԱՆԸ - Տիգրան Սարգսյանի բաց նամակին**

Տարիներու ընթացքին շատ մը խմբագրականներ եւ յօդուածներ գրած եմ «Առաջին» մէջ, որուն հետ անպաշտօն կապ մը ունեցած եմ: Գրուածքներէս շատերուն մէջ իրողութիւնները չափազանցուած կերպով արտայայտած եմ այն յոյսով, որ ընթացողներէն ոմանք պատասխանեն: Մինչեւ հիմա լուծութիւնը խլացուցիչ եղած էր, այնպէս որ երբ իմացայ Պր. Սարգսյանի պատասխանը զարմացայ, քանի որ «Առաջին» Սեպտեմբերի թիւին մէջ երեւոյ իմ գրած խմբագրականը բազմապատկառ մեղմ էր: Միւս կողմէն կը մտածեմ որ զարմանալու ալ շատ պատճառ չկայ. հակառակ անոր որ մեր համայնքը շատ մը լուրջ հարցերու դէմ յանդիման կը գտնուի, սակայն եւ այնպէս, կը թուի թէ, հայը յուզելու եւ գոնէ պատասխան մը կորզելու համար խնդրոյն առարկան կամ «Այր-Բէն-Գիմ»ը պէտք է որ ըլլայ եւ կամ Թուրքը:

Ծնորհակալ եմ Պր. Սարգսյանին որ ժամանակ տուեր եւ ինծի պատասխաններ է, միայն թէ դժբախտաբար Խմբագրականիս հարցուցեր է զազափարներ, որոնք չեն յիշուած հոն, ոչ ուղղակի եւ ոչ ալ անուղղակի կերպով: Գրուածքներս մէջ հակիրճ հաստատումով մը ուզած եմ ցոյց տալ մեր կիրակնօրեայ դպրոցները զօրացնելու կարեւորութիւնը,

քանի որ մասնաւորաբար հոն է որ կը ջամբուի կրօնական դաստիարակութիւն, եւ կրօնական դաստիարակութիւնը կարեւոր է երկու պատճառներով, առաջին՝ որովհետեւ մեր երիտասարդները այդպիսի մթնոլորտ ու շրջանակ կը փնտռեն, եւ երկրորդ, մեր Հայց. Առաքելական Եկեղեցւոյ գոյութիւնն ու ապագան այնքան վտանգուած են, որքան հայ լեզուն:

Տարորինակ է որ Պր. Սարգսյանի գիտնական հայ լեզուի կարեւորութիւնը չգնահատող մը: Մինչդեռ միասին եղած ենք յանձնախումբերու մէջ, ուր շատ զօրաւոր կերպով պաշտպանած եմ թէ հայերէն եւ թէ անգլերէն լեզուներուն գործածութեան անհրաժեշտութիւնը բոլոր մեր հրատարակութիւններուն մէջ: Ով որ ըսէ թէ հայ լեզուն կարեւոր չէ մեր գոյատեւման համար պարզապէս ինքզինքն է որ կը խաբէ: Որեւէ ազգային հաւաքականութեան համար լեզուն կարեւոր ազգային մըն է անոր ինքնուրոյն նկարագրին պահպանման համար: Լեզուն է որ ժողովուրդի մը կուտայ ուղղութիւն եւ իւրայայտուկ նկարագիր: Միւս կողմէ սակայն ով որ կը կարծէ թէ, մի միայն լեզուն է որ կ'արտայայտէ մեր մշակոյթին իւրայայտուկ նկարագիրը, վնասած կ'ըլլայ մեր ժողովուրդին: Լեզուն թէեւ հիմնական, միայն մէկ մասն է ազգային նկարագրին:

Այս առթիւ երկար վիճարանութեան մը դուռ չեմ ուզեր բանալ, բայց կը կարծեմ թէ ժամանակ է որ լեզուի հարցին շուրջ զինադուլ յայտարարենք: Հայ լեզուն մեր շատ կարեւոր մէկ մասն է, եւ քայլեր պէտք է առնենք որ ան ըլլայ գործածուող եւ կենդանի լեզու: Միւս կողմէ, ընդունինք, որ Անգլերէն լեզուի գիտութիւնն ու արդիւնաւորապէս գործածութիւնն է, որ պիտի ըլլայ վճռական ազդակը մեր ազգային ու ընկերային հետաւոր նպատակներուն իրագործման մէջ:

Հեգնական է նկատել Պր. Սարգսյանին վերջին պարբերութիւնը, որ կը հաստատէ իմ կարծիքս: Եթէ Պր. Սարգսյանին նման անձ մը, որ Անթիլիասի Դպրանոցին ալ աշակերտած է, կրնայ մտածել թէ լեզուն է միակ տարբերութիւնը Հայց. Առաքելական Եկեղեցիին եւ «Կաթողիկէ, Լուստերական, Երիցական, Եպիսկոպոսական, Աւետարանական, Մկրտչական եւ այլ յարանուանութիւններու» միջեւ, այն ատեն իմ սկզբնական տեսակէտս թէ մեր կիրակնօրեայ դպրոցները զօրացնելը անհրաժեշտութիւն մըն է, աւելի ճարտարօրէն կարելի չէր շեշտել:

ԱՐՈՒՍԵՍԿ ՓԱՓԱՋԵԱՆ

Հոկտեմբեր 21, 1982

**ՄԱՐԿՆՈՐԴԱԿԱՆ ԴԱՅՈՑ ԱՄԵՐԻԿԱՅԻ**  
**PRELACY OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA**

## PAREGENTAN III (MARDI GRAS)

### WEEKEND OF FEBRUARY 11, 12, 13, 1983

**AT THE BEAUTIFUL SHERATON BOXBOROUGH, MASS.**

**\$9250** per person  
 double occupancy  
 Add \$60 for triple occupancy

**INCLUDES ALL THESE EVENTS PLUS 2 NIGHTS LODGING**

- INDOOR SWIMMING POOL
- INDOOR TENNIS COURTS

Bring Your Swim Trunks, Mardi Gras Costume, Racquets and Tavloo, too!

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 11**  
 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. check-in time  
 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.  
 Paregentan III Reception-Pool Side  
 Mardi Gras Costume Dress  
 Live Armenian Music  
 Armenian Hors D'oeuvres, punch & cheese  
 Coffee at 10 p.m.

**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 12**  
 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
 Art Exhibit by Armenian artist  
 Girair Palamoudian - Patio Room  
 Book Fair & Video Tapes - Deck Room  
 Continuous showings of these films -  
 Bebo - Promise of Love - Tears of Happiness  
 Place Under the Sun -  
 The State Dance Ensemble of Armenia

1 p.m. to 2 p.m.  
 Armenian Comedy-  
 by the Boston Hamaskain Drama Group

2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Paregentan III Social - Pool Side  
 Live Armenian Music plus a Mock  
 Wedding with Davool Zourna -  
 Armenian Hors D'oeuvres, punch

6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.  
 Paregentan III Banquet -  
 Prime Rib of Beef au Jus Dinner

8 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
 Paregentan III Ball -  
 Dikran Yerezian's Sevan Band and  
 the Carnig Mikitarian Ensemble.  
 Prelacy Raffle  
 Coffee at 11:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13**  
 12 Noon - Yertak Parov

**SATURDAY NIGHT DANCE ONLY \$10 per person** or one free admission for \$100 raffle ticket holders

**GRAND LOTTERY DRAWING SATURDAY NIGHT**  
 1st prize-\$10,000; 2nd prize-\$5,000; 3rd prize-\$3,000; 4th prize-\$2,000; 5th prize-\$1,000 You may purchase \$100 raffle tickets from all local trustees, delegates, church and Prelacy offices (raffle ticket good for one admission to Sat. night dance). Proceeds from this raffle will be used for the Prelacy Educational Fund.

**FOR RESERVATIONS MAIL \$25 DEPOSIT PER PERSON BEFORE FEBRUARY 1, 1983**  
 Make checks payable to Armenian Apostolic Church of America and MAIL to Sts. Vartanantz Church, 402 Broadway, Providence, Rhode Island 02909. For more information call your local church or Sts. Vartanantz 401-831-6399.

DETAILED DIRECTIONS WILL BE SENT WITH YOUR CONFIRMATION.

SPONSORED BY PRELACY WAYS AND MEAN COMMITTEE

**PARAGENTAN WEEKEND '83**

SHERATON BOXBORO, MASS.



**7th Annual Raffle**

**Help Support Armenian Prelacy Programs**

Programs that are vital to the continuation of Christian and Armenian Education need your support. This year, you once more keep these programs alive and growing by purchasing tickets for the Seventh Annual Raffle.

Raffle Drawing will take place on February 12th, 1983 during Paregentan Weekend, at the Sheraton Hotel, Boxboro, Mass.

Donation: \$100

**PRIZES**

- 1st Prize \$10,000
- 2nd Prize \$ 5,000
- 3rd Prize \$ 3,000
- 4th Prize \$ 2,000
- 5th Prize \$ 1,000

Drawing on Saturday, February 12  
Donation \$100

Tickets available from Board of Trustees, Delegates or local sources.

- General Chairman:  
Mr. Varoujan (Bobby) Avakian
- Regional Representatives:  
NY/NJ — Dr. Roubik Khatchikian  
NEW ENGLAND — Mr. Gregory Avedikian  
MID ATLANTIC — Mr. Onnig Petrossian  
MIDWEST — Mr. Nercess Chitjian  
CANADA — Mr. Shahen Minassian

**CHRISTMAS - DECEMBER 25TH OR JANUARY 6TH**

(Continued from page 2)

against Paganism. The development of rites and rituals of the 4th Century advanced with these purposes in mind when they laid claim to a number of Pagan holidays, investing them with the Christian spirit and ideal. After all, St. Gregory the Illuminator had combined the holy days of the Presentation, the Transfiguration and the Assumption of the Holy Virgin with certain Pagan festivities in Armenia.

Up to this point, in the East, January 6th had become popular as the date of Christ's Birth and Baptism, while in the West; other problems presented themselves. From December 17th to the 23rd, the Pagan Winter holidays were celebrated, the Saturnalia, Sigillaria, Jovenalia, Bromalia, and the Winter Solstice which immediately followed on December 24-25th, marking the birth date of the Sun. That holiday had received great significance, especially during the 3rd Century. On one hand, the followers of Mithraism, on the other, the pretensions of the Roman Caesar who considered himself the worshipful "Sun-God," as well as the new philosophy advanced by the Neo-Platonic School and its adherence to the theory of Emanation, were encouraging the spread of the Sun-God Holiday. But simultaneously, new interpretations of Holy Scripture were burdgeoning, where the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Dawn of Righteousness (see Psalms Malachai, 4:2 etc.) were being identified with Jesus Christ. Whereas, in the Pagan world, worship of the "Victorious-Sun" was blossoming, the early Church was glorifying the Dawn of the Righteous, Christ.

However, it is not clear to us, how the Roman Empire prevented the observation of that date; so that Christians would not follow the Pagan holiday devoted to the Sun and to allow that observation to be transferred to January 6th, as the Christmas holiday. It is established that from 336 A.D. on, the Roman Empire officially adopted December 25th which gradually spread and occasionally the Romans aligned other nations such as Palestine (where it was difficult to celebrate Christmas on the same day in Bethlehem, and the Baptism, in Jordan). The East followed the traditions of the West by adopting and recognizing December 25th in Antioch sometime between 336-388 A.D., in Egypt in 482 A.D., in Constantinople between 379-399 A.D. This was not easily accomplished. For example, St. Gregory of Nazianz (329-389), upon his elevation to the position of Patriarch of Constantinople in 379, in an unprecedented decision, ordered Christmas to be celebrated on the 25th of December. But before the end of that year, the Patriarch was forced to resign his position, and, his opponent re-established the January 6th holiday which was preserved for around 20 years, but which eventually was changed upon the Greek Orthodox Church's categoric acceptance of the December 25th date. Armenia was left standing alone as her sister churches gave her no peace. While, intermittently both Greeks and Romans attempted to impose upon the Armenians their observation of the December 25th Christmas. This was accomplished sometimes based on conviction, sometimes on tyranny, and sometimes on political and military false promises.

In the 12th century, Greek controversy rose again and St. Nerses Shnorhali who was under great pressure, responded: "We have evidence for justifying our traditions. In order to show that it was not by arrogance that we separated ourselves from other nations, but that it is them who initially were celebrating with us, later changed at their will."

Despite decisions taken at the meetings of Sis (1307), Adana (1316), and Florence (1439) concerning the change of Armenian Christmas date to December 25th, no concrete results were produced. It was only St. Nerses of Lampron who adopted a more broad view in this matter when he stated in his *Synodal Address*: "Feasts and traditions were established as the fruits of charity and it is not charity which is their fruit, consequently, one should not destroy the reason why they exist aiming to keep them stable. Or, as a sign of out-pouring of the grace of our Lord bestowed upon us, the Holy Eucharist was given to us, likewise the Holy Muron (Chrim) the festivals of the Lord and all the rest. What do you consider correct: to change the content, the time, or in order to preserve with obstination what is, destroy the unity of the Church of Christ, established in peace?"

Thereupon, translating word into deed,

*The Ladies' Guild*  
of the  
*Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church*  
of America  
requests the pleasure of your company  
at the  
*Eighth Annual*  
*"Feast of Light"*  
on Saturday, the fifth of February  
Nineteen hundred and eighty-three  
*The Waldorf-Astoria*  
*Jade and Astor Rooms*  
49th Street and Park Avenue  
New York City

*Black Tie Optional*      *Cocktails - 7:30 p.m.*  
*Donation Seventy-five dollars per person*      *Dinner - 8:30 p.m.*

**PRELACY CALENDAR OF EVENTS 1983**

- JANUARY**  
Wednesday, Jan. 5th - Prelate's Christmas Party, at the Prelacy
- FEBRUARY**  
Saturday, Feb. 5th - "Feast of Light," at the Waldorf Astoria, Jade and Astor Rooms  
Wednesday, Feb. 23rd - Lenten Lecture I — Lecturer: Fr. Thomas Hopko of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, N.Y.  
Weekend of Feb. 11-13th - Paregentan Weekend '83, at the Sheraton Boxboro, Mass.
- MARCH**  
Wednesday, March 9th - Lenten Lecture II — Lecturer: Raffi K. Hovannisian of Washington D.C.  
Sunday, March 13th - Concert, Carnegie Recital Hall — 2:00 p.m.  
Eduard Gulabyan — Cello, accompanied by Erna Gulabyan — Piano  
Rita Bardakjian — Piano  
Wednesday, March 30th - Lenten Lecture III — Dr. John Khanjian of Kansas Wesleyan University.
- APRIL**  
Saturday, April 2nd - Easter Eve Reception for Armenian Youth, at the Prelacy
- MAY**  
Thursday, May 5th - Mothers' Day Luncheon, at the St. Regis Hotel

Lampronatzi initiated the celebration of Christmas on December 25th in his Diocese of Tarsus. An event which did not find general acceptance and remained a unique phenomenon.

Two centuries later, St. Gregory of Datev examines this issue once more and as was suitable to the culture of that period, cites 15 reasons for celebrating January 6th and justifies this proudly by saying: "Our Holy and Orthodox and faithful Church of Armenia, holds this traditions with fervor." (Book of Questions, p. 484).

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Six centuries have passed since Datevatzi and the Armenian Church have succeeded in preserving the January 6th Christmas up to the present. We must nevertheless ask ourselves until when will we continue to do so? God only knows. This traditionalist attitude which characterizes the Armenian

Church in the Diaspora, causes us to believe that world Christianity will continue to celebrate Christmas on the 25th, while we on the other hand will continue to ardently observe January 6th.

I wish to conclude this historical brief with a completely different thought. A few years ago, after the Christmas holiday had long passed, the toys broken, and the dolls torn apart, little 4-year old Lynn-Anahid asked me: "Hay Soop (Hayr Soorp), when is Christmas coming?" I explained that it had already passed. "No, no" she cried, "the kind of Christmas that comes and stays always..."

May God grant that Christmas time will come and remain with us forever, bringing peace to the world, brotherly love to all nations, justice for our people who believe deeply in their own re-Birth.

M.A.