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A Publication of the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America

Volume XIII, Number 1 — May 1990

Catholicoi Vazken I And Karekin II In Joint Message to Mikhail Gorbachev

A letter written and signed by His Holiness Vazken I, Catholicos of All Armenians, and His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, was delivered to President Mikhail S. Gorbachev in Moscow. The letter, which concerns the protection of the Armenian population in Karabagh and the reunification of Karabagh with Armenia, was composed by the two Catholicoses during their recent meetings in Paris and Brussels where they consecrated the new Armenian church.

The text of the letter is as follows:

The Honorable Mikhail Gorbachev
President of the U.S.S.R.
Moscow
U.S.S.R.

During our joint visit to Belgium on the occasion of the consecration of the newly-built Armenian church, and later in Brussels and Paris, Armenian delegations from France, England, Italy, and the United States communicated to us the serious concerns of the more than 2 million Armenians in the diaspora about the situation in Mountainous Karabagh and the anti-Armenian policies manifested there lately.

As spokesmen for the Armenian people, we feel the responsibility to bring to your attention the following points:

1. The Armenian people living in the diaspora are hopeful that your efforts of

(Continued on page 3)

AREC Sponsors Retreat for Young Adults

The 1990 Young Adult Retreat sponsored by the Armenian Religious Educational Council will take place at Stony Point Center in Stony Point, New York, July 26-29. The retreat will begin on Thursday evening and culminate on Sunday with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

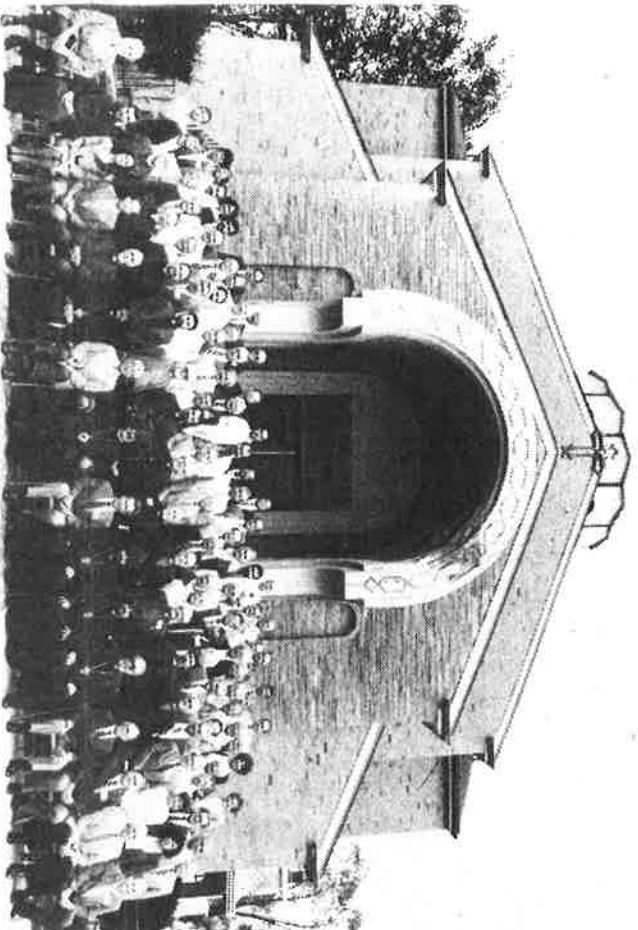
This year for the first time, two groups, under the auspices of the Prelacy, will join forces and attend lectures and other planned activities together. The St. Gregory of Datev Institute for Religious Studies, under the directorship of the Very Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian, will be in session at the Center from Sunday July 23 until Sunday July 29. The Young Adult participants will join the group Thursday evening, July 26 with a bible study immediately following dinner.

Some of the highlights for the Young Adult program during the four-day weekend include the following lectures and activities:

“Rediscover the Rites of Baptism and Marriage.” Rev. Khoren Habeshian and Rev. Nerses Manouagian will offer in-depth

(Continued on page 4)

National Representative Assembly Convenes in Watertown, MA; Dr. Yelena Bonner is Honored as Prelacy's ‘Woman of the Year’



Delegates to the NRA outside St. Stephen's Church in Watertown, Massachusetts.



Archbishop Ashjian presents “Woman of the Year” award to Dr. Yelena Bonner during the closing banquet of the NRA. Dr. Bonner's son, Alexey Semyonov, serves as translator. The inscription on the award said: “Presented to Yelena Bonner in recognition for her unflinching dedication to human rights, even in the face of great personal danger. She has been spokesman for the speechless. She has given hope to the hopeless. She has shown the world the power of truth.”

The National Representative Assembly of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, Eastern United States and Canada, convened in Watertown, Massachusetts during the week of May 8-11. The annual assembly took place at St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, under the presidency of the Prelate, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian.

The meetings began with a clergy conference on May 8, with lay delegates joining in on May 9 through 11. Together the lay and clergy delegates discussed issues facing church, approved the new budget, and overwhelmingly re-elected Archbishop Ashjian to a fourth four-year term as Prelate.

The closing banquet took place Friday evening at the Armenian Educational and Cultural Center in Watertown. More than 400 delegates and guests witnessed the presentation of the “Woman of the Year” award to human rights activist Dr. Yelena Bonner. In presenting the award, Archbishop Ashjian noted, “Dr. Bonner, together with her husband Andrei Sakharov, has been the conscience of the world.” Dr. Bonner accepted the award and addressed the gathering with her son acting as translator. (See text of Dr. Bonner's comments are page 2).

Clergy Conference

Members of the clergy began their conference with the attendance of 21 clergymen currently serving the Prelacy churches. Archbishop Torkon Hagopian, pastor of the host church, welcomed the participants who subsequently elected an executive body of Archbishop Moushegh Der Kaloustian, president, and Rev. Hrant Yeretizian, secretary.

Four papers discussing issues of current relevance were presented. Rev. Khachig Mgrdichian spoke about the Mormon Church; Very Rev. Shaka Panossian about the Jehovah's Witness movement; Rev. Antranig Bajjan about Pentecostal cuts; and Rev. Dr. Mesrob Tashjian concluded with “Atomic Power and the Church.”

The clergy conference concluded after considerable deliberations about the recruitment and education of clergy and various executive and liturgical questions. A list of recommendations was compiled and presented for consideration.

NRA Convenes

The full assembly convened on May 9 with an opening prayer offered by Archbishop Ashjian. The election of co-chairmen, Harry Sachakalian and Zaven Sarkissian and secretaries, Sue Erickson and Manuel Shehrian followed.

Along with the duly-elected delegates to the NRA, this year for the first time, Crosby Goshgarian attended as an observer from the Diocese of the Armenian Church.

Rev. Paul Bench from the Presbyterian Church spoke to the delegates about the

(Continued on page 4)



Archpriest Rev. Torkon Hagopian with recipients of Knight of Cilicia insignia, Mr. and Mrs. Astor Gusekian (left) and Dr. and Mrs. Varent Hagopian.

Vazken I and Karekin II send message to President Gorbachev

(Continued from page 1)

restructuring and democratization of the multi-national Soviet Union will continue successfully and will in the near future bring the Soviet Union to a new life and development within the family of autonomous nationalities living in unison and harmony.

2. On the road to these goals of restructuring and democracy, one of the prime conditions for the Armenians is the just solution of the demands of the people of Mountinous Karabagh. The right of self-determination and the establishment of lawful conditions will bring about the necessary environment for the Armenian population to autonomously govern its administrative, economic, educational, cultural and religious life, without restriction.

3. We respectfully believe, Mr. President, that after the tragic and bloody events of the past two years in Sumgait, Baku, Khrovbad and other regions, it is now time for you as president to take the necessary measures to bring out the above-mentioned lawful conditions to Karabagh in order to prevent further bloodshed. It is difficult to imagine the harmonious co-existence and cooperation among the nations of the Soviet Union without respecting the right of nations to self-determination. We assure you that it is the will of the whole Armenian population both in Armenia and in Mountinous Karabagh to live autonomously and to develop through its creative powers a national dignity within the great family of nations of the Soviet Union.

Please accept, Mr. President, our warmest wishes for your good health and for the complete fulfillment of your goals and ideals.

Respectfully,

Vazken I
Catholics of All Armenians

Karekin II
Catholics of the Great House of Cilicia

5-14-90
Paris

Մայիս 28-ին, Մոսկուայի մէջ, Խորհրդային Միութեան նախագահ Միխայիլ Կորպաչովին յանձնուեցաւ Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոս Վազգէն Ա. ի ևր Սեփ Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոս Գարեգին Բ. ի ստորագրութիւնը կրող հետևանալ նամակը՝ ի պաշտպանութիւն արցախահայրաբան ևր ի պահանջումը Արցախի Հայաստանի միացման:

Սեփ Վազգէն Ա. Կաթողիկոս Ամենայն Հայոց ևր Գարեգին Բ. Կաթողիկոս Հայոց Կիլիկեան Աթոռի, Բելգեայում Հայկական Նորակառույց Եկեղեցին Օճեւու առթիւ միատն գումուեղով, Պրիւճեղում ևր ապա Փարիզում մեզ ներկայացան բազմաթիւ Հայ պատգամաւորութիւններ՝ Տրանսխայեց, Անգլիայեց, Իտալիայեց ևր Միացեալ Նահանգներէրց, մեզ յայտնելով Արտասահման բնակող երկու միլիոն Հայերի ծանր մտահոգութիւնները Լեռնային Ղարաբաղում վերջերս դրսեւորուող հակահայ քաղաքականութեան վերաբերեալ:

Սեփ, արտայայտիչը հանդիսանալով նրանց արդարացի ապստամբերկ պարտը ենք գտում Ձեր բարձր ուշադրութեան յանձնել հետեւեալները՝
Ա. Արտասահման բնակող Հայ բողոքուրդը Լեայոյս է, որ Սովետական բազմապէջ երկրի վերակառուցման ու զեմիկրատացման համար Ձեր ի գործ դրած հետեւողական ջանքերը, աստիճանաբար յաջողութեամբ կը պսակուեն ևր մտն ապագային որը Սովետական երկիրը կը գտնի իր նոր կեանքի ու զարգացման ուղին, ինքնիշխան ազգութիւնների համբաւը ընտանիքում:

Բ. Վերակառուցման ու ղեմիկրատացման կենսագործման ճանապարհին, Հայերը, նախապայմաններից մէկն են համարում արդարացի լուծումը Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի Հայ ազգաբնակչութեան պահանջների բավարարման, ազգութիւնների ինքնորոշման իրականացման հիման վրայ, այնտեղ ստեղծելով բոլոր օրինական ևր վարչական գործնական պայմանները, որպէսզի Հայ ազգաբնակչութիւնը ինքնիշխան կերպով տնօրինի իր վարչական, տնտեսական, կրթական, մշակութային ևր կրօնական կեանքը անկաշկանդ կերպով:

Գ. Կարծում ենք յարգարժան Տիար Պրէզիտներ, որ անցնող երկու տարիների ողբերգական արիւնալի իրադարձութիւններից յետոյ՝ Սուրբախբում, Բազում, Կիրովպոլում ևր այլ վայրերում, ժամանակն է որ Ձեր Պրիւկրանցական Իրաստութիւններով հանձնը անհրաժեշտը տնօրինել, որպէսզի վերոյիշեալ օրինական պայմանները իրագոյս ուր գործնական ստեղծուեն Լեռնային Ղարաբաղում, կանխելու համար նոր արիւնալիները: Դժուար է պատկերացնել Սովետ Միութեան ազգութիւնների համեմալը գոյակցութիւն ևր գործակցութիւն, առանց յարգելու ազգութիւնների ազատ ինքնորոշման իրականացումը:

Ձեզ վստահեցնում ենք որ որը Հայ ժողովուրդի կամքն է՝ թէ Հայաստանում ևր թէ Լեռնային Ղարաբաղում, ինքնիշխան ազգի ու զարգանալ իր ստեղծարար ուժերով ու իր ազգային արժանապատուութեամբ Սովետ Միութեան ազգութիւնների մեծ Հետախիւրց անքատան:

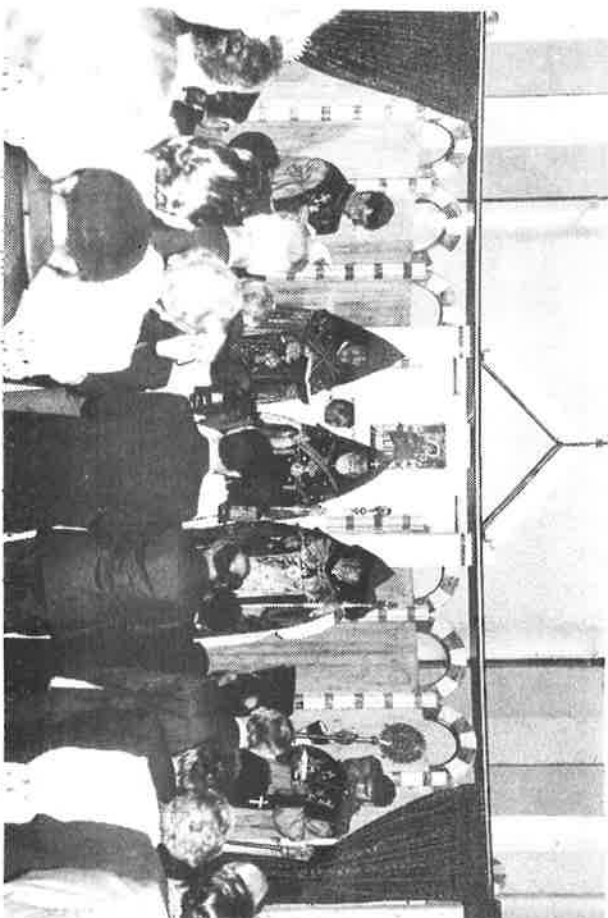
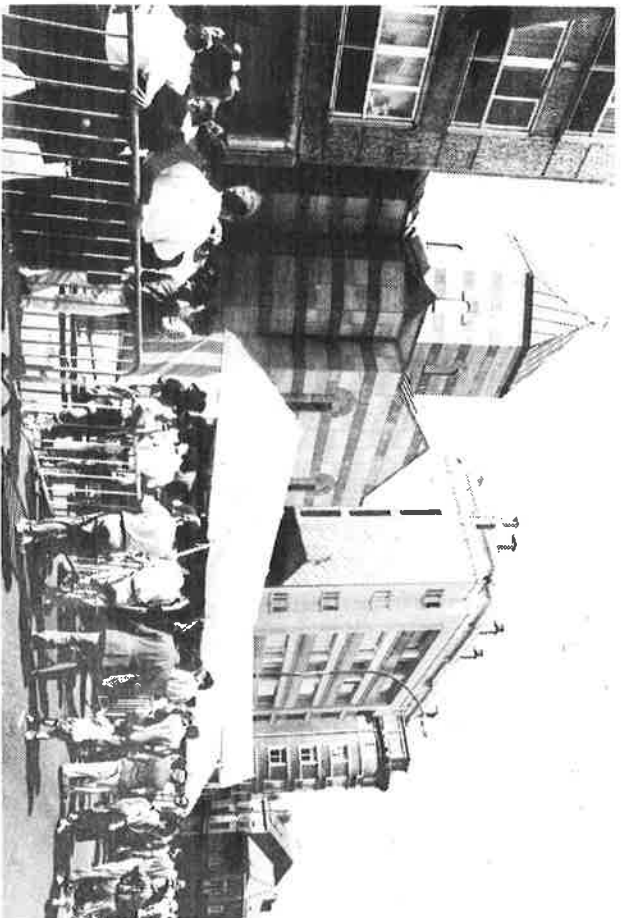
Ընդունեցէ Սեծայարգ Տիար Պրեզիտներ, մեր ամենաջերմ մաղթանքները Ձեր քաջատրջութեան ևր Ձեր հայրենանուէր վերանորոգիչ իտիպաների լիակատար յաջողութեան համար:

Խորին յարգանքով՝

Գարեգին Բ. Կաթողիկոս Սեփ Տանն Կիլիկիոյ

Վազգէն Ա. Կաթողիկոս Ամենայն Հայոց

Փարիզ



CATHOLICOSES CONSECRATE CHURCH IN BRUSSELS: Vazken I, Catholics of All Armenians, and Karekin II, Catholics of the Great House of Cilicia, jointly consecrated the St. Mary Magdalene Armenian Church in Brussels on May 6. It was the first time in history that two Catholicos consecrated a church together. The Armenian population of Brussels which is estimated at about 3,500, joyfully welcomed the Catholicos.

Catholicos Vazken I and Karekin II before the altar of the new church in Brussels. In his message to the people His Holiness Vazken said as long as the House of Cilicia remains strong he feels greatly strengthened in Etchmiadzin. He said there no longer is "Etchmiadzagan or Anteliasagan," but one Armenian Apostolic Church. On Sunday, May 13 the two Catholicos participated in church services in Paris. It was during their meetings in Brussels and Paris that the Catholicos formulated their message to Gorbachev.

Archbishop Ashjian

(Continued from page 2)

tinues today, although ill, to be the peaceful watchdog of the world, ready to defend the downtrodden. The April 29 edition of the Boston Globe published an article by her entitled "Glasnost at Age 5." It is an eloquent appeal to the world—in particular to the United States and Europe—not to repeat the mistakes of 1938. She pleads for "legal recognition of Lithuania and real support for the peoples of the Baltic states and of the entire Soviet Union in their movement toward democracy." A large part of the article is devoted to the Armenians. She charges the central authorities of deliberate lack of action in protecting Armenians. Furthermore she writes that, "The army is deporting Armenians from villages of Karabagh to landless, devastated Armenia, where there are already more than a million homeless people. The motivation given is that the army cannot guarantee their safety. If the deportation continues," Dr. Bonner writes, "the day may come when there will be nor Armenians left in Karabagh."

Yelena Bonner:

It is with deep humility, admiration, and love that I present to you, on behalf of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, the "Woman of the Year" award with the inscription, "Presented to Yelena Bonner, in recognition of her unflinching dedication to human rights, even in the face of great personal danger. She has been spokesman for the speechless. She has given hope to the hopeless. She has showed the world the power of truth."

Yelena Bonner

(Continued from page 2)

separation of Armenia and Artsakh which right now is understood by the world as an internal problem of the Soviet Union, but we have to translate the problem into an international problem. I think this is the only correct way for the eventual reunion of the Armenian people. The Armenians unlike the Jews don't have any other place, historical motherland, outside the Soviet Union and they cannot all migrate to the United States. We have to save Armenia where it is and where it was. Thank you.

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Poem for Baydzar by Diana Der-Hovannessian

The word for bread
changes texture,
in every language.
In Armenian
it takes on the fragrance
of the *tonnir*
outdoor oven.
It comes out crisp
and flat. To translate
you must rebuild that oven,
knead dough,
and let it rise
into cool foreign air
that has grown used
to wonder.
Armenians always
share their bread
so let us begin.

Siamanto Academy Celebrates 8th Graduation



Faculty of Siamanto Academy with 1990 Graduates.

The seven graduates of the NY-NJ Siamanto Academy received diplomas during graduation and commencement ceremonies on Sunday, May 6, witnessed by parents and faculty members.

Three years of college-level study of Armenian history, language and culture culminated in graduation for the high school students. Diplomas were presented to the graduates by staff members, Very Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, lecturer in Armenian church history; Dr. Herand Markarian, Director of the Armenian language and literature department; Mr. Harouttun Misserlian, lecturer in Armenian history and by Mrs. Hourig Papazian-Sahagian, Academy Director.

The class of 1990 represents the 8th graduating class of the Academy, which opened its doors in 1981 in New York under the supervision of co-founders, Dr. Steve Checkowsky and Mrs. Papazian-Sahagian and with the sponsorship of the Armenian National Education Committee.

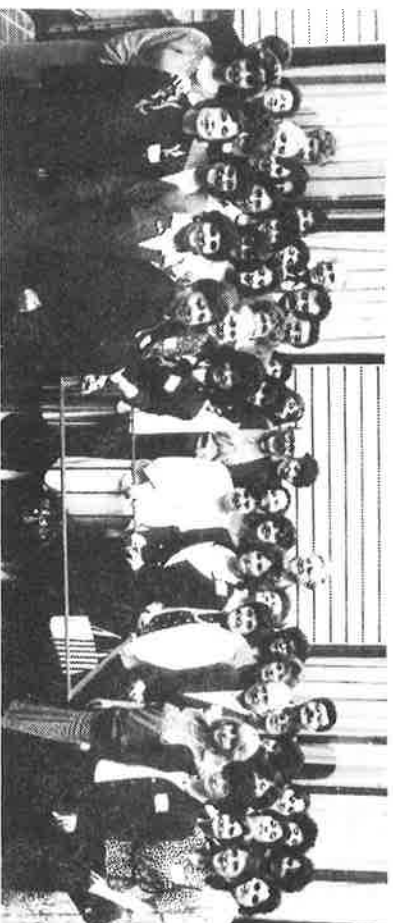
The members of the Siamanto Board who serve the Academy faithfully are: Madlen Darakjian, Yester and Ardashes Garabedian, Jean Khatchadourian, Anahid Kerjichian, Diana Minassian, Heran Tadjirian and Rosa and Zaven Varjabedian. The goal for establishing a specialized

school such as Siamanto Academy is to prepare younger generations to assume leadership roles in the Armenian American community, "not only for the community of the future," asserted Mrs. Sahagian in her opening remarks, "but for the Armenian community of today. These young people already possess the unquenchable spirit, energy, enthusiasm and a background of knowledge to enable them to enrich any community."

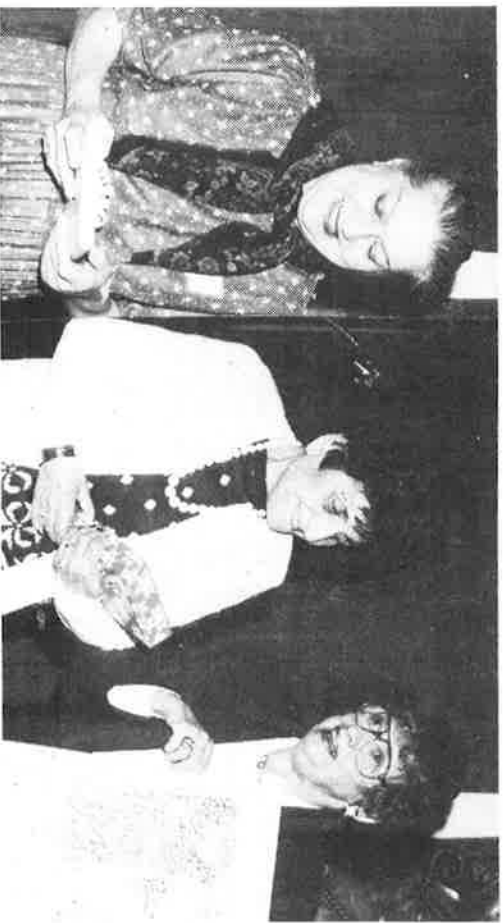
The Academy faculty joined Mrs. Sahagian in presenting the graduating class members, who in turn addressed the audience with their personal messages of farewell. The students of the class of 1990 are: Lucy Davydian, Taline Demirjian, Michael Gostanian, Nazo Haroutunian, Raffi Khatchadourian, Suci Minassian and Sossé Misserlian. Alternating with the farewell speeches were the recitations of poetry by first and second year students and the graduates themselves.

The Siamanto Academy is preparing to celebrate the 10th anniversary of its founding during the 1990-91 academic year. The anniversary events will bring together alumni, faculty, students, and their families and friends, in celebrating a decade in the life of a unique educational institution.

ANEC SEMINAR FOR EDUCATORS



Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian is flanked by a group of educators and guests at the 12th annual seminar for Armenian school educators sponsored by the Armenian National Education Committee on May 5th at the Prelacy. Thirteen Armenian schools were represented by more than 80 educators and guests at the all-day seminar. The theme of the seminar, "A Diasporan Phenomenon: The Armenian School and Its Challenges," served as the central focus during the day's various presentations which included Dr. Herand Markarian who spoke about the "The Armenian Theater in History," and Mrs. Seta Kaligian who demonstrated the value of the Ethnic Heritage and Haratch Kits created by the Armenian Relief Society. During the afternoon session, Irene Abrahamian, principal of the Hannusdagh Saturday/Sunday School of Sourp Khatch Church, Washington, DC, and Maggie Khacharian, principal of the Nareg Saturday School of Sts. Vartanants Church, Ridgefield, New Jersey, shared projects, programs and lessons used in their schools. Miss Hourig Attarian presented an overview of the curriculum of the history of Armenian culture as taught in the Sourp Hagop Saturday School in Montreal, Canada.



Teacher of the Year awards were presented to Marie Boghossian of Montreal and Sophie Kevonkian-Elisayed of New Jersey.

"Growth Possibilities of the Armenian Church for 2001." After a lively question and answer period, the delegates assembled in five different groups to discuss religious education, Armenian education, constitutional and administrative matters, and budget. Each group later reported its findings and conclusions to the entire NRA.

Education

It was recommended to make every effort to strengthen the existing Sunday Schools and organize schools where none exist; to strengthen the curriculum by hiring a specialist in this area to work with the Prelacy's religious education department. The panel studying Armenian education recommended that during the month of October, which is cultural month, special efforts should be made to raise funds to strengthen the existing schools and to form schools in communities which currently do not have Armenian schools.

It was also recommended that all churches should be encouraged to take special measures to bring back many parishioners who are inactive; it was further recommended that the churches be more flexible in the use of the English language.

75th Joint Commemoration

Following the report about the joint commemoration of April 24 with the Diocese, a lengthy discussion took place, particularly about the tri-colored Armenian flag. The majority of NRA delegates concluded that in the future the flag should not be a negotiable item.

Unity

The NRA commended the Executive Council for its diligence in pursuing the question of a unified diocese. Delegates noted disappointment that the Council was not able to implement joint programs in Armenian language and Christian education along with the joint 75th commemoration. The NRA also noted that progress was not made towards addressing the special relationship of the new united diocese with the Catholicate of Cilicia.

The delegates authorized the Council to continue the road towards unity and urged that the new bylaws, in Armenian and English, be circulated to the clergy, the boards of trustees, delegates, etc., for study. The NRA urged this task to be done within a reasonable time frame.

Elections

As noted earlier, Archbishop Ashjian was re-elected to a fourth term. The slate of candidates provided by His Holiness Karekin II as stipulated in the bylaws included: Archbishop Ashjian, Bishop Vartan Demirjian from Lebanon and Very Rev. Khajag Hagopian from Toronto. Archbishop Ashjian received 77 votes out of 91 votes cast.

The following members of the executive council were re-elected: Onnic Marashian, Nazaret Emlikian, and Khajag Dombalagian. Elected to the religious council was Very Rev. Khajag Hagopian. Elected to serve on the auditing committee were Bedros Tashjian, Richard Selverian, and Bedros Givlekian.

Archbishop Ashjian first offered thanks to His Holiness Karekin II and to the assembled NRA delegates, for their vote of confidence. In an emotional speech, His Eminence confessed the personal turmoil he has felt recently as he tried to decide whether to continue for another four years or not. "Twelve years in a position like this," the Archbishop said, "takes its toll on a person. Times have changed. With the changing of times, perhaps faces need to be changed also. I thought, Am I worthy of the faith placed upon me? Have I managed to keep the office of Prelate at a high level? Have I been an effective shepherd to my people? Have I been a faithful preacher of the Gospel of our Lord? All of these thoughts have been within me causing great turmoil. I have

prayed and contemplated, searching for the right road. Through intense prayer and contemplation, I realized the brave and valiant road is to continue to work in order to make the impossible reality. Now, I am strengthened by your faith in me and I pledge to continue to serve my beloved church and people to the best of my ability."

National Ladies Guild

Meeting concurrently with the NRA was the National Association of Ladies Guilds on May 10 and 11 at the Armenian Congregational Church in Watertown. A series of lectures took place including Miss Ruth Thomassian who spoke about the historical value of photographs. Rev. Joanne Gulezian-Harootunian spoke about "Women Ministry... Biblical Foundations." Elected to serve on the executive of the NALG were Yereztzin Arpine Shirikian and Pauline Kasabian. The other members of the executive are Voski Ormazian, Alice Khachadourian and Verkin Marashian.

Closing Banquet

More than 400 people attended the closing banquet. Nerses Chifjian, chairman of the Executive Council, served as Master of Ceremonies, and introduced guests including the noted actor Sos Sarkissian, Mkail Ispirian, Vice Minister of Athletics, and the 18-member Armenian wrestling team which was on a tour of the United States.

Knight of Cilicia awards were presented to two individuals in the Boston community who have served the church with distinction for many years: Mr. Asadour Guezelian and Dr. Varent Hagopian. Certificates of Merit were presented to Mr. Krikor Najarian, Miss Shake Aghoyan and Mr. George Hazerjian.

The highlight of the evening was the appearance of Dr. Yelena Bonner who was chosen as the Prelacy's "Woman of the Year."

Young Adult Retreat

(Continued from page 1)

studies of the two Sacraments most young adults will request during the course of a lifetime.

"Challenging the Cults." Can we distinguish Truth from false teachings? Rev. Antranig Bajjian will challenge us to be ready to give a reason for our belief in Christ.

"The Covenant of Betrothal." The promise of binding love and fidelity between two people begins in the Betrothal "Prayer of the Rings." Dr. Vigen Guroian will explain the meaning of and help us to reclaim the apostles' and saints' vision of Christ-centered living for couples during this engagement period.

"Relationships: The Love Triangle." Love is a triangle. That is, it requires three people, not just two, to form a union. Two people at the bottom points and God at the apex. John and Aghavni Bashian will give deep insights regarding the formula for successful marital relationships through the example of a simple triangle.

"Relationships: The Friendship Triangle." Friendship, like love, is a triad relationship. Today's generation is continually faced with the possibility of rejection and broken relationships. Professor Varouj Mazmanian will explore the characteristics of friendship and how to get and keep good friends.

During the afternoons participants will have free time to discover the beauty of the Stony Point area with leisurely walks among the flowered gardens, ferryboat rides on the Hudson River, a trip to nearby Bear Mountain and West Point and swimming in the sandy beach lakes nearby.

The closing banquet on Saturday, July 29, will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Young Adult Retreat, as well as honor the graduates of the St. Gregory of Davev Institute.