



Հայաստանյայց Ամենայնայն Արեւիկեան թեմի Ազգային Առաջնորդարանի
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AREC Sponsors Young Adult Retreat



Participants at the AREC sponsored retreat for young adults.

What is the link among baptism, the Eucharist, and our neighbors? Answer: Christ is using these treasures to make Himself present in our daily life. Our baptism establishes the foundation of our life in Christ; the Eucharist sustains our life in Christ, and our attitudes and actions toward our neighbor measure our baptismal life in Christ. This is what 20 participants learned on the weekend of November 8-10 1991, at the 11th Annual Young Adults' Retreat. The Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC), chaired by Reverend Antranig Bajjian and directed by Deacon Shant Kazanjian, sponsored the two-day retreat which was held in Attleboro, Massachusetts, at the La Salette Provincial House. Young adults from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, and Illinois participated in the enlightening retreat.

On behalf of His Eminence, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, and AREC, Deacon Kazanjian welcomed the group and encouraged everyone to take full advantage of the learning opportunity. After receiving a brief overview of the weekend's agenda, the group proceeded to the chapel where Rev. Bajjian and Deacon Kazanjian officiated and the group actively participated in the evening service. This was followed by an informal sharing session, allowing retreatants to get acquainted or to enrich already established friendships.

Following breakfast and morning service on Saturday, Father Paul Tarazi, Orthodox theologian from St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York, Professor of the Scriptures, and Pastor of St. John the Baptist Church, presented first of three exciting lectures. Referencing Scripture, supplying the background of ancient Near-Eastern thought, and providing translations of the Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic texts, Fr. Tarazi began his lecture on baptism. "The essential teaching of Jesus Christ is the Lord's Prayer" and the "Our Father" is THE FATHER, the only Source with absolute authority, to whom God's children submit. A person becomes a child of God through baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. This means that a Christian must always be anchored in Christ, live his life the way Christ lived—in total obedience to His Father.

Jesus Christ considered His Father as the only Master—(Oh, my Father, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will. Matt. 26:39). He called the Father "Abba" ("Daddy" in Aramaic), which indicates an intimate childlike relationship. It also implies complete submission to the ultimate Authority. Similarly, the Spirit of Christ that is poured into the hearts of Christians in baptism allows the baptized (children of God) to cry "Abba" to the Father the way Christ did and thus puts the baptized on "equal footing with Jesus Christ," stated Fr. Tarazi. The privilege, however, carries with it a major responsibility—that of completely yielding our will to the Abba's will. To elucidate key concepts, Fr. Tarazi used several child/parent examples throughout his teaching.

A stimulating discussion ensued in which all the participants were either challenged and/or reaffirmed in their Christian faith.

Session two on the Eucharist followed lunch. To substantiate his assertion that "The Eucharist is proleptic of the coming Kingdom," Fr. Tarazi expounded on the Biblical imageries of "first fruit" and "down payment" used by Apostle Paul in his letters to the Corinthians and Ephesians.

The imageries borrowed from the agricultural and business worlds illustrate the blessings of the age to come wrought for us in Christ's death and resurrection now, before His time. In other words, the Eucharist, the Sourp Badarak, is the bread of tomorrow given to us today, it is the bread from the banquet table of the Kingdom of God given to the believers here and now at the Badarak as a gift and pledge of the life to come.

The last topic focused on the baptized person's love regarding his neighbor. Referring to the "Good Samaritan," Fr. Tarazi reminded the retreatants that the

(Continued on page 3)

48-րդ ՏԱՐԵՂԱՐՁԻ ՏՕՆԱԿԱՏԱՐՈՒԹԻՒՆ ԾԻՔԱԿՈՅԻ ԱՄԵՆԱՅՆ ԱՐԲՈՅ ՀԱՅՅ. ԱՌԱՔ. ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻՈՅ

Հովանաւորութեամբ Հելասայի Ամերիկայի Կիլիկեան Թեմի Արեւելեան Շրջանի Առաջնորդ Բարձրաշնորհ Տէր Սեւրոպ Ս. Արք. Աշեփանին եւ մասնակցութեամբ բազմահարիւր հաստացեալներու, Շարք, Նոյեմբեր 2 եւ Կիլակի, Նոյեմբեր 3 շաբաթակազին, շուբով նշունեցաւ Շիքակոյի Ամենայն Սրբոց Հայց. Առաքեալական Եկեղեցւոյ Հիմնադրութեան 48րդ տարեդարձը:

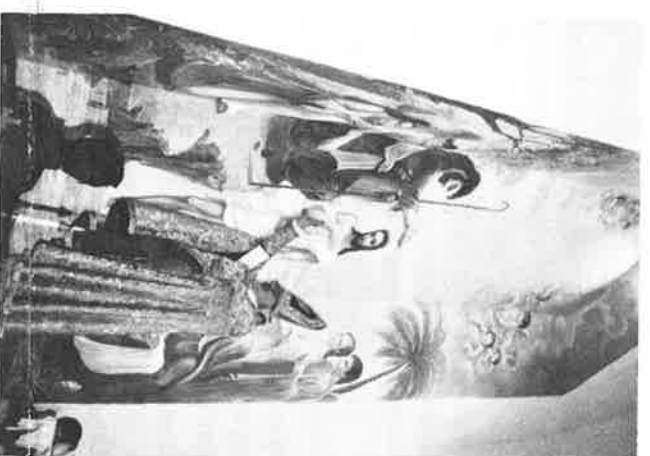
Շարք, 2 Նոյեմբեր 1991-ի յետ-միջօրէին Շիքակոյ ժամանեց Առաջնորդ Սրբազան Հայրը եւ առաջին Տեղաբնիկ անակնկալ այցելութիւն մը տուաւ շրջանի Դանիէլ Վարուժան պեղով ուսանողութեան, ուսուցչական կազմին եւ ինքնակալ մարմնի անդամներուն հետ:

Երկուշաբ, եկեղեցւոյ մէջ կատարեալ իրականութիւն արարողութիւններ վերջ, Հայ Կեդրոնի Շահնազարեան Սահման մէջ տեղի ունեցաւ ճոխ ճաշկերոյթ-պարահանդէս մը, պատրաստութեամբ եկեղեցւոյ Տիկնանց Միւլիան եւ օժանդակութեամբ շրջանի տարբերակի վարչութիւններուն:

Օրուան հանդիսակարգն էր եկեղեցւոյ հովիւ՝ Հոգեւնորհ Տէր Շահն Վրբ. Փանոսեան: Հայր Աւուրբին բացման եւ բարեկարգութի խօսքին ետք, շնորհակարարութեան եւ ինքնակցութեան խօսքեր արտասանեցին եկեղեցւոյ հոգաբարձութեան ատենապետ՝ Պր. Օննիկ Պաւլեան, շրջանի տարբերակի անուանող Հ.Յ.Գ. Քրիստափոր Կոյիւնիան եւ արձակուրդի հարցազարկի ատենապետ՝ Պր. Վազգէն Ալիսպեան եւ Ազգային Վարչութեան ատենապետ՝ Պր. Ներսէս Զիթեան:

Տեղի ունեցաւ նաեւ հանգանակութիւն, որուն բացումը կատարեցին Ազգային բարեբար եւ Կիլիկեան Իշխան՝ Տէր եւ Տիկնի Սարգ եւ Գոհարիկ Սարգեանները: Գոհարիկ Սարգեանները 50,000.00 տարբեր իշխանական նուիրատուութեամբ մը: Շնորհիւ գաղութի անդամներուն եւ ի մասնաւորի Ինտիանայի եկեղեցւոյ արքային ներուն, հանգանակութիւն գոյացաւ 100,000.00 տարբեր:

48-րդ տարեդարձի կարգադրակը կարեցին պատուով հիւրերը՝ Տէր եւ Տիկնի Սարգ եւ Գոհարիկ Սարգեանները: Յարգելիք վակուեցաւ Առաջնորդ Սրբազան Հօր խօսքով, որ շնորհակարարեւ ետք տարիներու ընթացքին գաղութի անդամներուն յաջողու-



Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian officiating at consecration of an icon at the 48th anniversary of the All Saints Apostolic Church of Chicago. His Eminence was in Chicago for the weekend of November 2 at which time he met with local leaders and attended the parish's anniversary dinner. Fundraising following the dinner raised a total of \$100,000, with \$50,000 donated by Mr. and Mrs. Mark Markarian.

Թիւնները, զէպի Հարաւայի Ամերիկայ կարգ մը հայկական գաղութներ կատարած իր շրջապտուղն ներշնչեալ կարգ մը մտածումներ բաժնեց մեզի հետ ու իր խօսքերը եզրակացուց, բոլորիս ուշադրութիւնը հրահրելով Հայաստանին օժանդակելու կարեւորագոյն հարցին եւ անհրաժեշտութեան վրայ:

Մինչեւ ուշ ատեն, Ժողովրդային երգիչ Յարութ Զէնեանին ու իր նուագախումբին ատեղած խանդավառ միջնորդութիւն մէջ, ներկաները ըմբռնեցին երեկոյթը:

Կիլակի, 3 Նոյեմբեր 1991-ին Առաջնորդ Սրբազան Հայրը մատուց Սուրբ եւ Ամնաճ Պատարագ եւ օծեց եկեղեցւոյ մէջ վերջնորդ հաստատուած 3 սրբապատկերները: Սրբազան Հօր բարոյն ետք, ներկաներ յոռնկայ լսեցին Ն.Ս.Տ.Տ. Գարեգին Բ. Վեհափառ Հօր կոնդակները, որոնցմով կը հաստատուէր Տիարը Ներսէս Զիթեանի, Սարգեաններին եւ Զահրապ Քաղանի Կիլիկեան Իշխանի պարգեատարումը, որը տեղի ունեցած էր նախորդ տարի, Վեհափառ Հօր կատարած հովուապետական այցելութեան միջոցին:

Մեսրոպ Արքեպիսկոպոս Աշխատանքի և Կրթության Վարչությունից Կատարվող Ժողովներին Անթրիպի մեջ



Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian participated in meetings of the Central Executive Council of the Cilician See which took place December 4 and 5 in Lebanon. His Eminence is a member of the Council's religious executive body. The agenda for the World Assembly which is expected to take place this spring was formulated and discussed as well as various other topics and issues.

Գեկտեմբեր 4-5-ի սիոնի, Անթրիպի մեջ, ընդ ճակագահութեամբ Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ. Գարեգին Բ. Կաթողիկոսի, գումարուեցան Ազգային Կերտնական Վարչութեան կրօնական եւ քարաքական ժողովները:

Քեմիս բարեխնամ Առաջնորդ՝ Բարձրաշնորհ Տ. Մեսրոպ Արքեպիսկոպոս Աշխատանքի և Կրթության Վարչության ղեկավարը և Վարչության ղեկավար ժողովի անդամ, Գեկտեմբեր 2-ին մեկնեցաւ Անթրիպս, մասնակցելու այդ ժողովներուն:

Յացողական երկու օրերու ընթացքին գումարուեցան կրօնական ժողովի երեք ճիւղեր եւ կրօնական ու քարաքական ժողովներու խառն երկու ճիւղեր: Այդ բոլոր ճիւղերու ընթացքին խորհրդակցութեանց գլխաւոր առարկան եղաւ յարաշինկայ 1992 Մարտի վերջերուն եւ Ապրիլի սկիզբը գումարուելիք Ազգային Ընդհանուր Ժողովի օրակարգերուն եւ ճիւղերուն պատրաստութիւնը:

Առաջնորդ Սրբազան Հայրը Նիւ Եորք վերադարձաւ Երեքշաբթի, Գեկտեմբեր 10-ին:

Businessmen Urged To Participate In Yerevan Conference

The second meeting of the International Armenian Businessmen's Organization is scheduled to take place April 11 to 14, 1992, in Yerevan, Armenia.

A communique from the Foreign Economic Minister of Armenia has been received by the Prelacy asking for help in contacting Armenian businessmen in the United States and Canada who would be interested in attending this meeting and becoming a member of the organization. Regular members are expected to pay \$1,000 per year while founding members are required to make a one-time payment of \$25,000, along with the regular yearly dues.

Businessmen interested in attending the conference may contact the Armenian Republic directly by writing to: Minister of Foreign Economic Affairs, Yerevan 10, Republic Boulevard, No. 2. Your communication should include your full name, address, date of birth and citizenship.

Anooshig Vartan

A few days ago my eyes caught sight of a thick book which we kept in my mother's room for the last few years. Looking at it brings back memories of peaceful Sunday afternoons, and fills my eyes with tears. It isn't the Bible, in case the idea crossed your mind. It is called 'Hamabadoom' written by Archbishop Maghakia Ormanian. I used to read it to her, your grandmother. She isn't living anymore, but the book is still here. On my desk.

Reading the book served a double purpose. First it increased my knowledge of the Christian faith. Secondly, to use mother's expression, "It brought down from heaven the peace of Christ." One day we were reminiscing about the 'war years', World War I and World War II. During the First World War she was a teenager. She saw the destruction of her homeland, and the death of her family and countrymen. Somehow she survived the massacre. During the Second World War she had a sick husband and four children to look after (without government help).

"In spite of all the hardship," she said on that Sunday afternoon, "no matter how exhausted and down-hearted I was, as soon as I entered the church my soul would be filled with peace. I would forget this cruel world and relax, as if someone powerful had taken the heavy burden off my shoulders." Going to church was not just a habit for her. It was a necessity. A source of strength.

I wonder how many people nowadays experience that feeling of peace and relief when they enter the church. There is a corner in every heart where yearning and the need for justice weighs heavy. To be sure, this need is not caused by poverty alone. You are living in one of the most affluent societies. Look around you, almost every person, young or old, has access to gym machines in schools, community centers, in business buildings, or

Gift Annuities Solve Seniors' Income Needs And Give A Lasting Gift to the Church

by Rosilyn H. Overton, CFP

Many older people have depended on interest earned on Certificates of Deposit or U.S. Treasury Bills to supplement their Social Security or other pension. Now, however, interest rates are so low that their standard of living is suffering. If you are an older person in this situation, and you were planning to leave some or all of your money to the Church, a charitable gift annuity from the Armenian Prelacy could be a tremendous help to you.

Here's how it works: you donate a sum of money (at least \$10,000) to the church now, and in exchange you will receive a guaranteed income for the rest of your life. If you are age 65, you will receive 7.3% of the amount donated each year for the rest of your life. If you are 70, the rate is 7.8%, and if you are 75, you will receive 8.5%. You won't have to worry about running around to banks renewing CD's, and the amount that you receive will not change. Plus, you will have the satisfaction of giving a substantial and lasting gift to the Church.

In addition to the income benefits, you will also receive an immediate tax deduc-

in houses. Swimming has become available indoors, even when it snows or is stormy outside. People keep using one means or another to relax. To have peace of mind.

If material things like machines, swimming pools, luxurious homes, gold, diamonds and armaments were to give contentment and peace, people wouldn't try to drown their troubles in liquor. Our mental institutions and prisons wouldn't be filled to capacity the way they are at the present. Our streets would be safer for everybody. Last but not least, we must not underestimate the manufacturers of armaments. They keep producing new and more 'efficient' arsenals every year. On every continent there are places where violence causes starvation, loss of life and misery. Yet, we call ourselves "civilized." Obviously this "civilization" is not on the right track. The Prince of Peace is kept out of bounds. My parent's generation knew, it seems, that PEACE didn't come to men from luxuries or empty diplomatic talks.

PEACE COMES FROM WITTHIN. To receive this grace one should know where to look for it. My mother and thousands of her generation found it in the church. The Prince of Peace has given us ample examples of peaceful living in his own life. The answers to our problems are in the New Testament, if we care to read it, and the reading session doesn't need to be Sunday either. The thick book on my desk which 'brought down from heaven the Peace of Christ' is only a guide, leading the troubled heart and mind to the shining star of Christmas. It is that time again when we are reminded of the message "Peace on Earth and Goodwill Towards Men. May the 'Prince of Peace' guide you and the whole world, including,

Your loving
Eugenie Horkeoor

tion for a portion of the donation. The amount of the deduction you receive depends on how old you are, but is usually in the 25 to 33% range. For an example, if you took a \$25,000 annuity and are 72 years old, you would receive income of \$2,000 per year, and get a tax deduction of approximately \$7,000. In addition, a portion of the \$2,000 income will also be tax-free.

If you make such a gift, and three or more years later have to be confined to a nursing home, the money in the gift annuity will not be counted as part of your assets in determining whether the government will pay your nursing home bill. Thus the gift goes to the church that you love instead of being dissipated on nursing home care. You can designate that the gift be in memory of a loved one or in honor of a dear or respected person who is still living. If you give in memory or honor, the Prelacy will send a card of acknowledgement to the honoree or the remembered one's family.

If you are married, or have someone else dependent on you, your annuity can be designated as payable as long as either of you live. The rate of interest you receive will be somewhat lower, to make the annuity last. For example, if a husband and wife both aged 65 decide to put \$50,000 into a gift annuity, they will receive 6.8% or \$3,400 per year as long as either of them is alive. For older couples, the rate is correspondingly higher. It is important to remember that a gift annuity is irrevocable, so you cannot change your mind once the annuity starts.

The gift annuity fund is administered by the Prelacy with the supervision of a group of prominent trustees. It is invested in government securities, and the check you receive is from the Prelacy. You can designate that a percentage of the

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EVERY TUESDAY FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 8:30 A.M.

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Radio Hour

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ՀԱՅՈՑ ՄԻՋ

Ներուխ Արք. Բախտիկեան

Ա.

Նախաքրտոնական գաղափարներն ենք, Հայաստանի մէջ, ամէն տարի, Հայոց Նաւասարդ ամսուն տեղի կ'ունենային ամանորի փառաշուք հանդիսութիւններ: Նստաւարդ ամսուկրիտ Նստաւարդա - Նոր Տարի- քառնի հայցած ձեռն է, հայկական տոմարի արաջին ամիսը, որ կը համապատասխանէ մեր Օգոստոս ամսուն: Ուրեմն, նախաքրտոնական շրջանի Հայաստանի նոր տարին կուգար ամբան այն ժամանակին, երբ Հայաստան այլաբարճը կը հողային արտադրութեան ամենէն առատ տանը կ'ապրէր:

Ամանորը Հայաստանի մէջ ազգային մեծ տոնը էր: Հայաստանի ներքին ու ծայրագոյն գաւառներէն, ազգային այր մեծ տոնին համար, հայկազուններ, օրիորւ ճամբորդութեան կողմ, կը հաւաքուէին Բագրեւանդանը, գաւառի Բագարիճ արանը, որը կը գտնուէին Արամազդի եւ Անանիայի մէհանները:

Նաւասարդեան աշխարհախորժի այս մէկուկումը սակայն լոկ կրօնական հանգամանք չունէր: Ան, նոյն տոնն, առիթ կուտար Հայ մշակութիւն ու հայ ֆիլիքական ուժին ցուցաբերութեանը:

Տարին անցամ մը, երկրին բոլոր մասերէն, բիւրաւոր հայորդիներ, բարկացած ազգային բոլոր խաւերէն, հաւաքուելով Բագրեւանդ, կը ցուցաբերէին կրեանց գաւառներուն յատուկ երգ, պար, խաղ, տարազ ու բարբ: Այս կերպով, Հայաստանի ընկերները, հարորակից կը գաւառային կրտսու եւ մէկ յայտարարի կը վերածուէր ազգային մշակութի բազմաթիւ երեւոյթներուն հետ նաեւ ԱՅԳԻ գարպարդի գիտակցութիւնը:

Մեր նախնիքներու ամենէն նորեկան ու ժողովրդական փառատոնն էր Նաւասարդը: Հայաստանի տասնհինգ գաւառներէն հաւաքուած հայկազուններ, երկրի այր գաւիթէն ցորենի ոսկեգեղձ խուրճիւրէն, պարուզներն անուշահոտ եւ արեւահամ պտուղներէն, անասուններու ընտիր ծնունդներէն կը տանէին որպէս երակտազկրտութիւն «նորոգ պտուղս խնամակալ արին Արամազդա՞ք եւ հոսկեմին եւ ոսկեմայր Անահիտին որ էր մայր ամենայն մարդկութեան, ծնուցիլը եւ կեցուցիլը ազգիս Հայոց»:

Բագրեւանդ գաւառի դիցաւան համադրովրդական այր ցեծատոնին, ուխտաւորները, ո՛չ միայն կը վայելէին ամանորեայ ամենաբեր նորոց պտուղս արատութիւնը Անահիտի եւ Արամազդի հոկանիին ներքեւ, այլեւ ներկայութիւնը գահաժառանգ իշխաններուն, սեպուհ եւ արազանիներուն, զէն ու զարդով պիտ ու զբաղկաններուն: Ատոնցմէ վեր, Ազատ եւ Անկախ Հայաստանի գահէին վրայ բազմած Բագաւորն ու Բագուհին, հայկական ազգայական ծիրանազգետով, շրջապատուած՝ արթունի հետեւորդներով, կրեանց ներկայութեանը չուրճն ու փայլը կ'անցնէին համազգային աշխարհախորժը ստե՛նակատութեան:

Հին, արքայական ընտանիքին եւ արազանիին ներկայութեանը տեղի կ'ունենար զօրահանդէս, ճիւղարւ, սրբախաղ, նետընկէցութիւն եւ որս սորորութիւն:

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Անցան ժամանակները, արտեցան հին սովորութիւններն ու հաւատարմիքները, եկար նոր շրջան, նոր կրօնք, նոր մշակոյթ: Մեր եկեղեցւորայ հայրերը նորը պատահտեցին հինին վրայ: Նաւասարդեան աշխարհա-

Christian Giving – An Act of Love

“God loves the cheerful giver.” (2 Cor. 9:7)

by REV. DR. MESROB TASHJIAN

Christian giving is an art, and God is the master teacher. The universe, human existence, and redemption are all gifts from God. The greatest gift and the model for Christian giving is at the very core of the Christian stewardship. The Christian, whether baptized in Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant or Armenian Apostolic Church font, can give nothing that he has not received from God. Giving, therefore, is the natural response of creatures who recognize the omnipotence of God and willingly as an expression of grateful faith, enter into the realm of Christian stewardship. “All the world is a stage, and all the men and women merely players,” has said Shakespeare. In a profound theological sense, it is a correct statement for the world is the stage for the drama of a stewardship in which God is the owner and man the steward. As representative of God, man is responsible to God for his Christian stewardship.

The Christian is commanded to give a portion of all his personal and material resources to serve God and man. One cannot be a good steward without developing and practicing the art of giving.

What is the purpose of giving?

St. Paul provides a brief comprehensive insight into the purpose of giving in a comment to the Corinthians about their share in the Jerusalem offering. “Under the test of this service,” he writes, “you will glorify God by your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ, and by the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others” (2 Cor. 9:13). Here he indicates three purposes in giving, and he intimates a fourth. The purposes are: 1) to glorify God; 2) to serve the needs of man; 3) to discipline and mature the self in the venture of faith, and 4) to support the life, ministry, and mission of the church.

The first purpose of giving is to glorify God. Giving is an expression of praise and thanksgiving. It acknowledges that God is sovereign in the universe and is the source of all life’s blessings. The Hebrew tithes and offerings were designed in part to teach people to fear and honor God (Deut. 14:34). St. Paul describes the Jerusalem offering as overflowing in many thanksgivings to God (2 Cor. 9:12). The second purpose of giving is to serve the needs of man. Our love for God is inseparably tied to our love for man. A major way of expressing our love to God is to love man. In the Hebrew tithing system, the Hebrews gave part of their tithes and various charity gifts to serve directly the needs of people (Deut. 14:28-29). The New Testament indicates that one major purpose of giving is to alleviate different forms of human need and problems. This dimension is so important that Jesus teaches that when we give to people in need, we give directly to the Lord Himself (Mt. 25:31-46).

The third purpose of giving is to discipline the self in growth toward higher levels of maturity in the Christian life. The great commandment requires not only that we love God but that we love our neighbors as ourselves (Lk. 10:27). A goal in the Christian life is to break out of the bonds of self-interest. Giving is a revealing test of how far we have traveled toward that goal. Giving is love in action. Giving is an exercise in opening our grasping, possessive hands and extending love to another. It is a clue as to whether we are laying up treasures in heaven or are in the business of building bigger barns.

The fourth purpose of giving is to support the life, ministry, and mission of the church. Our various churches scattered in different parts of our country are all inseparable members of the same and one headquarter which is our Pre-lacy. All the

member churches functioning under the Pre-lacy’s banner, have fixed their eyes to it for spiritual leadership, direction and identification. Financial support is of basic importance to our Pre-lacy’s internal and external life, ministry, and mission. It is the responsibility of all the Armenians who are baptized in the Armenian Church, to support the Pre-lacy because these Armenians are incorporated into the full range of the Pre-lacy’s existence and service of the gospel. Financial support is one aspect of what St. Paul refers to as partnership in the gospel (Phil. 4:15).

Our Pre-lacy is engaged in a wide range work of ministries not only in the United States and Canada but also in our homeland, Armenia. The Pre-lacy has to keep the tempo with other denominations of the world with a serious attempt of preserving the identity and character of the Armenian Apostolic Church. It is through your generous support that the Pre-lacy will be able to fulfill its mission. It is your participation in giving which will undergird and enable the Pre-lacy to exercise a responsible stewardship. Be it known to all that your Pre-lacy’s stewardship encompasses leadership, spiritual guidance, social relationships, preservation of national culture, and traditions, care for human needs, worship, education, the nurture of spiritual discipline, the enrichment of community life, discovering of talents for religious and spiritual ministries, publication of religious and educational materials, public relationships, and offering cultural and religious programs to facilitate the spiritual growth of our faithful. Your stewardship in the service of God urges you to give. But don’t give in order to gain power. Don’t give with a spirit of discontentment. In those cases the Pre-lacy may get its money but God has not really gotten your heart. Giving is simply the duty of the servant of God (Lk. 17:7-10).

It has been declared that the National Representative Assembly has finally instituted the National Membership program. In many parts of the world, especially in the Middle-Eastern countries, the National Membership known as “Azkayeen Dourk” has been an established tradition. Now this program has been introduced to our American and Canadian faithful.

The Armenian Church in America is the people of God composed of all the members of the Armenian nation here in the United States and Canada who have been reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ who are bound to Christ and to one another through the Holy Spirit. All these members in different churches are internally bound to the Pre-lacy and are partners in its corporate stewardship. You have valuable motivations to give. Give as response to God’s grace because giving is a “gracious work” (2 Cor. 8:7), says St. Paul. Give as a response to the example of Christ who gave Himself for us. God’s gift of Christ is the prototype of all giving.

Give as a response to human needs. The Good Samaritan most memorably embodies this noble principle (Lk. 10:29-37). Give as an expression of thanksgiving to God. Giving is an integral part of worship.

Give as a form of sacrifice to God. From the earliest stages of Hebrew religion, gifts have been basic to the sacrificial system. Even in the New Testament, gifts given directly to other human beings in need can be described as sacrifices to God. In daring language, St. Paul calls the Philippian’s gift to himself “a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.” (Phil. 4:18).

Give spontaneously. Many immediate face-to-face human needs demand a spon-

taneous personal response. The Christian must serve the needs of the poor, hungry, homeless, and sick wherever and wherever they are encountered (Mt. 25:31-46). Give systematically. Responsible giving requires planned and regular pattern that avoid spasmodic giving. At a minimum, the Armenian faithful should ideally follow the practice of weekly giving to his church and annual membership dues of \$25 to the Pre-lacy.

Give humbly and give in love. The giving will lose its value and miss the purpose if it is done without love. Authentic giving is one expression of your growth into the kind of person God wants us to be. St. Paul says, “If I give away all I have... but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Cor. 13:3).

Give to preserve your identity and your national and cultural values. Our faith, our language, our history, our culture, our spiritual values and traditions, our saints and feasts are extremely important elements to preserve our national identity. When a person denies his identity he can easily lose his sense of origin and becomes a reed shaken in the wind. The Armenians are committed Christians. They have surrendered their wills to Christ, and have no desire to yield to any other. The vivid example was the battle of Avarayr in 451 A.D. They have their heritage which can be enriched but never denied. They proclaim their freedom and independence from any political system that would tyrannize their integrity. In order to be able to fulfill its mission as the guardian of the Word and of our national values, we have to support the National Membership program. We have to say YES to our Pre-lacy who has always said YES to the will of God and to the will of our people.

Let us remember that our participation in the National Membership program will enable us to take part in the whole mission of the Pre-lacy, to go where we cannot go, to educate people we shall never meet, and to build the Kingdom of God wherein we can earn a place as a faithful steward.

May the blessings of the Lord be upon you all.



Young Adult Retreat

(Continued from page 1)

neighbor is not necessarily the one who lives next door or who is of the same nationality or who is Christian. “Make every human your neighbor and love your neighbor—not in order to enter the Kingdom but because in loving your neighbor you become a witness for Jesus Christ.

The evening concluded with vesper service during which everyone sang Hayr Mer, recalling Fr. Tarazi’s declaration that the Lord’s Prayer is “the essential teaching of Jesus Christ.”

Crowning the weekend retreat was the celebration of Sourp Badarak on Sunday morning at Sts. Vartanantz Church in Providence, Rhode Island. The celebrant was Rev. Dr. Mesrob Tashjian, who, during his sermon, encouraged the believers to remain steadfast in their faith despite difficult times, to live with hope, and to let Christ’s joy radiate from their hearts.

After the service, the retreatants had lunch at the Christmas bazaar where friendships were solidified. We parted with hugs and tears, a greater understanding of our Christian faith, and anticipation for the next retreat.

Jeanette Nazarian

