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Armenian Apostolic Church of America
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The Blessing of Muron (Holy Oil)—the first in the Pontificate of Catholicos Aram I—took place in Antelias, Lebanon on Sunday, May 26, with the presence of thousands of faithful from around the world and with representatives of the Holy Mother See of Etchmiadzin, as well as the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople. The centuries-old ceremony took place outside in the courtyard of the Catholicate in front of the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator with the tolling of bells and the flight of doves. Catholicos Aram mixed the remaining Holy Muron and Holy Muron from Etchmiadzin into the new Muron, symbolizing the continuity and unity of the Armenian Church.



National Representative Assembly in N.J. *(see pages 4 & 5)*



The 1700th anniversary of the proclamation of Christianity as the official religion in Armenia which will be commemorated worldwide in the year 2001 (less than five years away) will be a major event for all of Christendom. A three day consultation conference took place in Paris, June 14-16 with the participation of more than 40 academic specialists, theologians, and clergy from the U.S., Canada, England, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Austria, Lebanon, Jerusalem, Iran, and Armenia in order to discuss the best way to celebrate this milestone.

(See pages 3 for story and photos.)



From the Editor...

The editor's note this month is more like a "note-ette." The one column of space I usually try to save for myself is reduced to less than four inches.

Last month's "Language of the Liturgy," generated lots of comments (verbal). But, praise the Lord, also several written responses which I will happily share with you in the coming months.

This summer issue covers the months of June, July, and August. Our next issue will be the September issue.

I will feel remiss if I do not say at least a few words about Arthur Hamparian whose death leaves a great void not only as a valued publications consultant but as a dear friend. My association with him in the area of "making books," together with my late husband, spans more than three decades. His gentle and unassuming demeanor will be greatly missed. †

Ardashes Arthur Hamparian 1924-1996



In a photo taken in the mid 1970's, Ardashes is seen with the then Prelate Archbishop Karekin Sarkissian (now Karekin I of Etchmiadzin) conversing about their favorite topic—books.

Ardashes Arthur Hamparian, a valued and active member of the Armenian American community, died on June 18. Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian officiated at the funeral services on June 20 and offered his condolences to the family and friends assembled to bid a final farewell to an exemplary Armenian American who generously contributed his talent and expertise to a host of organizations, including the Prelacy.

The following eulogy was presented on behalf of the family by Ardashes's brother-in-law, Charles Kasparian.

"Ardashes Hamparian was a first generation Armenian American, who lived his life as exemplified by so many of his generation in his service to the Armenian Church and to the Armenian people.

"Ardashes, his brother Nishan, and his sister Aghavani, grew up in New York City, the children of genocide survivors, Hampartzoom and Armaveni Hampartzoomian. There they participated in the life of the Armenian community, attending St. Illuminator's Armenian Apostolic Cathedral and the Aharonian Armenian School. It was in his home that Ardashes was instilled with his abiding faith in the Armenian Church. It was there that his family inspired in him his lifelong commitment to the Armenian Cause. Living in the tightly knit Armenian communities of Manhattan and the Bronx, in modest circumstances but rich in family and friends, Ardashes was given the drive which would propel him into a lifetime of commitment to his faith, his family, and his nation.

"Ardashes left home to serve in the Navy during World War II and was called back to serve in the Korean war. Following his military service and then as a graduate of Columbia University, Ardashes entered the publishing business, a field he would grow to love and a profession he would put at the service of the Armenian nation. Over the years, he has been affiliated with top publishing houses including Grosset & Dunlap, Random House, Viking Press, and Times Books. Prior to his retirement he served as the Executive Director of Littlefield and Adams, publishers of university textbooks.

"Ardashes' experiences in the creation of books, his love of literature and his knowledge and appreciation of Armenian history combined to make him an important asset to the Prelacy, where, for more than a generation, he volunteered to guide through books, commemorative booklets, hymnals, and other publications. He also volunteered on a number of projects and was on hand to advise on a variety of printing and publishing concerns. Ardashes sheparded through works written by Vehapar Karekin I (then Prelate of the Prelacy), Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, and many other distinguished church and community leaders. As chairman of the Armenian National Education Committee (ANEC) and his interest in the perpetuation of the Armenian language in America, he contributed to the design and production of Armenian-English textbooks including, *Armenia in Ancient and Medieval Times*, by Robert Bedrosian; the

Historical Atlas of Armenia, now readying for its next printing; as well as Thomas J. Samuelian's two volumes, *A Course in Modern Western Armenian* and *Armenian Dictionary in Transliteration*. Just a few years ago he produced the booklet in observance of the 75th anniversary of St. Illuminator's Cathedral. In his ANEC post he worked to improve the quality of Armenian education, a cause dear to his heart.

"Through the years, Ardashes donated books to Armenian schools including the Mekhitarists in Venice, the Birds Nest orphanage in Lebanon, and day schools in California, to name only a few. For nearly 30 years he had been sending books by and about Shakespeare to Professor Zarian, a Shakespearean scholar in Yerevan. For the last several years he was donating newly published and updated scientific and technical textbooks to Yerevan State University.

"Always an activist with an abiding faith in the just cause of the Armenian people, Ardashes was an early advocate of political efforts to secure justice for the crime of genocide and the forced exile of the Armenian people from their historic homeland. In 1965, on the occasion of the 50th observance of the Genocide, Ardashes participated in the planning of the first of the "activist" processions through the streets of New York City. This community-wide demonstration helped pave the way for the demands of the Armenian people to be put before the world and, ultimately, opened the door for the emergence of today's energetic brand of Armenian American advocacy.

"Ardashes' long years of service to the Church was honored when he was awarded the Mesrob Mashtots Medal by the Prelacy. In addition to volunteering for the Prelacy and ANEC, Ardashes was actively involved in the governing bodies of St. Illuminator's Cathedral, St. Illuminator's Armenian School, the Land and Culture Organization, the Armenian Literary Society of New York, the Armenian Radio Hour, the Armenian Students' Association, and more recently, the American Armenian Medical Philanthropic Fund, Inc. (formerly the Armenian National Sanatorium of Lebanon). He has also served as a delegate to the Prelacy's National Representative Assembly.

"His first visit to Armenia was in 1979 and again several times over the years. Together with his son Raffi, he spent one month in Gogaran to assist in the rebuilding of this village following the earthquake. It was his wish to attend the dedication of the restored church in Gogaran scheduled for this August.

"Ardash and his wife, the former Mary Aljian, were blessed with three children, Lorig, Aram, and Raffi, all of whom, following the example of their father, are actively dedicated to the Armenian nation.

"Ardashes is an example of the generation born in America, proud of his American heritage and also a true son of the heroes of Vartanantz, Sardarabad, and the *fedeyees* with Antranig. He was staunch in his belief that Armenia shall be free and independent—not only for all our generations past, who dared to dream, to hope, but for our Armenian people today, both in Armenia and the Diaspora, whose aspirations, and whose dreams have yet to be fulfilled. He believed that all Armenians in their political and/or religious positions, had a right to their beliefs—that by dialogue and discussions, rather than by labeling, the greater interest of the Armenian nation would be advanced. He believed that all elements of the Armenian community, however divergent their paths, would eventually bring the brightest and best of our people to the fore. He leaves us with the legacy of the covenant with both our martyred dead and our courageous survivors in our pursuit of the Armenian cause and a constitutional democracy for the fledgling nation of Armenia. He believed that in the history of the world, men of goodwill with aspirations and dreams have been the pavers of the path in societies where the individual's rights prevail and where justice prevails."



Young, talented Armenian American artists entertained the guests at the Prelacy Ladies' Guild's annual Mother's Day Luncheon. Under the direction of Gregory Toronian, a blockbuster show was put on by Daniel Adamian, Seda Azarian, Shirleyann Kaladjian, and Christopher Sevadjan. This year's luncheon was dedicated to the late Suzanne Hagopian a founding member of the Ladies Guild. In a touching tribute, Dr. Herand Markarian presented a slide presentation on highlights of her life.



Souren Anastasian, Levon Barsouian and Riitta Haroutunian were the proud 1996 graduates of the Siamanto Academy. Commencement services took place on May 18 in the presence of parents and friends. Shown above with the graduates are Mrs. Norik Baboorian-Checkosky (third from left), administrator of the Academy, and Mrs. Gilda B. Kupelian, the Executive Director of the Armenian National Education Committee, the sponsoring organization of the Siamanto Academy.

OUTREACH

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Consultation Conference on the 1700th Anniversary of Christianity in Armenia Concludes in Paris

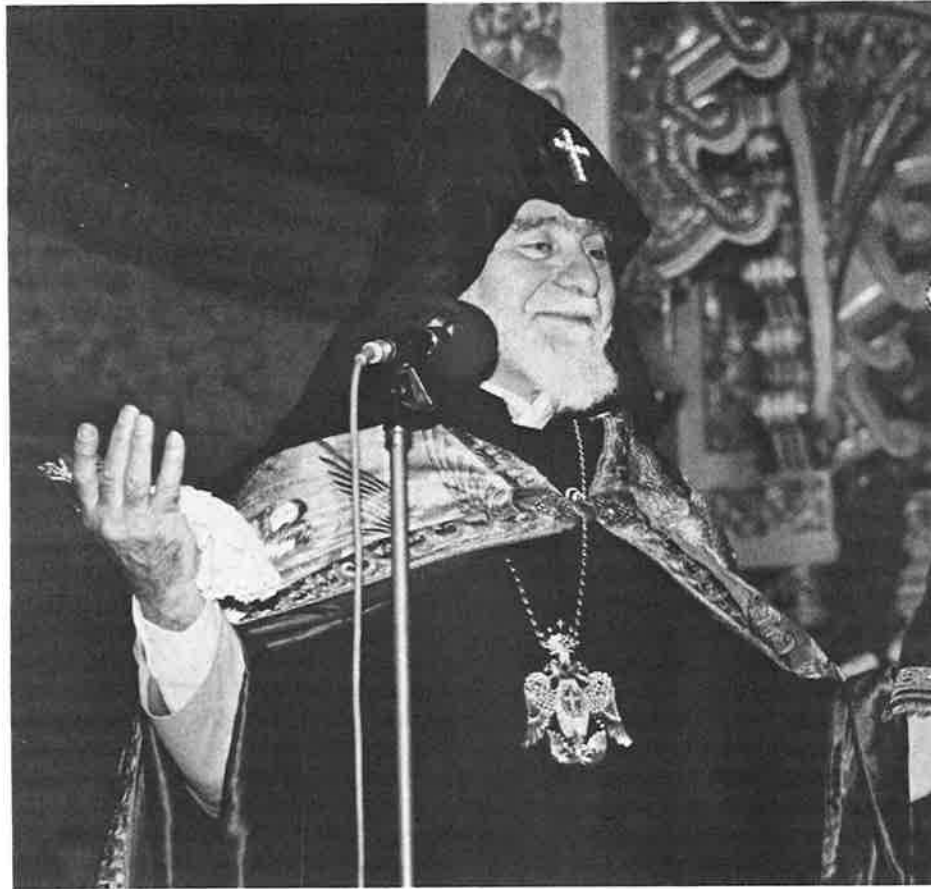
Under the patronage of His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, and His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, a three day consultation on the 1700th anniversary of the proclamation of Christianity as the official religion in Armenia took place in the Armenian Cathedral of Paris, June 14-16, 1996. All sessions were presided over by His Holiness Karekin Catholicos. Also present was His Beatitude Archbishop Karekin, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, a member of the Executive Committee. Aram Catholicos was unable to attend the meetings due to his presence at an urgently called international assembly on the status of Jerusalem held in Lebanon; also absent was His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem.

In his opening prayer and remarks, His Holiness Karekin presented to the participants the general directions the deliberations should take. The meeting was then turned over to the co-chairmen of the Executive Committee, Archbishop Mesrob Krikorian, Patriarchal Delegate of Etchmiadzin for Central Europe and Sweden, and Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Prelate of the Cilician Diocese of New York, who together explained the procedure to be followed during the coming days.

The intent of the consultation was to seek out from the assembled experts their ideas on how best to commemorate the conversion of the Armenian nation to Christianity in 301 A.D. As the Catholicos and the co-chairmen pointed out, the year 2001 is not only the 1700th anniversary of Christianity in Armenia, but the first year of a new century and the first year of the third Christian millennium. Furthermore, since the fourth century saw not only the conversion of the Armenians to Christianity, but in quick succession other national churches and, most importantly for the spread of the new faith, the conversion of the Roman Empire, the 1700th jubilee of the Armenian Church takes on a greater importance. The Armenian Church is universally recognized as the first national church, thus, the celebration will be of great interest to all Christian denominations and an example for their own commemorations.

The Executive Committee, through its co-chairmen, invited more than 40 academic specialists, theologians, and higher clergy from the United States, Canada, England, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Austria, Lebanon, Jerusalem, Iran, and Armenia, including the holders of the major chairs of Armenian Studies throughout the world. There was also active participation of members from the Supreme Council of Holy Etchmiadzin, as well as a member of the parallel committee established by the President of the Republic of Armenia, Levon Ter Petrossian, to commemorate the 1700th anniversary. The consultative group was multi-ethnic, divided nearly equally between Armenian and non-Armenian scholars, multi-denominational with Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim participants.

The planners of the consultation grouped the deliberations into six major themes: 1) "Jubilee of the Year 2000 and the 1700th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Christianity as the Official Religion in Armenia," with Professors Bernard Outtier and Dennis Papazian as discussion leaders; 2) "The 1700th Anniversary as an International Event: Symposiums, Exhibitions, Conferences and other Programs," under Dr. Patrick Donabedian and Prof. Jean-Pierre Mahé; 3) "Academic Publications Marking the 1700th Anniversary," led by Professors Robert Thomson and Nina Garsoian; 4) "God's Pilgrim People Together: A Journey Back to the Future," led by Kegham Kevonian and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian; 5) "General Programs," co-chaired by Archbishops Krikorian and Ashjian; and 6) "Historic



His Holiness Karekin I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, delivers his sermon during the Divine Liturgy which ended the three-day conference. In his opening remarks His Holiness told the assembled scholars and specialists, "The seventeen centuries of continuous, unbroken and creative witness of the Armenian Church is part of the entire Christendom and of human history in general. The 17th century celebration is an excellent opportunity to bring that witness under international and pan-Christian focus... The challenge is before us. Let us take it seriously and with utmost love and responsibility."

Armenia and Church Renovation," led by Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian and Professor Jean Mahé.

The Executive Committee emphasized from the beginning that the sessions were for "brainstorming." Indeed, most of the first day was witness to an enormous diversity of ideas and suggestions with the energetic participation of His Holiness and the upper clergy. As the day progressed both the richness of possibilities and the complexity and the implications of the celebration became apparent to all.

To facilitate the work of the consultative body, the co-chairmen decided to divide the gathering into six small sub-groups meeting independently to draw up a program for each sector. Group One, "The Spiritual Dimension of the 1700th Anniversary," chaired by Prof. Vigen Guroian and Rev. Manfred Richter; Group Two, "Conferences and Symposiums," under Prof. Richard Hovannisian; Group Three, "International Exhibitions," led by Dr. Donabedian and Prof. Dickran Kouymjian; Group Four, "Publications," chaired by Professors Thomson and Garsoian; Group Five, "Pilgrimages," led by Archbishop Derderian and Mr. Kevonian; and Group Six, "Historic Armenia and Church Renovation," led by Archbishop Ashjian and Professor Mahé.

At the end of the formal deliberations, the group leaders presented detailed reports which not only suggested the

direction activities related to their area of consultation should take, but a concrete outline of what projects were already firmly in the planning stage and what other projects might be undertaken. All of the reports and the proceedings of the meeting will be published in a newsletter. A general survey of each report follows.

Resumé of Reports

Group One: "Spiritual Dimensions of the 1700th Anniversary," report of Vigen Guroian:

1. There is need for the preparation of a critical theological analysis of the relationship of ethnos, nationality, and faith.
2. There is need for a fundamental rethinking of Armenian Christian identity in the contemporary world and serious ecclesiological reflection on all aspects of church life and the church's engagement with the world.
3. In lights of points 1 and 2, the Armenian Church ought to take advantage of the climate of cooperation created by the modern ecumenical movement and make a concerted effort to be present whenever conversations about world Christianity occur.
4. There ought to be a pastoral project which addresses and takes into account inculturation of the faith in the various societies in which the Armenian Church is located.



Three great scholars confer: (l to r), Robert Thomson, Jean-Pierre Mahé and Nina Garsoian.

5. There ought to be produced a short catechism for young adults, as well as a children's Bible with illustrations based, if possible, on Armenian Gospel illuminations.

Group Two: "Local and International Conferences," report by Prof. Richard Hovannisian.

The committee proposed that there be one major international conference of two or three days with the participation of scholars and specialists on the Armenian Church, its history and theology, its impact on national literature, architecture, painting, and its enduring role during the period of statelessness, as well as the effect of the Genocide on the church, its role in the survival and revival of the Armenian people, and the challenges that face the church today. The committee also thought that smaller regional conferences should be regularly programmed on a variety of specific subjects. All conferences should have a comparative approach to attract non-Armenian as well as Armenian scholars and audiences, and to emphasize the ecumenical nature of the 1700th anniversary celebration.

Group Three: "International Exhibitions," report of Prof. Dickran Kouymjian and Dr. Patrick Donabedian.

The Committee proposed a series of regional and international exhibitions to emphasize the pioneer aspect of the first national Christian church which gave rise to an extraordinary rich civilization and a continuing and living culture.

A number of large exhibitions on the Armenian Church which through liturgical objects underlines and explains the fundamentals of Armenian faith and spirituality. Already two such exhibits are in the planning stage for the year 2001 at the British Museum in London ("Armenian Art from the 4th to the 17th Century") and the Palazzo Ducale in Venice ("Armenians Today and Yesterday: Architecture and Culture.") The current exhibits at the Dobrée Museum in Nantes and the Bibliotheque Nationale of France should be regarded as the first in a series leading

(Continued on page 5)



The Committee on Exhibitions (photo left) and the Committee on Local & International Conferences.

National Representative Assembly Convenes in New Jersey:

The National Representative Assembly of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America (Eastern United States and Canada) met in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey, May 15-17, during which time the delegates deliberated on the many challenges facing the Armenian Church. The host community was Sts. Vartanantz Church, Ridgefield, New Jersey.

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Prelate, and the delegates welcomed the recent decision of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, to join Archbishop Ashjian and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Diocese of Canada, in permitting co-celebration of liturgical services.

In his keynote address to the NRA delegates, Archbishop Ashjian spoke of the many changes that have taken place in the life of the church during the past few years calling for new thinking and new action in keeping with these changes.

Mr. Onnic Marashian, chairman of the Prelacy's Executive Council, in his keynote address, emphasized the need to "pause and reflect on the challenges facing us as a church community in the Eastern United States and Canada." Concentrating on issues close to home, Mr. Marashian spoke of the growing financial problems facing many of the parishes.

Several awards were conferred during the closing banquet on Friday, May 17. This year's "Spirit of Armenia" award was presented to Congressman Robert Torricelli in recognition of his many years of service to the Armenian American community in New Jersey. The "Woman of the Year" award was conferred upon Mrs. Isabella Avedissian, benefactor to many Armenian organizations, especially in the field of education. Mr. and Mrs. Onnic and Verkine Marashian were honored with the Prince and Princess of Cilicia award and the Mesrob Mashdotz medal was given posthumously to Pierre Papazian. Special recognition and awards were presented to faithful parishioners of Sts. Vartanantz including, Iris Papazian, Dick and Arax Sarajian, Krikor and Hasmig Zadourian, Aram and Silva Zadourian, and Vahe and Rose Surenian. Shant Haroutunian, Esq., a long-time member of the Prelacy Executive Council who chose not to run for re-election, was presented with a painting in recognition of his years of dedicated service to the Prelacy.

Meeting of Religious Assembly

The religious assembly met prior to the joint meetings. The clergymen discussed liturgical and organizational matters and also participated in a workshop on "Clergy Stress and Creative Ministry," led by John L. Booramra, from St. Vladimir's Seminary. Archbishop Ashjian who had just returned from Istanbul, where he represented the See of Cilicia during Catholicos Karekin I's trip to visit Patriarch Batholomew I and the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, presented a detailed report about the upcoming 1700th anniversary celebrations of the official establishment of Christianity in Armenia.

Meeting of Religious and Lay Assemblies

The joint religious and lay assemblies convened Wednesday afternoon, under the presidency of Archbishop Ashjian, and with the participation of 97 lay and 17 clergy delegates. Following the reports of the credentials and nominating committees the executive was elected as follows: Mr. Zaven Sarkissian, Toronto, and Mr. Artin Deirmenjian, Chicago, Co-Chairmen; Mr. Raffi Der Boghosian, Toronto, Armenian secretary and Mr. Ted Bohigian, Chicago, English secretary.

NRA Panels

On Thursday, May 16, after routine duties, the Assembly broke into individual panels: Christian Education; Armenian Education; Constitutional Matters; Fi-



Delegates and guests at the 1996 N.R.A. in New Jersey.



Congressman Robert Torricelli (NJ) was the recipient of the 1996 "Spirit of Armenia" award which is presented to individuals who have been exceptionally helpful to the Armenian American community. Show, left to right, Ken Sarajian, Hratch Zadoian, Congressman Torricelli, Archbishop Ashjian, and Onnic Marashian.

nance, Budget, and Audit; and Board of Trustees. This year a special panel was set up for delegates to the World Assembly in Lebanon who met in order to go over the agenda of the upcoming assembly.

Unity

Following the presentation of the report of the Unity committee the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

"Whereas the National Representative Assembly has reviewed the Executive Council's report on the issue of Administrative Unity and heard the comments of the Unity Committee, Be it resolved that, we welcome the recent decision of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, to join with our Prelate, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Diocese of Canada, to permit the co-celebration of liturgical services, and, We authorize the Unity Committee to resume the unity process consistent with the past resolutions of the National Representative Assembly."

Representing the Eastern Diocese at the NRA was Edward Chapian, Esq., and representing the Canadian Diocese was Father Zareh Zarkarian.

Elections

Re-elected to serve on the Religious Council was Very Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian. Re-elected to the Executive Council were Onnic Marashian, Dr. Jean Arakelian, and Jack Mardoian, Esq. Elected to serve as a new member on the Council was Mr. Hagop Kouyoumdjian.

Visit to Hovnanian School

On Thursday, May 16, the Armenian Education panel together with Archbishop



Mrs. Isabella Avedissian receives the "Woman of the Year" award from His Eminence in appreciation of her dedicated support of many Armenian institutions around the world, especially in the field of education.



Onnic & Verkine Marashian were honored with the Prince and Princess of Cilicia award. Mr. Marashian has been a member of the Prelacy's Executive Council for many years and was recently re-elected chairman.

Ashjian visited the Hovnanian School in New Milford, New Jersey. Delegates were given a tour of the school by the principal, Mr. Artoun Hamalian, which was followed by an Ascension Day program prepared by the students and a delicious lunch prepared by the parents. Also in attendance were the school's major benefactors, Mr. and Mrs. Vahakn and Hasmig Hovnanian.

Ascension Day Services

Thursday evening a Divine Liturgy was celebrated at Sts. Vartanantz Church with the participation of all of the clergy, in commemoration of Ascension Day. A dinner, prepared by the local Ladies Guild, followed at the church hall. The evening was also an informal celebration of Archbishop Ashjian's 35th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood.

Messages congratulating His Eminence were read from His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Armenian Church of America. Father Zareh Zarkarian, who

was attending the NRA as a representative of the Canadian Diocese, congratulated Archbishop Ashjian on behalf of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of Canada.

Closing Banquet

The 1996 NRA concluded Friday evening with the closing banquet which took place at the Woodcliff Lake Hilton. As mentioned earlier, special awards and recognitions were presented. In his closing remarks, Archbishop Ashjian, again welcomed the announcement made by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, granting permission to Prelacy clergy to take part in religious services in Diocese churches, on a case by case basis. Archbishop Ashjian noted that the Prelacy has had an "open door" policy for many years and since last May, cooperation in joint celebration of the Divine Liturgy was established in Canada. Archbishop Ashjian expressed confidence that these latest efforts will greatly enhance the unity of the Armenian Church.

Welcomes Ruling by Diocese on Joint Clergy Participation



A view of the meeting.

Mesrob Mashdotz Medallion Presented to Pierre Papazian Posthumously



In what Archbishop Ashjian described as his "most difficult duty of the evening," he presented the Cilician See's Mesrob Mashdotz Medal posthumously to Pierre Papazian in recognition of his many years of service to the Prelacy and the Cilician See and his extensive literary works. His Eminence recalled how he himself was hospitalized in France when the news of Pierre's death was conveyed to him and the deep personal sorrow and helplessness he felt. His Eminence described Pierre as a true "maverick" with a keen intellect and great vision. "He was never afraid to take unpopular stands if he felt it in the best interests of the Armenian nation," the Prelate said. In addition to the Gontag from His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, a special message from His Holiness Karekin I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, was read by Archbishop Ashjian. In his message, Catholicos Karekin recalled his personal friendship with Pierre whom he described as a "quiet intellectual a serious thinker, and valued friend." Shown with Archbishop Ashjian above, left to right, are Mr. Papazian's son, Michael, to whom the medal was presented, his sister Margaret, and widow, Iris, who was one of the honorees from the New Jersey community who received commendations from the Prelacy.

Honorees of New Jersey Community...



Krikor & Hasmig Zadourian



Aram & Silva Zadourian



Dick & Arax Sarajian



Vahe & Rose Surenian

1700th Anniversary (continued from page 3)

up to and continuing after the year 2001. Other major museums such as the Metropolitan in New York and the Louvre in Paris will be contacted.

Recommendations were made on specific exhibitions which ought to be proposed, including "Liturgical Vessels and Vestments," and "Armenian Altar Curtains and Related Church Textiles." The committee strongly recommended that all exhibits should serve to define and explain the Armenian faith, especially to today's youth. The Exhibits should also be open to other cultures including especially the Eastern Orthodox churches, other Christian churches, as well as Islam.

Group Four: "Publications," report by Prof. Peter Cowe:

A thorough program of publications which would include liturgical, theological, patristic, hagiographic, and historical texts as well as works relating to Armenian Christian art and architecture, was presented. Among specific general works proposed are, a four volume history of the Armenian Church, a single volume popular presentation of church history, and individual volumes on the liturgy and Armenian Christian literature.

Group Five: "Pilgrimages and the 1700th Anniversary Commemoration," report by Prof. Vigen Guroian and Kegham Kevoian:

A series of pilgrimages will be undertaken beginning in the year 1997 and culminating in the anniversary year 2001 to the holiest sites of Armenian Christianity with special attention focused on those places in and near Etchmiadzin where the Armenian Apostolic Church was first established. Other sites in the Near East and West important to the Apostolic and historical legacy of the Armenian Church will also be included. Emphasis will be placed on pilgrimage as a path to spiritual enlightenment. Priority will be given to the youth who will be given elaborate instruction and preparation on the meaning of pilgrimage as a pious action.

Group Six: "Historic Armenia and Church Renovation."

1. The Committee expects that the specialists in Armenian studies will seek bilateral and trilateral agreements between universities for preserving

Armenian sites abroad, i.e., monuments outside the frontiers of the Armenian Republic.

2. In the event a foreign university solicits the aid of UNESCO or any other international aid for the restoration of an Armenian monument on its territory, it should be necessary to assure that this aid is granted provided there is cooperation with one or two universities from other countries.

3. Establish a priority list of monuments to be preserved distinguishing between churches, monasteries, and civil or memorial monuments.

His Holiness Karekin I also asked all the specialists gathered in Paris to endorse the following propositions: (1) All Armenian churches in the Republic of Armenia be incorporated into a plan for their systematic preservation and eventual restoration. (2) All Armenian and non-Armenian specialists contact the Republic of Armenia as well as their own governments to address the responsible authorities and governments directly, of all countries in which Armenian churches and monuments exist and urge them to take appropriate measures for the classification, preservation and restoration of these structures.

Whenever possible an attempt was made to coordinate activities of this international consultative body with those of the parallel committee established by the Armenian Republic.

Conclusion of Conference

On Sunday, June 16, the meeting was closed by the Holy Liturgy celebrated by Archbishop Mesrob Krikorian in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. His Holiness Karekin I gave a special sermon on the importance of the 1700th anniversary. There was general agreement that the results of the three-day consultation were extremely positive and that the work of the special commissions produced the outlines of a concrete program of action. The Catholicos emphasized that this was just the beginning of a series of gatherings. He also stressed that every anniversary associated with the 1700th anniversary should be focused on the spiritual dimension of Armenian Christianity and seen as a vehicle toward the renewal of the faith.



Concurrent with the National Assembly, the National Association of Ladies Guilds (NALG) held their annual conference which continued the group's year-long theme of family and health. Shown are members of the executive with Archbishop Ashjian.



Archbishop Ashjian presents a gift of appreciation to Mr. & Mrs. Shant and Louise Haroutunian. A member of the Prelacy's Executive Council for many years, Mr. Haroutunian decided not to run for re-election this year.

A Palm Sunday Meditation on the

by Vigen Guroian

OUR Prelate, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, has honored me with an invitation to address you on this Palm Sunday and eightieth birthday of St. Illuminator's Cathedral. The honor, I dare say, is more than he himself imagines. For there is a special joy and sense of personal progress that I feel in being here today. This is the Church in which my parents were married and I was baptized. My very first memories of being in Church belong here as well. For it is here that my parents brought me as a very young child. The sweet scent of the incense, the shimmering of the flabellums, the warm candlelight, the sharagans sung by the choir, the resonant responses of the priest and the deacon—these are my earliest memories of Church, in this very place. Even this room that we are seated in, Pashalian Hall, brings back blessed memories because John Pashalian and his father were my first baby-sitters. Johnny Pashalian's gentle manner was a great comfort to a shy young boy and through my young adulthood until his untimely death I thought of him as a beloved uncle.

There is another uncle whom I associate with this church, my great uncle, John Odabashian, who as a young man stood armed guard with his cousin at the grand wood carved doors of this Church. That happened long before I was born. But when I was older, I was told stories about that time, and so I also began to understand why I did not see all my relatives here. Thus, just as this hallowed house gave me my earliest sacred memories of the worship of God, it also reminds me even to this day of the divisions within my own family and among Armenians as a people.

But allow me to begin at the beginning, as I intend to return to these observations later on. This is the day all Christians call Palm Sunday. My purpose is to consider the meaning of Palm Sunday in light of the present circumstances of the Armenian Church and the future of our Christian faith as we commemorate this eightieth anniversary of St. Illuminator Cathedral and look forward to the 1700th anniversary, in the year 2001, of the founding of the Armenian Church.

This day's gospel reading is taken from St. Matthew. It is the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem riding on an ass and a colt. For Jews this bore the symbolism of royal and messianic presence. In this morning's liturgy we commemorated that event, and with hymns and prayers remembered its redemptive meaning, sealed by our Lord's passion, death, and resurrection. The Melody for the liturgy of Palm Sunday says:

The children of the Hebrews sing the song of the cherubims;
And the company of the gentiles join in the feast of the celestials.
A field adorned with roses, and bedecked with verdant leaves.
Resounds with the music: Hosanna, blessed is he who comes.

And in the Introit the whole Church exclaims:

Rejoice, O Jerusalem, adorn thy bridal-chamber. O Sion; for behold thy king Christ, seated on the new colt, shows meekness and comes to enter into thy chamber. And we cry aloud: Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, who has great mercy.

Jesus had entered Jerusalem on other occasions and on other Passover feasts, and on those occasions he had taken great care not to make a public display, sometimes he had even slipped into the city by night so as not to arouse attention. And so we might ask: "Why did he act differently on this day? And what are the lessons we learn from the answer to that question?"

The record of all four gospels indicates that Jesus carefully planned this entrance into Jerusalem and that he also knew that

by so entering the city he risked putting his own life in danger. Jesus never had made claims to worldly authority of kingship. But the crowds that greeted him at Jerusalem's gates as well as the Roman authorities and Jewish religious leaders thought differently of him. Even Jesus' disciples seemed to be expecting that he was going to establish a new government over Israel. St. Matthew reports that just before the company departed for Jerusalem "the mother of Zebedee's sons," James and John, approached Jesus and after bowing before him asked him if he would give orders that in his kingdom her two sons "sit next to you, one at your right hand and the other at your left." (Matt. 20:20-21)

With hindsight we know what neither Jesus' disciples, the Jewish crowds, nor the religious and political authorities knew. Jesus was about to lay the foundation stone of the church, making his own broken body that stone. For this to happen everything leading up to his crucifixion and resurrection would need to be public, so that there might be many witnesses and testimonies to the mighty act of God in Christ.

Jesus answered James' and John's mother: "You do not understand what you are asking," (Matt. 20:22) and turning to the other disciples who had become jealous and angry, he added: "You know that, among the Gentiles, rulers lord over their subjects, and the great make their authority felt. It shall not be so with you; among you, whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:25-28)

But the disciples simply did not comprehend what Jesus was saying. They did not just understand the kind of kingdom the Messiah was bringing into existence. Later they did understand and they were forgiven by their resurrected Master. All but John ultimately gave their lives for his sake; they themselves renouncing any claim to worldly power and adding their broken bodies to that eternal foundation upon which our Church stands and our faith rests.

We also are told by the gospel writers what happened after the joy and enthusiasm of this day. By week's end the same crowd who sang Hosannas and laid flowers, palm branches, and articles of clothing in Jesus' path cried out for his death, while the disciples fled for their lives as their leader was nailed to a cross. Only the blessed woman remained to anoint our Lord's broken body; and so is it any surprise that they were rewarded by God with the first knowledge that their Master was resurrected.

But let me back up for just a moment and recall another event in the story. Whereas St. Matthew puts the cleansing of the temple on Palm Sunday, St. Mark's report rings with greater authenticity. St. Mark tells us that Jesus did indeed proceed directly to the temple that first Palm Sunday. However, since darkness was falling, he soon retreated with the twelve disciples to Bethany for the night, returning the next day. Says St. Mark, on that next day Jesus cleansed the temple,

On the following day... they left Bethany... So they came to Jerusalem, and he went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold there. He upset the tables of the money-changers and the seats of dealers in pigeons; and he would not allow anyone to carry goods through the temple. Then he began to teach them and said, "Does not scripture say, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations?' But you have made it a robbers' cave." The chief priests and the scribes heard this and looked for a way to bring about his death. (Mark 12, 15-19)

St. Mark's account includes several impor-

tant details. First, by choosing the temple for such a demonstrative display of divine disfavor, Jesus made it clear that his aim was not political revolution or founding a new independent Jewish state. Second, Jesus acted consistently with something he had done three years earlier. In the desert following his baptism in the river Jordan, Jesus had rejected the Devil's third and last temptation. He refused to give over his divine sonship in exchange for rulership over all the earth's kingdoms.

Nevertheless, the temptation that Jesus rejected the people had implicitly embraced. When he rode into Jerusalem on the back of an ass he knew that he might arouse the nationalistic passions that were running so high among his countrymen. When the crowd began to chant, "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David which is coming!", Jesus' fate was sealed. He was bound to disappoint the crowd because he could be obedient to no one other than his Father. However, by refusing to be the political Messiah of their nationalistic expectations, Jesus established the true mission of the Church. The blood with which our salvation was bought was spilled at the hands of the Roman rulers with the assent of religious leaders whose first concern was to hold on to their privileged position and power. An important lesson of Palm Sunday is that the Church must never permit itself to become the handmaid of political powers. In the way of Christ, rather, the Church must always attend first and foremost to healing the body and spirit of sinful and suffering human beings.

The words shouted by the growing throng on the first Palm Sunday, "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David which is coming" echoed the poetry of nationalism that had captured the Jewish imagination in contradiction to all the warnings of the prophets.

"Behold, O Lord, and raise up their king, the son of David... Cleanse Jerusalem from the Gentiles who trample on it... crush the arrogance of the sinner... crush his whole substance with an iron mace, blot out the lawless Gentiles with a word, put the Gentiles to flight with his threats!"

This was a popular song of the day. No wonder the people turned on the Messiah of peace and condemned him to death whom God had sent to fulfill the message of the prophets.

I have come to the crux of my talk. Does the picture begin to look familiar? What if we were to substitute Azeris for Gentiles in the Jewish nationalist song I just quoted, and Armenia and Artsakh for Jerusalem. Would that pen in the last details of this portrait? But someone will ask: "Was not the cause of the Jews against the oppression of Rome just? Was not their desire for an independent Israel right?" Of course they were. And the cause of an independent Armenia is right, and the struggle for Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh) is morally justifiable. But just as accomplishment of those ends for Israel were not Christ's purpose nor is the primary mission of the Church political liberation or nation building.

In Jesus' time, the popular nationalistic expectations of the Messiah were that he would "cleanse Jerusalem from the Gentiles." But Jesus wanted Jerusalem cleansed for the Gentiles. When he entered the temple he was acting in that spirit and toward that purpose. Out of the corrupted contemporary Judaism he wanted to found a new Israel in which there is no dividing wall between Gentile and Jew.

The Church's mission is to become that new Israel. Call it the Church of the Colossians or the Church of the Romans or the Church of the Slavs or the Church of the Armenians, it is still the same Church. It does not serve or belong to only one nation. When Jesus went into the temple his greatest anger was not with the

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money changers, as is so often interpreted, but with the priests who used those money changers to exploit the temple for their own profit and with the narrowest definition of who constitutes the people of God. That is to whom Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah: "Scripture says, 'My house shall be called a house of prayers for all people' but you make it a robbers' cave."

During my visit to Armenia in 1991, I spent a long day in bible study with a group of young men and women at St. Sarkis Church. I asked these young people if they would choose a passage for discussion. They made a selection from the Old Testament book of the prophet Ezekiel. "The House of Israel's priests have done violence to my teaching and have profaned my holy things; they have made no distinction between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them." (21:26) I asked them what this had to do with the Church in Armenia, and they answered that it was well known that Armenian priests were "more concerned with performing the ritual and selling the sacrament than preaching the word of God." Their report was confirmed by many others with whom I spoke.

The pieces fall together all too neatly, and a judgment is called down upon the Armenian Church. When Armenian Church leaders play the role of nation builders and neglect building souls—as they have done—they deny Christ and join the priests in the temple and all their kind whom Christ condemned. But our church leaders are not the only ones who are guilty of such behavior. We all share the blame. Our Church leaders have merely taken our cue. They, with our encouragement and support, have courted the ruling powers obsessively, whether Ottoman, Soviet, or now Armenian. In doing so, they have neglected the nurture of faith and let the weed of a secular and idolatrous nationalism choke the garden of the Armenian soul.

Almost seventy years ago, a very young Armenian deacon who became known to us as Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan foresaw the dangers and consequences of this forfeiture of the true mission of the Church. For those who would have the Church treat the right worship of God, the nurture of the soul, the formation of Christian conscience, the sustenance of the body, and salvation of the whole human being as secondary to the so-called national cause, Nersoyan issued this admonition:

Because of the ignorance of some, the intentional distortion of acts by others, the indifference of still others who should be most watchful, a secondary benefit derived from the Church, i.e., the preservation of our ethnicity, is presented as her only purpose and calling. As this misunderstanding further spreads and gets rooted in people's minds, it obviously harms the cause of Armenian nationhood...and does even more to harm the true calling of the Armenian Church.

Nersoyan then added that "even some Clergy think the same, but they are not faithful to their true calling. The Church is the agent of the Gospel primarily and absolutely. Her virtue rests entirely on this attribute."

But, some so-called "realists" and self-

Mission of the Armenian Church

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proclaimed "patriots" in our community will be heard muttering: "Well, all right, the Church might deny its true calling if it behaves politically and nationalistically, but how would that harm the cause of nationhood?" Nersoyan's analysis supposed three fundamental theological reasons why there is a connection between the mission of the Church misconceived and the future of the nation brought to naught. The first reason he gave is christological: the Father sent the Son into the world to save us from sin and death and that is accomplished only in the Church not by any nation. Some contemporary theologians speak of the Gospel of being "incarnated" in a variety of cultures. If what is meant by this is that through the Church God communicates the Gospel to various peoples making use of their own distinct histories and cultures, this is certainly true. How else could it be? There is no such thing as a cultureless or timeless Christianity, but that gives no warrant for using the Church as a means to the secular end of making a modern nation-state. Quite the contrary, the Church's ultimate purpose in relation to any particular nation is to conform it to the mind of Christ in which the national differences are sublimated to a catholic conscientiousness in unity with the whole Church. We honor non-Armenians as saints for just that reason and they belong no more or no less to the Armenian Church than to the Roman Catholic Church or Greek Orthodox Church. This brings us to the second reason which is ecclesiological. By its very nature and according to its true mission the Church stands over and against every nation as a sign of God's sovereignty and judgment; otherwise the nations will bring themselves and the entire world to ruin. And the third reason is moral and salvific: when the Church attempts to be the builder of nations, it is bound to ignore the nurture of the spirit and soul "through Christ and the Gospel." Nersoyan warned: "We must express our repugnance of becoming an evil and morally bankrupt nation, because such a nation would soon fall;" and such a nation we are bound to become if the Church takes up the national cause at the cost of building souls.

And so this admonition issued almost seventy years ago by one of our great churchmen, certainly the most brilliant of his generation, is no less directed to us today than to Armenians then. "The Armenian Church," Archbishop Tiran concluded, "must be mindful of her calling and devote herself to it alone because that is the only way to revitalize the Armenian people. Our people must have life, and Our Lord came so that we may have life and have it abundantly." That, my brothers and sisters, is why Jesus entered Jerusalem on this day, for this reason and no other reason!

I have myself: "How would the contemporary inhabitants of Yerevan greet Jesus were he to enter their city today?" I do not doubt that at first with great jubilation. But when Jesus refused to behave like the religious leadership or join the freedom fighters or support the government unconditionally, forces would conspire to dispose of him as a traitor to the cause of *Hye Tad* (Armenian Cause). No one seems to worry that we might be building a nation with a poisoned soul.

What kind of a nation would we build? Or have we grown so cynical that we don't care what kind of nation so long as we have a nation? Yet how often did I hear from real believers during my visits to Armenia that their greatest concern was not the Azeris or the Turks but the corruption of the youth, the soul-killing process of the lingering soviet mentality, and the abuse of newly won freedoms by people in whom there is no conscience. Why hasn't the Armenian Church here and in Armenia condemned the drug-trafficking, blackmarketeering, racism, loose sexual morals, rampant divorce, abortion and the like that is blackening the soul of the Armenian people in their so-called moment of triumph? Why did the newly elected Karekin I not address these matters during his visit here and call upon us to mobilize ourselves to heal the soul of the nation. Instead he seemed to be on a mission to raise money and to build the nation; he spoke repeatedly about nation building. I should have expected such rhetoric from the elected President of Armenia. But it would have been pleasing to have heard more from His Holiness about the building up of Christ's body, the Church.

Not alone from the time Jesus entered Jerusalem until He breathed His last breath on the cross did He utter a word of concern about any part He might play in the greater glory of the nation. Instead He went on healing the sick and pouring His strength into the weak. Jesus concerned Himself with building and remarking souls, and from these souls the kingdom of heaven would be made.

I turn to our bishop now and beg him to help us to remember this conduct of our Lord in His last days on earth. Please, Surpazan, cleanse the temple and with your strengthened hand help the weak; with your strengthened voice preach the Gospel; as Christ's representative among us show us how to prepare our souls to be with Jesus and the repentant thief in Paradise, even this day. For what is what the Church is here for, and none of us knows when he or she will be called away.

Lastly, Surpazan, unite us so that we can all worship together. No committee can heal the divisive wounds, only the charismatic example of holiness in your person. I have written to you and told you of the letters I regularly receive from Armenian people of faith who yearn for holiness in their midst and reconciliation among themselves. Some of my cousins are here and some of them and other friends worshipped a few blocks from here this morning, and I could not be with them to greet the Lord. What a mess we have made of the gift of grace and God's love for us in Jesus Christ. May God forgive us!

You, Archbishop Mesrob, have in this year experienced the searing love of God the Father, the purifying fire of his Holy Spirit, and the healing hand of the only begotten Son. Our people need a voice for their pain, fresh words of faith to quench their thirst for the Spirit. You can give them that. God has prepared you for that task. I beg you to use your renewed strength to speak from your wounded heart to the wounded hearts of the Armenian people.

Lead us in love, Surpazan. Show us how to forgive that we know how to forgive also. Lead us in reconciling acts so that we can receive Easter communion and every communion henceforth without fear of condemnation. Make the Gospel live in our hearts as it lives in yours so that we might be emboldened to serve one another in love and in unity, with all glory given to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto ages of ages. Amen. ✠

Vigen Guroian is Professor of Theology and Ethics at Loyola College in Maryland. This homily was delivered at St. Illuminator's Cathedral, New York, on Palm Sunday.

AREC Sponsors Conference on Stories & Storytelling in Christian Education

The Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC) of the Eastern Prelacy provided the opportunity for Christian educators to gather, learn, and exchange ideas during the weekend of April 12-14, 1996. Thirty-five Sunday School teachers and directors representing eight communities plus priests came to the Espousal Conference Center in Waltham, Massachusetts, for the National Conference focusing on the theme of "Stories and Storytelling in Christian Education."

Deacon Shant Kazanjian, Director of AREC, welcomed the participants to the conference Friday evening, reminding all that the ultimate goal of Christian education is to integrate people from every station of life into the life of the Church, which is to say to help people become partakers of the life of the coming-yet-present Kingdom of God and to live as its witnesses. Dn. Kazanjian then invited Mrs. Sandra Selverian, AREC Vice-Chairperson, to lead a session on Networking of Ideas & Resources. Mrs. Selverian first spoke about the unique programs within her Sunday School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she acts as program coordinator. She then interviewed the Sunday School representatives, extracting from them a wealth of activities and ideas that would have perhaps otherwise remained unknown.

Saturday began with a touching morning service with Rev. Fr. Torkom Hagopian, Rev. Fr. Antranig Baljian and Dn. Shant Kazanjian. Dr. Vigen Guroian, Professor of Theology and Ethics at Loyola College of Maryland, presented his first lecture, "Awakening Moral Imagination in Children." He explained that children cannot be taught morality as a textbook subject, rather they must somehow experience it. Fairy tales and fantasy provide children with a safe playground in which to struggle with good and evil. In most classic fairy tales virtue gimmers and evil is blatant, guiding children to see and choose the good. Fairy tales also allow children to role-play, discover and identify—all without the threat of failure. In his second lecture, "Evoking a Religious World Through Storytelling," Dr. Guroian explored specific stories and demonstrated how to evoke from them moral issues. Today children are often taught to define

their own standards of behavior, specially within many public schools. As Christians, however, we have been given a very solid set of moral laws. It is our duty to live those laws and transmit them, not as shifting rules depending on personal preferences, but as the absolute behavioral norms for a healthy society. Dr. Guroian clearly and eloquently demonstrated the usefulness of fairy tales in Christian education.

"The Art and Craft of Storytelling," was presented by Mrs. Virginia Tashjian, renowned storyteller and author. She explained that the interest of storytelling comes from two human desires: The urge to learn from the experience of others, and the thirst for imaginative experiences. In a very lively manner, Mrs. Tashjian listed the tools necessary for successful storytelling, the differences between storytelling and reading stories, the selection and preparation before the actual telling of each story. There are many genres of stories and an experienced storyteller will know which type of story to match with the audience. During her second session, Mrs. Tashjian demonstrated everything from her first session through a real storytelling with a group of 5th and 6th grade Sunday School students from St. Stephen's Church. Both the students and adults present were captivated by her storytelling. In her final session Mrs. Tashjian presented a biographical essay where she highlighted resources on stories and storytelling useful for Sunday School ministry.

By the end of the weekend the participants of this unique conference had reaffirmed to themselves the need and function of Christian educators. They returned to their community Sunday Schools refreshed and full of information and ideas to use.

Sonia Tekeyan

Biblical Spices

CUMMIN—a cultivated herb whose tiny aromatic seeds were harvested by beating the stalks with a rod (Isa. 28:25,27). It was used medicinally, as a perfume oil, and as a seasoning. Jesus used the tithing even of those tiny seeds while not observing the Law's requirements to act justly and mercifully as an example of hypocrisy (Matt. 23:23).

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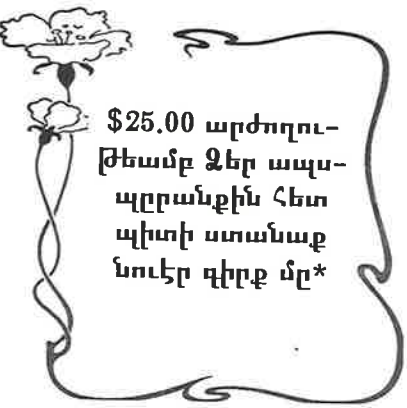
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