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Armenian Apostolic Church of America
138 East 39th Street, New York, New York 10016

Volume XIX, Number 4 — October 1996

Prelacy Seminar Benefits Midwest Church Trustees

The duties and responsibilities of parish leadership were the topic of a day-long seminar sponsored by the Prelacy on October 12. The regional seminar was hosted by the pastor and trustees of St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church located in suburban Dearborn, Michigan.

The seminar succeeded in its aim, which was to assist local trustees in carrying out their parish duties more effectively. It is planned to expand the seminar training program to other cities during the coming year.

Participants included about 30 representatives of several church parishes from the midwest and Canada. The program was organized under the auspices of Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, and presented by lay and clergy. Participating clergy included Very Rev. Khajag Hagopian, Very Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian, and Rev. Vartan Kassabian.

His Eminence opened the seminar with a prayer. Attendees were welcomed to Detroit by Rev. Shrikis, pastor of the host St. Sarkis parish, and Mr. John Manoogian, Chairman of the St. Sarkis Board of Trustees. Very Rev. Tanielian, pastor of St. Sarkis Church in Douglaston, New York, offered a meditation on the biblical passage, "Behold: I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5).

A thought-provoking presentation on the challenges facing the Armenian Church in the modern world was presented by Very Rev. Hagopian, Vicar of Canada. Hayr Sourp gave a comprehensive review of several critical issues including, the concept of the Armenian Church as a national church; inner evangelization of the church (in Armenia as well as in the diaspora); Christian educational needs; youth involvement in the life of the parish; reforms in the areas of liturgy, language, celibacy of priests, and the role of women; moral, ethical, and social issues such as abortion, euthanasia, organ donation, cremation, divorce, AIDS, technologic births and surrogate motherhood, drug abuse, race, war, genocide, poverty, and homelessness. Finally, he considered relations between the hierarchical sees of the Armenian Church, especially Etchmiadzin and Cilicia, as well as evangelical outreach to Armenia Protestant and Catholic.

Although Hayr Sourp did not offer immediate answers for all of these myriad challenges, he indicated his belief that the Armenian Church must focus on its mission as a community of faith. He offered several new ideas and challenges to the present clerical leadership. By bringing these matters forward, he clearly indicated that, in the context of the upcoming 1700th anniversary of the establishment of Christianity in

(Continued on page 4)

Construction of Maternity and Pediatrics Polyclinic Is Underway Through Support of Papaian Family

The new out-patient clinic of the Maternity and Pediatrics Hospital complex in Yerevan was inspected by Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian during his trip to Armenia in August. The new clinic, which had been started several years ago but halted because of the lack of funds, is now being completed through the generous support of Haig and Suzanne Papaian of California, in memory of their parents, Haig and Margaret Papaian. The facility is expected to be completed within the next month. Its official opening is scheduled for November 1996. The project is under the auspices and supervision of the Eastern Prelacy.

Archbishop Ashjian was accompanied by Mr. Sergei Haroutunian, Yerevan director of the Prelacy's St. Nerses the Great Charitable Fund, and Dr. Gamo Der Bedrossian, the director of the Karageuzian Fund in Armenia. They were greeted by Dr. Razmig Aprahamian, director of the Polyclinic, and a group of staff physicians.

Since 1975 more than 70,000 babies have been born at this hospital with an average of 3,000-4,000 per year. During the past two years the annual birth rate at this facility has declined to an average of 2,500, which reflects a national trend. For years the average number of births per year has been 60,000. During the past two years this number has dropped to 49,000. According to the physicians, the birth rate is now beginning to increase, with 2,500 reported in Goris and Marduni alone, which is double the normal amount.

Four hundred physicians are on staff and the hospital has 216 beds with the capacity to care for 50 new-born infants. The hospital has been designated as a teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Yerevan. Currently, in addition to local medical students, there are students from the Armenian diaspora, as well as several Indian, Persian, and Arab students.

The new out-patient clinic, which is expected to become a great asset for the advancement of health care in Armenia, will be named in memory of Haig and Margaret Papaian.



A view of the Maternity and Pediatrics Polyclinic in Yerevan which is under construction.



Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian accepts a gift from the staff of the Polyclinic. From left to right, Dr. Razmig Kasbarian, director of the clinic; Sergie Haroutunian, director of Prelacy programs in Armenia; Archbishop Ashjian; Dr. Razmig Aprahamian, director of the clinic; Dr. Gamo Der Bedrossian, director of the Karageuzian Foundation in Yerevan.

During his visit Archbishop Ashjian was given a detailed progress report by the Director. Afterward His Eminence said, "This is surely Armenia's most joyous place, because the first sounds of new born babies are heard each day." The clinic will serve the health needs of

Armenia and Artsakh.

"We thank Haig and Suzanne Papaian for their generous help in completing this polyclinic," said Archbishop Ashjian. "The memory of their parents will remain vibrant forever through this facility which each day brings forth new life." ✝



"...And thanks for never putting me on 'hold.'"

Siamanto Academy Students and Alumni CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday, December 21, 1996

6:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight

Sts. Vartanantz Church Hall

Ridgefield, New Jersey

Details to Follow

**Onnic Marashian
Retires from McGraw-
Hill's Oilgram News**

Onnic Marashian, chairman of the Prelacy's Executive Council, retired in June after nearly 40 years of dedicated service to The McGraw-Hill Companies. He first joined McGraw-Hill as Bureau Chief for World News in Beirut. He followed this with reporting stints for World News in London and Washington before joining *Platt's Oilgram News* as Bureau Chief in its Washington Bureau in 1969. In 1973 he was promoted to Editor-in-Chief of *Platt's* and later Editorial Director and Western Hemisphere News Director before a move to his final position as Head of News worldwide for *Platt's*. He is recognized as an international authority on the oil industry.

During his career, *Platt's* evolved from a couple of small daily industry newsletters into a major news organization recognized as a leader in the petroleum information industry with distribution on all the world's major news vendor networks.

The staff of *Platt's* produced a special "retirement issue" of *Platt's* dedicated to Onnic. Headlined, "Shock and Horror: Onnic to Retire!!!!!! *Platt's* staff wanders halls, weeping and wailing," the issue contained testimonial after testimonial about Onnic's capabilities and integrity and a top ten list, à la David Letterman, of why Onnic will be missed. Here's the list (number seven is our favorite):

- 10) He always reminded everyone to take the "al-" out on second reference to an Arab name.
 - 9) With David Smith departing a few years earlier, and now Onnic, nobody around here will have the guts to wear a bow tie any longer.
 - 8) The Highland Room will be closed due to lack of interest.
 - 7) No more high-ranking religious people will call us up, asking for him.
 - 6) We will need to deal with Muriel Allen ourselves.
 - 5) When we open up our first paycheck after raises are handed out, the size of the raise won't be a surprise anymore.
 - 4) Nobody around to debunk theory of Wanda Jablonski starting OPEC.
 - 3) Only person on the staff who can pronounce Karachaganak.
 - 2) Will need to learn other benchmarks for the price of an airplane ticket other than "What?!! You can get to London for cheaper than that!"
- But most of all...
- 1) There will never be another classy *Platt's* person like him.

Onnic will continue his association with McGraw-Hill as a consultant, and fortunately for us will have more time to devote to the Armenian community which he and his family have served so faithfully for many years. ✚

**Hourig Papazian Sahagian Showered
With Love and Praise at Retirement**



Photo above:
Hourig and ANEC
colleagues with
current and former
Siamanto Academy
students at
retirement party
in May.



Photo left:
V. R. Tanielian
presents Hourig
with Mesrob
Mashdotz medal.

Photo below:
Hourig with husband
Robert Vahe.



Photo right:
Mary Dugan presents Hourig with scrap-
book filled with ANEC memories.

The violent rainstorms did little to dampen the spirits at a reception in honor of Hourig Papazian Sahagian in recognition of her years of dedicated service to the community and especially to the Armenian National Education Committee (ANEC) where she served as Executive Director since the early 1980s until her recent retirement.

John Ouligian, current chairman of ANEC served as the evening's MC and presented a brief summary of Hourig's work. He noted that he had very personal reasons for being thankful to Hourig for she played cupid for him and wife Dottie.

A host of friends offered their personal tributes to Hourig. Very Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian, on behalf of Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, described Hourig as a woman for all seasons with great creative skills and the talent to inspire and motivate others.

Dr. Tom Samuelian, whose highly-acclaimed text books on western Armenian were published by ANEC, told the gathering that Hourig is known all over the world. "She always knows what it takes to make good things happen," he said, adding, "Other people get in front of the parade and lead it, Hourig gets the parade started and gets others to march in it. She is my mentor, teacher, and friend," he concluded.

Long-time friend Sosy Kadian recalled the "Washington Heights gang"—the intellectuals that visited Hourig's home. "Since her youth Hourig (which means 'little fire') had the fire in her. She always sees the greater picture; she grabs life with two hands and her motto always is *I'm gonna do it.*"

Dr. James Russell said that he too came from "Washington Hayots," and went on to speak about the extensive contributions Hourig has made to the community.

Dr. Steve Checkosky reminisced about their work with the Siamanto Academy, describing Hourig as "a person with vision, common sense, and charisma."

Speaking on behalf of the Armenian Relief Society—a co-sponsor along with the Prelacy of ANEC—Mary Anne Bonjuklian offered her organization's deep respect and thanks.

Norik Checkosky, accompanied by Garineh Soghomonian, sang two Armenian songs.

The highlight of the evening came when Very Rev. Tanielian presented her with the Mesrob Mashdotz medal, the highest honor given to writers and educators by His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia.

In a written message Archbishop Ashjian paid tribute to Hourig saying, "During her years as Executive Director of the Armenian National Education Committee I have seen first hand her dedication and her dynamic spirit which motivated others. A generation of Armenian Americans affectionately know and love her as 'Deegeen Hourig.' She has made a lasting impression on these young people many of whom are now leaders in our community. We honor Hourig this evening not only for her many years of past service but for the many more years ahead when she will share her expertise and knowledge with yet another generation of Armenian Americans.

A special scrapbook containing the highlights of her career with ANEC lovingly prepared by Mary Dugan, was presented to Hourig as a special keepsake.

In an impromptu speech Hourig addressed the many friends, relatives,

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OUTREACH

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CROSSROADS

A PICTORIAL REVIEW OF PRELACY AND PARISH ACTIVITIES



St. Sarkis Church In Michigan Celebrates 34th Anniversary

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian joined parishioners and friends in celebrating the 34th anniversary of St. Sarkis Church, Dearborn, Michigan, on Sunday, October 13.

The celebration began with the Divine Liturgy, celebrated by the parish priest, Rev. Dr. Gorun Shrikian. Archbishop Ashjian delivered the day's sermon, during which he spoke about the Holy Translators, whose Feast Day was celebrated the previous day. His Eminence spoke of how the Bible was translated for pastoral and theological reasons and not because of the beauty of the language, even though the 19th century French Armenologist, le Vaillant de Florival, has called the Armenian Bible the "queen of translations." Archbishop Ashjian spoke of the current reluctance to use the vernacular language in church. "For the Holy Translators," said the Archbishop, "the commitment was to faith, not the language. They realized the importance of transmitting that faith to the people in a language that could be understood. Now we seem to have a commitment to the language rather than the faith, and we are reluctant—even afraid—to make a bold move and speak to the people in the vernacular language. While the mystery of the Armenian Church is important, so too is understanding and sharing," said the Prelate.

Archbishop Ashjian ended his sermon with his thoughts about the necessity of having total dedication to things we believe in. "We should not be ambivalent in our commitment. It is no accident that our fathers in their commitment to the Armenian people and faith choose as the readings for the Feast of the Holy Translators chapter 12, verses 41-44 from the Gospel of Mark, which tells the story of the poor widow who contributed a small amount, but who, Jesus said, cast more than the others because she gave "all that she had."

"We must become like that widow," said Archbishop Ashjian, "who gave fully and with deep commitment. We must make Christianity a part of our everyday lives and not just be Sunday morning Christians."

Following the Divine Liturgy an anniversary luncheon took place in the Church's Lillian Arakelian Hall, with the chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. John Manoogian, as the afternoon's master of ceremonies. He presented a vivid account of the history of St. Sarkis Church as well as the current status of the parish.

Award presentations were made to Jerry and Lillian Masrobian and Jack Garbooshian in appreciation of their years of devoted service. The Masrobians were introduced to the gathering by Mr. Onnig Hachigian and Jack Garbooshian was introduced by Rev. Shrikian.

Mr. Razmig Babigian, lead tenor of Yerevan State Opera, shared his talent with two selections, an aria from the opera Anoush and the popular Pomp Voradan by Gomidas. He was accompanied by Miss Emma Bagdassarian, who also offered musical interludes during the dinner.

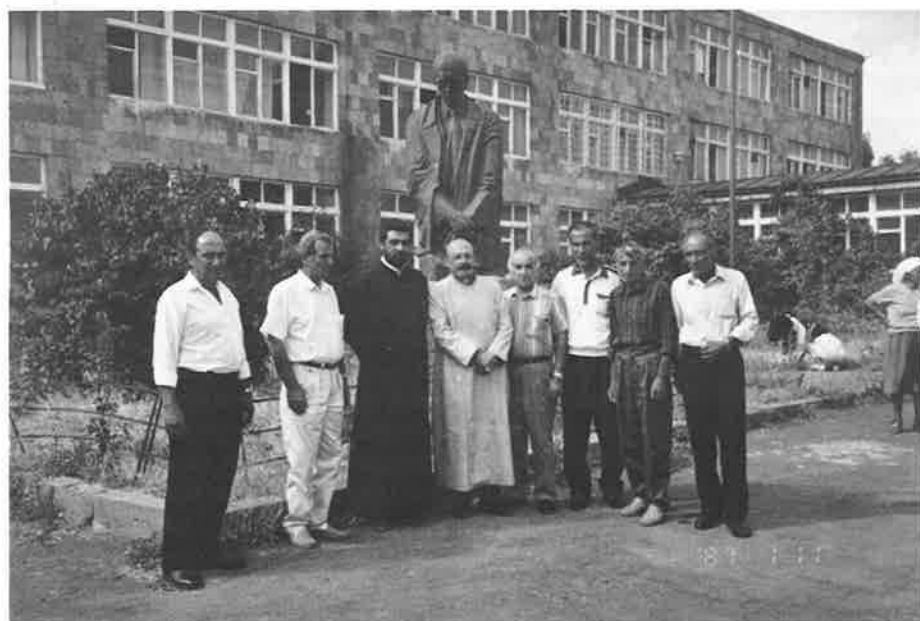
In his remarks, Archbishop Ashjian spoke about the powerful spirit and mystery of the Armenian Church which holds people together. By way of exam-

Granite City Community Looks Forward to Construction of New Church



Photo above:
Archbishop Ashjian with
clergy members and godfathers
of St. Gregory Church in
Granite City.

Photo left:
Andrew Hagopian, left,
and Vasken Aroian, right,
assist Archbishop Ashjian
to break the ground.



During Archbishop Ashjian's trip to Armenia in the summer he visited the Vahan Tekeyan School. He is seen in this photo with the principal of the school and the major and officials of Garbi.

ple he cited the Granite City community which numbers barely 100 families who last week laid the foundation for their new church which will be consecrated next year during the pontifical visit of His Holiness Aram I. He also spoke about current issues and problems facing the Church. He closed with inspiring words about the exciting and extensive plans for the celebration of the 1700th anniversary of Christian Armenia which will begin next year and continue through to the year 2001. ✚

The St. Gregory the Illuminator Church community of Granite City, Illinois, is closer to the realization of its dream of many years with the groundbreaking and blessing of the cornerstones for their church which took place Sunday, October 6.

Joining the parishioners of this dedicated 45-year-old community to mark this joyous occasion was the Prelate, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, and Very Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian, vicar-general of the Prelacy and pastor of St. Sarkis Church in New York. The clergymen were met at the airport by the parish priest, Rev. Vartan Kassabian, various community leaders, and students from the Mesrobian Armenian School.

On Saturday, Archbishop Ashjian met with the Board of Trustees and among other duties had the opportunity to look over the plans for the new church. Saturday evening Vespers service was attended by many of the faithful in anticipation of the groundbreaking scheduled the following day.

Without doubt, Sunday, October 6 is a day the community will long remember as Very Rev. Tanielian celebrated the Divine Liturgy and delivered the sermon. Hayr Anoushavan spoke of the Armenian people's embracement of Christianity throughout the centuries to the present, as witnessed by the dedication of the Granite City community.

Following the Divine Liturgy, the faithful gathered at the site of the Church, next to the Community Center, and Archbishop Ashjian together with Hayr Anoushavan, Der Hayr Kassabian, the godfathers of the church, and representatives of various Christian sister denominations, participated in the ceremony for the groundbreaking and blessing of the cornerstones. Church benefactors Antranig Hagopian and Vazken Haroian broke ground at the site of the altar and the four corners were blessed in the names of the apos-

(Continued on page 4)

Archbishop Ashjian Attends Enthronement

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian attended the enthronement of His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon, the new head of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, on Saturday, September 21.

The traditional and well-organized ceremony took place at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Manhattan, where the new Prelate was greeted by many local and national political leaders as well as leaders of other Christian churches. A luncheon which took place following the religious ceremony was attended by Very Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian on behalf of Archbishop Ashjian who, having just returned from an extensive trip to Armenia and Europe, had several important meetings to attend.

Archbishop Spyridon is the spiritual leader of 1.5 million Greek Orthodox Christians in America. His Eminence is the fifth archbishop since the organization of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in 1922 and the first American-born elected as Archbishop of America. He succeeds Archbishop Iakovas who retired last year after serving nearly 40 years.

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Catalog of Armenian Exhibit in France Is Available at Prelacy Bookstore

"Armenia Between the Orient and the Occident: 3000 Years of Civilization" is an exhibit currently on view at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), the national library of France. The exhibit focuses on Armenia from the perspective of exchanges and contacts between different cultures.

The beautiful exhibit is attracting a host of local people as well as many tourists. Accompanying the exhibit is a stunning 256 page catalog which those who are unable to see the exhibit itself will surely want to own. Edited by Raymond Kevorkian, the curator of the exhibit and also the research specialist in the BNF's Division of Ancient Printed Books, the hardbound book (in French) includes 220 color illustrations and essays by numerous scholars and provides detailed description of all of the objects in the exhibit. The catalog is now available for purchase from the Armenian Prelacy Bookstore for \$60.

Armenia has been throughout its history a bridge connecting East and West, absorbing many of the features of the cultures and civilizations with which it had contact, but at the same time remaining distinctly Armenian. The first part of the exhibit brings to light the intellectual exchanges that resulted from the adoption of Christianity as the state religion at the beginning of the fourth century, a decision that brought Armenia into contact with Europe. Among the important intellectual exchanges of this period were the translation of Greek Christian literature into Armenian. Included in the exhibit is a manuscript of Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicle*, one of the many examples of Greek writings that have only survived in Armenian.

At the same time, Armenia had extensive contact and relations with the various empires and nations of the Middle East. Armenian authors were important witnesses to the political upheavals of this region. Their works represent a major source of information for our knowledge of Asia, especially of the Sassanian world, the Mongols, the

Seljuks, and the Arabs. Included in the exhibit are such works as the *The History of the Wars and Conquests of the Arabs in Armenia*, and the *Livre de la fleur des histoires* by Hetoum, on the Mongol conquests during the Cilician period.

In addition to intellectual contacts and exchanges, examples of material exchanges are also treated in the exhibit. Examples include plates, earthenware, religious objects, and woven and embroidered textiles. A notable example of the influence of Armenian merchants on European life and culture was the introduction of coffee in France, which led to the opening of cafés in Paris, the first of which was owned by an Armenian. Armenian merchants, who opened new routes to Russia through the northern port of Archangelsk and the Baltic also introduced Indian banking techniques to the West, for example, letters of exchange and double-entry bookkeeping.

The exhibit was organized by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France along with the collaboration of two Armenian museums, the Institute for Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran) and the Armenian Historical Museum. It also is sponsored by the French Ministries of Culture, Education, and Foreign Affairs and by the Ministry of Culture of the Armenian Republic.

The exhibit includes more than a hundred medieval Armenian manuscripts from the collections of the Matenadaran and the BNF as well as some items from French collections and the Mekhitarist Library in Venice. Most of the items have never before been exhibited publicly.

To order contact:
Armenian Prelacy Bookstore
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Board of Trustees Seminar

(Continued from page 1)

Armenia, these and related matters are being deliberated upon at the highest level of the Armenian Church hierarchy.

Mr. Steven Hagopian, parish chairman at St. Gregory the Illuminator in Granite City, gave an interactive presentation on the roles and responsibilities of church trusteeship. Every trustee is expected to participate actively in the liturgical and sacramental life of the church, to administer in trust the property and resources of the church, to provide moral and material support to parish organizations, and to serve as a role model to members of the parish.

Ideas for parish renewal were offered by Mr. Kenneth Sarajian of Sts. Vartanantz in Ridgefield, New Jersey. The church should be a vehicle through which people come closer to God, and one function of the church and its leaders is to help the people approach Him. Several suggestions were offered especially to increase youth participation.

An historical overview of the church unity issue was presented by Professor Hratch Zadoian. He pointed out that the present situation had its origin in Armenian life in America and the world at the beginning of the century. Despite claims to the contrary, the Prelacy church parishes are definitely "canonical," (i.e., legal), a fact that is some-

times ignored in current discussions of this subject.

His Eminence presented updates regarding several recent Prelacy activities: the Prelacy Endowment Fund, the upcoming pontifical visit of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I, and the upcoming worldwide celebrations and pilgrimages planned for the 1700th anniversary of Armenian Christianity.

Following the instructional portion of the program, the clergy retired to the sanctuary for evening Vesper services.

During the day, the program was interrupted three times by wonderful meals offered by the St. Sarkis Ladies Guild, led by Yeretzgin Shrikian. The host parish went out of its way to make the day a memorable one for participating clergy and out-of-town guests.

Those in attendance were unanimous in their estimation that this valuable program should be expanded in the coming months and brought to other cities. It could be profitably attended by not only church trustees, but also members of auxiliary bodies, Sunday School teachers, deacons, and choir members.

—LAS

If you don't change, nothing will change.

Granite City Begins Construction

(Continued from page 3)



Archbishop Ashjian with three generations of the Hagopian family serving the St. Gregory Church in Granite City.

(Continued from page 3)

tles Peter, Paul, Thaddeus and Bartholomew.

Immediately following the ceremony, a luncheon took place in the Community Center which was attended by more than 200 faithful parishioners and friends.

Mr. Stephan Hagopian, chairman of the Board, and the afternoon's Master of Ceremonies, introduced the guest clergy including, Very Rev. Father Kyrill Antonoff, former pastor of the Bulgarian Orthodox Community; Father Andrew Moulton, Pastor of St. Cyril Orthodox Church of Granite City; Very Rev. Bohdan Piorkowski, Pastor of St. Mary's Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church; and Father Don Wester, Pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel in St. Louis.

Mr. Hagopian presented a brief history of the Granite City church which has a membership of about 100 families, and the work which began in 1970 with the purchase of the current site for a new Church and Community Center. He described the subsequent building of the Community Center and now the realization of their dreams, the building of the Church as designed by architect Zohrab Tazian.

Father Tanielian congratulated the community on behalf of the Prelacy's Executive Council. Students of the Mesrobian School offered a delightful program of songs and dances under the direction of principal Svetlana Avakian.

In introducing the Prelate, the chairman of the Board, Mr. Hagopian, recalled how everytime he spoke with Archbishop Ashjian the same question was always asked, "When are you going to build your Church?"

"Srpazan's prodding and encouragement were most helpful," he said as he invited the Prelate to present his message to the gathering.

Archbishop Ashjian first expressed his profound thanks to the clergymen in attendance and noted that their presence created a true spirit of Christian solidarity. He congratulated the pastor, the Board of Trustees, the auxiliaries and all of the parishioners.

The Prelate noted that the building of a church represents three things: First, we are thanking and praising God; second, we become more firmly joined with our faith; and third, we insure the passage of our Christian faith to the next generation.

His Eminence then announced that next year when His Holiness Aram I visits the Eastern Prelacy, he will have the honor of consecrating Granite City's St. Gregory the Illuminator Church. The announcement was received with prolonged applause.

The spiritually uplifting afternoon

ended with the benediction and the singing of "Giligia," and parishioners went home with renewed dedication and with the deep belief that the Armenian Church is ready for the 21st century and the fourth generation of Armenian Americans. ✚

Reception for Hourig P. Sahagian

(Continued from page 2)

former and current students who jammed into the Prelacy's Hovnanian Hall.

"I've made many speeches in my life," she said, "but never a retirement speech because I've never retired before. I don't know what is appropriate but I know what is in my heart tonight and my heart will speak for me or else I will be speechless for the first time in my life.

"This unbelievable honor from Vehapar and all of these kind and generous words are overwhelming. You have painted a picture of me I don't recognize. You've made me too good!

"My first thanks go to the Almighty for all of His blessings. My next thanks is for Vehapar who considers me worthy of such a great honor. I would assure His Holiness that I have been the happy handmaiden of Mesrob Mashdotz all my life. No less thanks I offer to Srpazan for organizing this splendid farewell evening with my friends, colleagues, and family. And profound thanks to him for allowing me to work in the field I love, Armenian education.

"My next thank you is for my dear family who put up with my many plans, big and little, my crazy enthusiasm, my endless meetings, my six-day weeks. And thank you to my grandchildren who are among God's best work!"

Hourig thanked the Prelacy staff, the many dedicated people who have served so devotedly on ANEC, especially Ardashes Hamparian. She thanked everyone who came out "in this storm-filled evening" and to the organizers of the reception, to Iris Papazian who prepared the booklet ("which makes me look so good") and to the Garabedian family ("the essence of Armenian hospitality.")

She ended her heartwarming remarks with a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay. "I've been waiting to recite this poem for decades," she said:

My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night;
But, ah, my foes, and oh my friends,
It gives a lovely light!