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

Volume XIX, Number 6 — December 1996

## 1997 Raffle Campaign Headed by Emlikian and Dombalagian

The 1997 raffle fundraising campaign for the Prelacy is underway under the co-chairmanship of Naz Emlikian and Harry Dombalagian from Philadelphia. The annual campaign has become a major source of funds for the Prelacy especially in helping to finance many of the Prelacy's educational projects.

The drawing of the winning tickets will take place on May 16, 1997, in Providence, Rhode Island, during the banquet concluding the National Representative Assembly. Tickets are \$100 each and will give the buyer an opportunity to win one of the following five prizes: First prize, \$10,000; second prize, \$5,000; third prize, \$3,000; fourth and fifth prizes, \$1,000. As in previous years, the seller of the most tickets will receive a trip to Armenia for two.

Mr. Emlikian and Mr. Dombalagian are active members of the St. Gregory the Illuminator parish in Philadelphia. Both have also served in leadership capacities on a national level, having served for many years as members of the Prelacy's Executive Council, with Mr. Emlikian

serving as chairman several years ago. Both men have been honored by the Holy See of Cilicia with the Knight of Cilicia award. They have held a number of leadership positions at St. Gregory Church, a parish they and their families continue to serve with great dedication.

Assisting Messrs. Emlikian and Dombalagian are the following regional coordinators: Sahag Hagopian, Canada; Dr. Levon Sarian, Mid-West; Robert Najarian, New England; and Dr. Dertad Manguikian, Mid-Atlantic.

"We look forward to a very successful raffle campaign," said Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, "under the leadership of two very dedicated members of our community. Naz and Harry have served the church for decades and it is always a pleasure to work with them because of their dedication, understanding, and their good humor."

Tickets may be purchased from any of the above mentioned individuals as well as from any Prelacy church or by contacting the Prelacy office, 138 E. 39th Street, New York, NY 10016, (212) 689-7810. +

## Ազգային Թաղում Գեորգ Տօնապետեանի



Archbishop Ashjian officiates at the funeral of Kevork Donabedian who died on November 16.

Շարք, 16 նոյեմբերին, յետ կարճատև հիւանդութեամ Պոսթըրնի մէջ կը մահանար ազգային-հասարակական գործիչ, շարքեանի մեծերու մահակիմ խմբագիր, ուսուցիչ-մանկավարժ, Ազգային Ընդհանուր Ժողովի անդամ, Կիլիկիեան Ասպետ Գեորգ Տօնապետեանը:

Առաջնորդ Սրբազան Հայրը, Ազգային Վարչութեան հետ համախորհուրդ, որոշեց, ի յարգանս Գեորգ Տօնապետեանի վաստակին եւ նուիրումին, կատարել ազգային թաղում:

Թաղման կարգը տեղի ունեցաւ չորեքշաբթի, 20 նոյեմբեր 1996-ի առաւօտեան ժամը 10:30-ին, Մեծագոյն Պոսթըրնի Ս. Ստեփանոս եկեղեցւոյ մէջ, ընդ նախագահութեամբ Քեմիս առաջնորդ Բարձր. Տ. Մեսրոպ Ս. Արքեպիսկոպոսի, որ շրջապատուած էր տասներկու վարդապետ եւ Քահանայ հայրերով: Եկեղեցւոյ մէջ ներկայ էին հանգուցեալի ալրին, Տիկին Արփի Տօնապետեան, որդիները՝ Բաբիկ եւ Վիգէն, իրենց ընտանիքներով, հանգուցեալի գաղափարական ընկերները եւ հոծ բազմութիւն մը: Յատուկ ուշադրութեան արժանացաւ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ի սկաւտական փոքր խումբ մը ինչպէս նաեւ Ս. Ստեփանոս ամենօրեայ դպրոցի աշակերտութիւնը:

Եկեղեցական արարողութեան աւարտին Սրբազան Հայրը, որ վաղեմի բարեկամութեամբ մը կապուած էր հանգուցեալին հետ, սրտառուց դամբանական մը խօսեցաւ՝ «Ջպաշտօն իմ փառաւոր առնեմ» բնարանով վեր առաւ անոր նկարագրի ցայտուն գիծերը, պաշտօնի հանդէպ լրջութիւնը, յարգանքը, եւ զայն փառաւորելու գիտակցութիւնը: Խօսեցաւ Գեորգ Տօնապետեանի կեանքին մասին՝ Հալեպի Հայկազեան վարժարանի գրասենյակներէն մինչեւ Քարէն Եփփէ ճեմարանի տեսչութիւնը, եւ ապա իր վաստակը՝ Սուրիայէն մինչեւ Ամե-

րիկա: Սրբազան Հայրը գնահատեց նաեւ հանգուցեալ Գեորգ Տօնապետեանի հաւատարիմ սէրը Հայ Եկեղեցւոյ եւ Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Ս. Աթոռին հանդէպ:

Սրբազան Հօր դամբանականէն յետոյ կարդացուեցաւ Ամենայն Հայոց եւ Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Հայրապետներուն ցաւակցական գրերը՝ ուղղուած հանգուցեալի ընտանիքին:

Եկեղեցական արարողութեան աւարտին, յուղարկաւորութեան թափորը որ կազմուած էր Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ի սկաւտներէն եւ Ս. Ստեփանոս վարժարանի աշակերտներէն, հոգեւորականաց դասէն, ճամբայ ելաւ դէպի «Հայրենիք» հրատարակութեան շէնքը: Այնտեղ՝ որ Գեորգ տարիներ շարունակ գրած էր, աշխատած է եւ վաստակուած՝ տեղի ունեցաւ տրտում արարողութիւն մը: Երկու երիտասարդներ նուագեցին «Գեորգ Զատուշի Մահը» եւ «Վարդան Ջօրավարի Ողբը» մեղեդիները սրինգի վրայ: Յանուն Հ.Յ.Գ. Բիւրոյին խօսեցաւ Պր. Կարօ Արմէնեան եւ Սրբազան Հօր «Հոգևոց»էն յետոյ թափորը իր ճամբան շարունակեց դէպի Մառնի Օպըրն գերեզմանատունը, ուր տեղի ունեցաւ թաղման կարգը: Այնտեղ ալ նուագեցաւ «Տէր Կեցոն», «Տէր Ողորմեան»: Խօսք առաւ, յանուն Հ.Յ.Գ. Արեւելեան Ամերիկայի Կ. Կոմիտէին՝ Պր. Վազգէն Այվազեան: Երգուեցաւ «Վերջերով Լի»-ն, եւ ապա «Սոսկում Ահաւոր» ժողովրդական երգի տխուր կշռոյթի տակ հողիջաւ Սասնոյ գաւակ եւ հայրենասէր Գեորգ Տօնապետեանի մարմինը:

Թաղման կարգէն յետոյ, Ս. Ստեփանոս եկեղեցւոյ սրահին մէջ, եկեղեցւոյ կողմէ տրուեցաւ հոգեհաշ մը, որու ընթացքին, եկեղեցւոյ հովիւ Տ. Անդրանիկ Ա. Քեմյ-Պալեան հրաւիրեց բազմաթիւ անճարարութիւններ, որոնք խօսք առին եւ իրենց ցաւակցութիւնը յայտ-



Archbishop Ashjian with the co-chairmen of the 1997 raffle campaign, Harry Dombalagian (left) and Naz Emlikian.



The cover of the raffle ticket is a color reproduction of a wedding procession in an Armenian village, a watercolor-gouache by Sumbat Kiureghian.

## A New Year and Christmas Message from Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian

Dear Faithful,

On the occasion of the New Year and Christmas, I extend my heartfelt greetings to you and your loved ones, wishing all of you a bright future under God's protection.

During this season it is customary for us to make plans for the new year, become reacquainted with the miraculous story of the Nativity and our Lord and Saviour's message of love and brotherhood.

This year, as in past years, it is my desire to share with you some thoughts, which have occupied my mind and prayers recently.

One of the most striking parts of the story of our Lord's birth, was that Joseph and Mary could not find room in all of Bethlehem and the infant Jesus was born in the most poverty-stricken atmosphere, in a stable amongst the animals, with a manger filled with hay as his first bed. Because of this humble birth, He became Lord and Saviour for all, not just for the wealthy or royalty. Each year the Christmas season gives us the opportunity to rediscover the message of Christmas and open our hearts to Jesus. In other words, Christ—the world's Saviour—is reborn in us, enabling us to dedicate ourselves completely, body and soul, to God. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?" (I Corinthians 6:19)

It is the words of the same apostle Paul that dominate my thoughts this Christmas. In his first letter to the Corinthians, after offering practical advice and speaking of the teachings of Christ, he ends with, "The churches of Asia salute you, Aquila and Priscilla, together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord." (I Corinthians 16:19)

*The church in their house...* I had never before fully appreciated the meaning of that phrase. I wonder... Are the members of that church the family members?... Have they gathered in order to protect their home and family?... Is the house Paul speaks of a house of our understanding? It is impossible to know the exact meaning of Paul's words without knowing more about this couple.

Aquila and his wife, like Paul, were Jews who became Christians. Aquila, like Paul a tentmaker by profession, was born in Pontus. He later went to Rome where he met Priscilla. We do not know exactly when, but they embraced Christianity, perhaps at the behest of Priscilla, and became preachers and leaders in the new religion. In 49 A.D. they were expelled from Rome by the edict of the emperor Claudius. They went to Corinth where they remained for 18 months before moving to Ephesus, the same place from where Paul writes his letters to the Corinthians, to whom he presents the greetings of Aquila and Priscilla. In Romans we read that this same couple has eventually returned and settled in Rome. It is interesting to note the mobility of the people. Even without modern transportation means, they moved from place to place...from Palestine to Pontus...from Pontus to Rome...from Rome to Corinth...from Corinth to Ephesus, and back again to Rome.

In those days there was no church—that is to say, there was no building called a church. It was only in the third century that we first come across the word church referring to a building. Until that time, the Christians remained in small groups meeting in homes. Aquila and Priscilla, wherever they went, opened their home as a meeting place for Christians. They are an amazing couple. They generously provide hospitality to all those who come in the name of the Lord. As described in Acts, they are ideal Christians: friendly, hospitable, and generous.

Homer, as a supreme compliment, says of one of his heroes, "He dwelt in a house by the side of the road and he was the friend of wayfaring men," which reminds me of the words of one of our great poets, Medzarentz, who conveyed the very same feeling when he wrote,

Oh, how I yearn to be that cottage  
On the road or mountainside,  
Waiting to greet the traveler.

Did the poet know the cottage of his yearning was, in God's eye, a church?

Let us further explore the biblical concept of a house-church. In Greek *oikon* has more than one meaning. It can mean members of a family, or the house itself where Christians gather for prayer. The second meaning is probably more acceptable, because later in Rome the concept of *domus ecclesiae* becomes popular, which is the first reference to Christians meeting in special houses as noted in Corinthians.

Surely, in large cities there was more than one such house-church for Jews who were distanced from the temple and synagogues of Jerusalem and began using homes for their prayers and religious ceremonies.

Such houses of worship are mentioned elsewhere as well, showing the central role the home played for the early Christians. The house was a great unifier, and expressions of faith took place in the presence of all family members. (Acts 16:32; Colossians 4:15; Acts 12:17).

Dear Faithful,

It is my hope that on the occasion of Christmas, when our Saviour is at our doors, we open our homes to Him, and accept Him as our Holy Saviour, our Lord, and transform our modern homes into the early home-churches.

When our home becomes a church, where we pray together regularly, then we can truly say we are living our faith. Our children will learn more from our lives and our deeds than from our words.

Always remember that we are the church. When our children grow up in a home that is like a church they will be the unwavering inheritors and keepers of our church and faith.

During this season of joy let us open our hearts and our homes to Almighty God and His Son who became like us so that we could become more like God.

Blessed is the miraculous birth of our Lord...

Christ is Born and Revealed...

Good News for us, for you, and for all humankind. ✚

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### OUTREACH

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## Dedication of Cross at St. Illuminator's Cathedral

*Editor's Note: The following are the comments delivered by Armen Amirian about his grandmother, Takoohie Hovagimian Kazigian, in whose memory the new cross above the door of St. Illuminator's Cathedral in New York City was dedicated on November 10.*

My name is Armen Amirian. My mother, Elizabeth is the oldest child of Takoohie Hovagimian Kazigian. In 1915 my mother's mother was a seven-year-old child living in Armenia. By luck, coincidence, or perhaps design, my grandmother was left behind during the forced evacuation of the Turkish massacres, although all of her family was marched away. She was taken in by a compassionate Turkish family and worked as a servant in their home. When word spread of an American orphanage for Armenian children, the Turkish family made the magnanimous decision that grandma should rightfully be returned to her people.

The orphanage made up lists of the names of the surviving children and published the list in newspapers in America. Her uncle Paul, living in Rhode Island, saw her name in a paper and sent money for her passage. She came to America in 1922, eventually met my grandfather Khougas Kazigian, married and moved to New York City. They had three children, Elizabeth, Anna, and Johnny, and opened a small food store.

As orphans, my grandparents knew the importance of a family. Uneducated, they understood the value of school. No matter how much work there was to do in the store, school and homework came first. Although the children would help their parents in the store, it was made clear to them that school came first. There were no excuses. The children were encouraged to continue on to college, where my mother earned a master's degree and became a teacher.

My grandparents' respect for school, their sense of sacrifice to one's family did not die with their bodies. When *medz-mama* passed away, she asked to be cremated, so that, in her words, we wouldn't waste our time going to a cemetery. I took that to mean that when I thought of her I should do something she would have done; dwell on her positive points rather than the fact that she was gone.

At the risk of sounding overly dramatic, when I spend time with my son, either playing with him, helping him with his homework, teaching him something, and even when I get involved with his school, in my heart I am visiting the graves of my grandparents, thanking them for their sacrifices, and telling them I appreciate what they did for me.

It is impossible for the younger generation who live here in comfortable, safe surroundings to fully comprehend what *medz-mama's* generation lived through: a World War; the death of most of their families; moving halfway around the world to an entirely different culture with a completely different language; living through the Great Depression, only to have to endure another World War. A sort of "siege mentality" develops where one assumes that things will probably get worse, and that one should never completely relax. However, it was that mind set, and a bit of luck, that separated the survivors from those who perished.

Quite simply, her generation established a standard for hard work, family values, and the ability to show love despite years of pain that humbles my generation—and rightfully so.

I remember seeing Granny at her son Johnny's house in Massachusetts. She had on a pair of sneakers and was heading off to work in the garden. Johnny's children, Raffi and Cassie (who were quite young at the time), ran past her into the back yard. The expression *atchkis louys* is perfect here. Literally it means "light of my eye" and that is what there was when she stopped to watch the children. *Medz-mama* loved children and it made her so happy to see that all of her children finally had families. For a moment she seemed



Parishioners gather outside to witness the dedication of the cross at St. Illuminator's Cathedral.

to actually relax. Perhaps seeing her grandchildren playing in the garden finally made it sink in that she had succeeded. The sight of the grandchildren who were about the same age that she was before the massacres, playing happily as she had before all of the evil, showed her that the circle was now complete and that all of her hard work had paid off.

My only regret as I think back to that day in the garden, is that she was of a generation that seemed always ready to toil in the garden, but were never able to sit back and leisurely gaze at the flowers once they had grown. In my heart I know that at long last she watches us, and I hope she is proud of what she sees. ✚

### Գէորգ Տօնապետեան

շար. էջ 1-էն

Անցին Տիկին Տօնապետեանին, հանգուցեալի զաւակներուն եւ ընկերներուն: Խօսք առին՝ յանուն Ազգային Վարչութեան Պր. Օննիկ Մարաշեան, յանուն Արեւելեան Կ. Կոմիտէին Պր. Վազգէն Այվազեան, յանուն Գանատայի Հ.Յ.Դ.-ին Տօթ. Վաղարշ Էնրամեան, յանուն Արեւմտեան Ամերիկայի Հ.Յ.Դ.-ի Պր. Ժան Գոսպեան, յանուն Ս. Ստեփանոս վարժարանին եւ եկեղեցւոյ Տ. Անդրանիկ Ա. Քենյ. Պալմեան, յանուն Քարէն Եփփէնեմարանին Պր. Մանուէլ Զարշաֆեան, յանուն Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ին Պր. Ժան Աւետիսեան, եւ վերջապէս յանուն Գէորգ Տօնապետեանի ընտանիքին եւ հին եւ նոր ընկերներուն Պր. Եղուարդ Էյոյեան:

Կարդացուեցան բազմաթիւ հեռագիրներ՝ Հայաստանէն, Լիբանանէն, Սուրիայէն, Յունաստանէն եւ Ամերիկայաներէն:

Գէորգ Տօնապետեանի յիշատակին տրուած հոգեհաշը աւարտեցաւ Սրբազան Հօր աղօթքով:

«Առաքիչի խմբագրութիւնը, յանուն Առաջնորդ Սրբազան Հօր եւ Ազգային Իշխանութեանց, ամգամ մը եւս իր ցաւակցութիւնը կը յայտնէ Տիկին Արփի Տօնապետեանին, զաւակներուն եւ բոլոր հարազատներուն:

Հողը թեթեւ գայ:

# Unity of Purpose Forum Takes Place in Cambridge

by Garo Adanian

A crowd of over 300 people congregated at the Hyatt Regency President's Ballroom on the evening of November 21 for an open forum. The theme was "Unity of Purpose: The Role of the Armenian Church in a Changing Diaspora," with guest speakers Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. The guest panelists of the evening were Noubar B. Afeyan, Elise Antreassian, John O'Connor, and Thomas Samuelian.

The discussion was a follow-up to a forum held in January of 1996, when His Holiness Karekin I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, addressed a gathering of over 1,000 people on a variety of issues regarding the Armenian Church in the United States.

The evening began with the introduction of the Archbishops, and an opening prayer by Archbishop Mesrob. After a brief introduction by Laura Gononian, Director of the Department of Youth Ministry of the Armenian Diocese, and by moderator Anthony Barsamian, each of the panelists gave their views of the Armenian Church and introspected on the need for unity.

Dr. Afeyan, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of PerSeptive Biosystems, Inc., and the first panelist to speak, commented, "Once we arrive at a common mission, then unity in action can follow. I am a firm believer that unity of purpose proceeds unity in action." He also related the Church to uniting the Armenian people in culture, identity, and conditions, and that the Church should act as a "community nucleus" by reaching out and bringing the communities together as one.

Elise Antreassian, co-director of the Department of Religious Education at the Diocese of the Armenian Church, pointed to the fact that families of today are less homogeneous and are less involved in the church because of personal lifestyles and priorities. "People come to church today with higher expectations. They don't have the same patience. They won't stay around if they are bored or the message is irrelevant to their lives." She expressed that people seek out the church for sense and spirituality, and "to discover the meaning of life through the church." Antreassian stressed that the Armenian Church should not be regarded as simply an institution, but as an anchor in the community to promote change and growth.

John O'Connor, board member of the Armenian Assembly and the Armenian Library and Museum of America, was the only non-Armenian speaker of the evening, and his insights were well received by the audience as well as the other forum panelists. After complimenting the Archbishops on their services to the Armenian community during their ministry, O'Connor emphasized that "the church is the bridge between the nation and the Diaspora, the church is the keeper of the culture, and the house of reconciliation." In the light of mistrust and long divisions between the two factions of the Armenian Church, O'Connor said enough is enough" and called for the two sides to reunite to get past the barriers that have kept the community separated.

The fourth speaker, Thomas Samuelian, Ph.D., and JD, had some different views on the Armenian Church and the goals of unity. "The church must be hospitable and it transforms through its hospitality. If it doesn't do that, it falters..." Samuelian explained that the church must attract and accommodate people, must be receptive to women wishing to practice in the church, and must open its doors to non-Armenians. The problem of dissonance was also confronted, more so

## Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian delivered the following comments at the Unity of Purpose Forum:

I am very pleased to be here tonight at this open forum which I consider to be a welcome opportunity for the creation of greater understanding which ultimately is the one thing that will lead to true unity for the Armenian Church in the United States.

This forum is, in a sense, an outgrowth of one which took place in Boston during the visit of His Holiness Catholicos Karekin I early this year with the attendance of more than 900 people.

Let me say at the outset that I believe that forums such as this are the key to our ultimate success. Tonight is a milestone, however, because it is the first time that my brother, Archbishop Khajag, and I will be sharing the podium together with the moderator and panelists. While it is true that we have had areas of cooperation recently, and that there have been other forums, this is the first time that the Prelate and Primate are participants. Above all, I look forward to hearing your thoughts and feelings. *You are the church and you can make a difference.*

The topic selected tonight is very important: "Unity of Purpose: The Role of the Armenian Church in a Changing Diaspora." Certainly within our memory, never has the church been faced with so many changes and so many challenges. And we must act with these changes in mind, try to put the past aside, and concentrate on the future. For if we do not do this, there is not going to be much of a future.

We have been talking about unity for a long time, but in my estimation to date it has not been clear, sincere, and objective action. The end result or the objective of unity should not be so much the merits of administrative unity, as the restoration of the Armenian Church to the faithfulness of its traditions and its service. The end should be giving the church the means to fulfill its calling, that is, preaching the Gospel.

Unity is good and desirable. Who can dispute that? Unity will strengthen the Armenian American community and give it single-mindedness of purpose. It will reinforce the social fiber of our community and strengthen our collective memory. I pray for the time when we shall shake free from parallel programs, publications, and edifices. I pray for the day when we shall be able to present ourselves to the outside world as a collective unit belonging to one nation and one people, without feeling ashamed, without searching for words of apology, without giving all sorts of explanations. Above all, I pray for the day when through unity we will be able to carry out the will of our Lord and Saviour, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Ephesians 4:5)

But, we cannot achieve these goals by simply proclaiming our desire for unity. We must work at it; we must work at it together. We must recognize that there are differences between us, but that the similarities are far greater. We must open our hearts to one another and truly believe that the time has come for the Diocese and the Prelacy to merge into one united church. If we do this, I believe that God will use this union to create a renewed church, one that is faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The world has changed so dramatically for Armenians that we can no longer be complacent and indifferent. Most of all, we have to recognize that we need each other if we hope to conquer the great challenges before us.

The role of our church in the diaspora needs to be re-thought. Certainly, now that Armenia is independent we can be less concerned with national concerns, and become more directed to the true mission of the church, that is, spreading the Word of our Lord. The church exists for that mission. Whatever else we do, if we are not doing that, we cannot call ourselves a church. We must face head-on the issues of great concern: the training of priests who understand our local situation; the question of language; the changing role of women; social and moral concerns.

The challenges facing the church in Armenia must also be our concern. It is a difficult thing to think about, let alone verbalize, but the truth is that we are facing the monumental task of re-Christianizing Armenia. Imagine. The first Christian nation needs to be Christianized! Let us sit idly and allow other denominations and sects to fill the vacuum. Priests are needed to travel to all parts of Armenia and Artsakh and live and pray with the people. New churches are needed. Old churches need to be renovated.

In my address to our National Representative Assembly in May 1995, I outlined a plan for unity which I truly believe can work. The plan called for specific actions in liturgical and pastoral matters on a local parish level, on a diocesan level, and a proposed structure for our united Diocese. By implementing some of the concepts outlined, I believe unity can be achieved. I say this as an Armenian clergyman, born and raised in the Middle East, who since 1977 has been caught up in the whirlpool of unity. I say this as a clergyman with deep love for the Armenian Church and people.

Therefore, in the name of one Saviour in whom we all believe, in the name of one Muron, with which we are all anointed, let us go beyond words, let us go beyond blind hope, let us go beyond expectations. Let us just concentrate on the actions and deeds that will accomplish our goal. Let us renew ourselves and transform old obstacles into new opportunities.

In a short time we will be celebrating the Centennial of the Armenian Church in America established by Khrimian Hyrig in 1898, and we are already deep into the planning stages of the 1700th anniversary of Christian Armenia. What a great time—could there be a better time?—for us to proclaim our diocesan unity as our gift to our forefathers, for the generations ahead, and for the glory of our Lord who prayed that His followers "may become one..." (John 17:23). ✚

than by the previous speakers. "For too long there have been too many grudges. We can't build a community on grudges." He summarized by raising questions in regards to the accessibility of the church, suggesting the church provide regular English language services in each com-

munity, to have a more streamlined *badarak*, and to bring the church to the people scattered throughout the community through itinerant priests.

The two Archbishops were then invited to the main forum table, and Archbishop Khajag was the first to step to the podium and comment on unity. He

attributed the division of the church to politics. "Politics is the reason behind our continuing state of disunity." He stressed that the community has reached a new era, and that new steps must be taken to reach the goal of unity. Archbishop Khajag also commended the two unity committees which have formed a united set of by-laws to resolve the issues of division. However, these by-laws have yet to be adopted by both the Prelacy and the Diocese.

The historical problems of the church division, according to Archbishop Khajag, are no longer in effect today, and that the time has come for more progress. He ended his thoughts by saying, "We should not play games with the integrity of the church, nor with the faith and loyalty of our people," stressing that the goal of unity can finally be resolved by the community on a united front.

Archbishop Mesrob followed with a more spiritual viewpoint towards unity. He addressed the audience, stating, "You are the church, and you can make a difference." He wished for a united people, a united nation, and stressed the urgency of "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism."

The only way towards unity, according to His Eminence, is to recognize the weaknesses and differences of the community, and only by working to overcome these grievances can unity be accomplished. According to Archbishop Mesrob, the fact that Armenia has reached independence must result in expressing less of a concern for national issues, thereby placing emphasis on the church itself. The Archbishop was optimistic on the achievement of unity and called for the community to go beyond words, thoughts and expectations, to take a final action toward unity.

A question-and-answer period followed the statements by the Archbishops, during which questions written beforehand, were posed to the forum panel from audience members via moderator Anthony Barsamian. The questions varied from the explanation of disunity to children, to the cause of decreasing enrollment in Sunday Schools.

Samuelian commented that the community as a whole is responsible for the continued division of the church, and that direct confrontation of the criticisms of the Archbishops and the church is the only way to end disunity.

When asked of their expectations of the unity committees, both Archbishops expressed their gratitude and satisfaction of the progress made.

O'Connor answered a question relating to maintaining interest in the church by Armenians by stressing the necessity for the church to bring the gospels to the people, one Armenian at a time.

A question regarding the continuance of building separate churches in communities was asked, whereby Archbishop Mesrob underlined the importance for building the church's future, and that the need to accommodate geographically and socially distributed communities is the focus. Archbishop Khajag further expounded on the issue by expressing his favor to the closing of churches in less populated communities.

Archbishop Khajag was later asked to identify the key determining factor for church unity, and to explain how this factor would be implemented. "The by-laws are ready from both sides. Both committees must vote and decide on the issues, and unity will happen. It's that simple," His Eminence stressed.

With regard to the obstacles of unity, Archbishop Mesrob commented, "Unity is not a goal. Unity is a means to bring the word of Christ to the people."

The forum ended with a closing prayer by Archbishop Khajag, the singing of the *Hayr Mer*, and a brief reception which followed. ✚



# CROSSROADS

## A Review of Prelacy and Parish Activities



### Catholicate of Cilicia Participates In World Council of Churches Conference



Participants representing the Armenian Church (Cilician and Etchmiadzin Sees) at the WCC conference.

"Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures," an international conference organized by the Mission and Evangelism unit of the World Council of Churches (WCC), took place in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, November 24 to December 3, bringing together 638 delegates and representatives of various denominations, including the Armenian Apostolic Church, as well as various observers and correspondents.

Representing the Catholicate of All Armenians were Archbishop Datev Gharibian, Bishop Viken Aykazian, and V. Rev. Mikael Ajapahyan. Representing the Catholicate of the Great House of Cilicia was V. Rev. Nareg Amezian, who actively participated in the deliberations and served on the seven member message

committee.

Catholicos Aram I, as the Moderator of the Central and Executive Committees of the WCC, was invited to open the conference, but was unable to attend because of prior commitments.

The conference began on Sunday, November 24, with the opening worship service in the presence of Brazilian religious and civic dignitaries. The theme of the conference was explored in four sections: 1. Authentic witness within each culture; 2. Gospel and identity in community; 3. Local congregations in pluralist societies; 4. One gospel, diverse expressions. Overall the conference included 11 worship hours, 6 Bible studies, 13 plenary sessions, 9 section sessions, 6 encounters, and 8 regional meetings. ✚

### All Saints Church Marks 53rd Anniversary

All Saints Church, Glenview, Illinois, celebrated its 53rd anniversary on Saturday, November 16, with a dinner under the auspices of Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Prelate. Dr. and Mrs. A. Ovasapian served as honorary chairmen of the event.

Mr. Raffi Leblebejian, Master of Ceremonies, introduced several speakers including Mr. Artin Deirmenjian who presented a concise history of the community and also noted that the evening was not only a celebration of the church's anniversary, but also a celebration of Archbishop Ashjian's 35th anniversary of ordination.

Rev. Zareh Sahagian, pastor of the church, and Vartan Hagopian, chairman of the Board of Trustees, also took the opportunity to present their messages to the community.

The cultural program included Ms. Isabelle Paylakdorian who in her heart-warming soprano voice offered selections including Armenian religious and folk songs, as well as operatic and popular songs. She was accompanied by Lara Fustigian.

On behalf of the community, Rev. Sahagian presented a gold ring with an amethyst stone to the Prelate. The religious motifs on the sides of the beautiful ring included a dove and a mitre.

In his concluding remarks, Archbishop Ashjian thanked the pastor and the entire community for their love and appreciation. He also expressed his deep admiration for the Chicago area community for their continued deep commitment to the Church.

Mr. Zohrab Tazian, the well-known and unique community leader from Fort Wayne, Indiana, conducted the successful fund-raising drive which in a short period raised \$70,000. ✚



Mr. Ardashes Torosian, principal of the Khirikian School #10 in Yerevan presents Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian with a small rug made by students, during the Archbishop's visit in October. The Prelacy has provided financial assistance to the school for several years.

### Lebanese Independence Day Marked in New York

On the occasion of Lebanon's Independence Day, His Excellency Ambassador Antoine Chedid and Mrs. Chedid, hosted a gala reception on Friday, November 22, at the Lebanese Consulate in New York City.

Attending the reception were Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Prelate, and Archpriest Moushegh Der Kaloustian, pastor of St. Illuminator's Cathedral.

His Eminence expressed the good wishes of the Armenian community and the hope for peace. ✚

### AREC Sponsored Seminars:

#### Seminar on Liturgy

*Interpretation of the Divine Liturgy* (Sourp Badarak) was the theme of a four-hour Sunday School Teachers' seminar sponsored by the Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC) of the Prelacy on Saturday, November 9. The seminar took place at St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown, Massachusetts, and was led by the director of AREC, Deacon Shant Kazanjian.

The seminar began with a discussion on the biblical concept of the Lord's Supper, followed by an outline of the overall structure of the Badarak of the Armenian Church. Deacon Kazanjian proceeded to walk the teachers through the Badarak with the help of a video tape. A step-by-step interpretation focused on what happens to the participants as they go on the corporate spiritual journey—starting with the very first and essential act of gathering as a Church, to hearing the Word of God, to uniting the totality of their life as a sacrifice to the once and for all sacrifice of Christ, to thanking God for the awesome salvation He has wrought in Christ, to partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ as communion with God, to thanking God for the Gift of foretasting the life and joy of the Kingdom to come.

The seminar participants included sixteen Sunday School teachers from the New England parishes, St. Stephen's (Watertown, Mass.), St. Gregory (Springfield, Mass.), and St. Asdvadzadzin (Whitinsville, Mass.) The teachers left with a better understanding of the inexhaustible depth of the Sourp Badarak and more eager to teach about the central act of worship of the Armenian Church. ✚

#### Youth Seminar

Over 40 junior and senior high school students from Boston, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, and Toronto came to St. Vartanantz Church in Ridgefield, New Jersey, November 30–December 1, for a weekend of fellowship, discipleship, and worship.

The Thanksgiving weekend youth seminar, sponsored by the Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC) of the Prelacy, started three years ago in response to a need expressed by the youth of the St. Gregory of Datev Institute Summer Religious Studies Program for more youth-oriented Christian education programs.

The Seminar leaders were Very Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar General of the Prelacy and the pastor of St. Sarkis Church of Douglaston, New York, and Deacon Shant Kazanjian, Director of AREC.

The formal educational part of the weekend included two major sessions. Hayr Anoushavan presented an interactive session on the vessels and symbols of the Divine Liturgy. In the second session the participants explored basic Christian beliefs through guided small group discussions, led by Deacon Shant. As always, worship constituted an integral part of the program. The weekend seminar included morning and evening services as well as a Sunday Divine Liturgy.

On a lighter side, the participants had ample time for fun and fellowship. Friday and Saturday evenings were set aside for a thanksgiving party. Friday night youths from the New Jersey community joined in to enjoy a lively evening of dancing.

The next major event of the Institute is the 11th Annual Summer Religious Studies Program scheduled to take place at the St. Mary of Providence Center in Elverson, Pennsylvania, July 5-12, 1997. ✚



### Anniversary Celebration for Pope Shenouda

The 25th anniversary of the enthronement of Pope Shenouda, spiritual leader of the Coptic Church, took place in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on November 24, with more than 750 people in attendance.

His Holiness has served for 25 years, earning a respected position in the Middle Eastern Christian community. He is highly regarded for his administrative abilities, as a preacher of peace and reconciliation, a biblical scholar, and a worthy descendant of Saints Anthony and Cyril.

Pope Shenouda has always maintained a close brotherly relationship with the Armenian Church. In April 1995 he participated in the enthronement of His Holiness Karekin I in Holy Etchmiadzin and in July, 1995, the consecration of His Holiness Aram I in Antelias, Lebanon.

Attending the silver anniversary celebration to express the best wishes of the Armenian community were Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Prelate, and Very Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar-General. ✚

### The Art of Listening

*In every experience of true listening, especially to God, but also to another person, there is a mysterious moment in which the one who listens steps out from a fortress of self-concern and dwells silently in the truth of the one who speaks.*