



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

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Bishop Choloyan Will Represent Cilician See at WCC General Assembly

The Executive Council is pleased to announce that the Prelate, His Grace Bishop Oshagan Choloyan, will be a member of the delegation representing the Cilician See at the 8th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches which will convene in Harare, Zimbabwe, December 3, to 14, 1998.

Jack Mardoian, Esq., chairman of the Executive Council, said that the Council received a letter from His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, informing them that Bishop Choloyan has been selected to be part of the delegation which also includes: Bishop Sebouh Sarkissian from Damascus, Syria; Very Rev. Nareg Alemezian from Antelias, Lebanon; Very Rev. Mashdotz Chobanian from Oslo, Norway; Dr. Levon Tavitian from Tehran, Iran; Mrs. Roubina Peroumian from Los Angeles, California; and Miss Manoushag Boyajian from Beirut, Lebanon.

Also participating in various capacities on behalf of the Cilician See during the General Assembly will be: Mrs. Seta Pamboukjian from Beirut, Lebanon; Mrs. Eva Berberian from Athens, Greece; and Mr. Varoujan Attarian from Geneva, Switzerland.

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of more than 300 churches, in more than 100 countries in all continents, from virtually all Christian traditions. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member church but works cooperatively with the WCC. The highest governing body is the Assembly which meets every seven years. The directives of the Assembly are governed by the Central and Executive Committees of which His Holiness Aram I

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Prelacy's Mission for Armenia's Children Continues; Latest Shipment of Goods Arrives

by Martha Kouyoumdjian Mekaelian

Over the past six months the Eastern Prelacy, in conjunction with AmeriCares, undertook the challenge of collecting primarily toys for the children of Armenia. Our goal was to amass enough stuffed animals, dolls, building blocks, etc., to distribute to the major institutions of Armenia and Artsakh, and then to the general population of children from newborn through 18 years of age. Joint efforts have resulted in collecting goods with a wholesale value of more than \$90,000.

Our first appeal was to AmeriCares, who not only requested donations from major corporations, but also conducted "toy drives" in the public schools of Connecticut. Boxes were placed in numerous public schools and the young students had one purpose: to buy a stuffed animal or toy for an Armenian child. Over a period of four months, children came to school with brand new, beautiful stuffed animals, often larger than the child, and soon filled those boxes with stuffed animals, dolls, painting kits, and innumerable toys.

Dr. Vazken Ghougassian, Executive Director of the Prelacy, and I were privileged to visit AmeriCares and view these wonderful toys, as well as the entire shipment (over 35,000 pounds). We have never seen such an assortment of bright, beautiful and fun toys in one place at one time. We were and are so grateful to AmeriCares for the love, generosity, and compassion they have shown for Armenia's children. These two containers were transported by the United Armenian Fund to the Prelacy office in Armenia, the St. Nerses Charitable Organization of Yerevan, where the goods were distributed. The arrival of the goods coincided with a visit by the Prelate, Bishop Oshagan Choloyan, who helped distribute the toys and other items. Bishop Choloyan was in Armenia for the meetings of the 17th Centenary steering committee of which he is the co-chairman.



A portion of the infant formula which was part of the shipment to Armenia.

The entire contents of the shipment included: Assorted bars of soap (10,362 pounds) valued at \$17,719.02; Toothbrushes (798 pounds) valued at \$7,956.06; Painting Kits (337 pounds) valued at \$309.00; Stuffed animals (1,079 pounds) valued at \$5,470.53; Similac Infant Formula (22,405 pounds) valued at \$57,303.76; and Technica Boots for children (247 pounds) valued at \$2,111.85.

There were enough gifts to distribute to children 14 to 18 years (bars of soap, toothbrushes); children ages 3 to 12 years (stuffed animals, toys, boots); and for infants, newborn to two years, (Similac infant formula).

These gifts, however small they may

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Prelate Begins Visits to Parishes

Bishop Oshagan Choloyan, after an initial period of becoming familiar with administrative duties in the Prelacy's headquarters in New York City, began his visits to the parishes in order to meet the faithful. In each community he visits, Bishop Oshagan meets with the leaders of the community, including members of the Boards of Trustees and Delegates to the National Representative Assembly, as well as Sunday School and Armenian School teachers and administrators.

Chicago

The first parish His Grace visited was All Saints Armenian Church in Chicago, July 22 to 26. On Sunday he celebrated the Divine Liturgy and delivered the sermon in which he spoke about the nature of the church emphasizing that "the church is not a building, neither is it this or that organization. The church is the people." He encouraged the faithful to become a true part of the life of the church together with their families—a participation that goes beyond Sunday attendance.

On Saturday, Bishop Choloyan met with the Board of Trustees and NRA Delegates and heard their concerns and suggestions. During his visit to Chicago the Prelate spent one full day meeting with the chairman of the Prelacy's Executive Council, Jack Mardoian, Esq., who is a member of Chicago's All Saints Church.

At a reception at the home of the pastor, Rev. Zareh Sahakian, the Prelate met with community leaders which included the Cilician Knights and Princes of the Greater Chicago area. Bishop Oshagan told them that they are part of a handful of individuals who have been honored because of their exemplary service to church and nation. He encouraged them to remember that they have a duty to work for the health and welfare of the church and to encourage members of the community to come forth and become active, productive members of the church.

ARS Regional Convention

During his visit to Chicago the Prelate attended the Armenian Relief Society's Eastern U.S. Regional Convention, hosted by the local Zabel Chapter. His Grace offered his blessings and encouraged the delegates to continue their valuable assistance to the Armenian nation. He attended the evening banquet as well where he delivered the invocation and again spoke to the delegates telling them, "The Armenian Relief Society is not just any organization. It was born out of necessity and it is an organization whose primary mission is to help the Armenian people." Bishop Oshagan encouraged the delegates and membership to continue their resolve to maintain Christian

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Bishop Choloyan distributes toys to institutionalized infants in Armenia.



Left to right: Mrs. Martha Kouyoumdjian Mekaelian, Mr. Alon Marom, project director of AmeriCares, and Mr. Phillip Tu of AmeriCares, inspect the toys for Armenia's children prior to their shipment overseas.

Communiqués:

John Yervant Kouyoumjian

The Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, Eastern United States and Canada, announces with deep regret the death of John Yervant Kouyoumjian, a generous benefactor to the Armenian nation and a Prince of the Cilician See. Mr. Kouyoumjian passed away on Tuesday morning, June 21, in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Funeral services took place on Saturday, July 25, in the Chapel of Shepherd and Son Funeral Home. At the request of the deceased, his remains were transferred to Armenia for interment in the Etchmiadzin Cemetery.

On this occasion, the Eastern Prelacy's Prelate, His Grace Bishop Oshagan Choloyan, and the Religious and Executive Councils, extend their heartfelt sympathy to his widow, Mrs. Nellie Kouyoumjian, his daughter and son-in-law, Rosalia and Peter Alagna, his grandchildren Felicia, Christina, and Sandra, his daughter Eleanor Raynor, and all members of the Babayan Family.

We will always remember him with deep respect. May he rest in eternal peace. ✦

Melvie Arslanian-Milhaud

The Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America announces with deep sadness the death of Mrs. Melvie Arslanian-Milhaud which took place Thursday evening, August 13, in New York City. She was 45 years old.

Mrs. Arslanian-Milhaud was born in Beirut, Lebanon, to Melancthon and Violette Arslanian, and was raised in Antwerp, Belgium, where she had her primary education. She attended the University of Aix En Provence, France, where she received a degree in Philosophy and Letters. She continued her studies at New York University where she received a degree in cinematography. She was the director and producer of several films including "Styletto" and "Fading," and her most acclaimed work, "Above the Waves," a conversation with her grandmother and role model, Beatrice.

Funeral services took place at St. Illuminator's Cathedral on August 18.

On this sad occasion, His Grace Bishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate, and the Religious and Executive Councils extend their deep condolences to her husband and son, David and Arsen Milhaud; to her mother, Mrs. Violette Arslanian; and her brothers Ara and Raffi Arslanian.

The family requests in-lieu-of-flowers donations be made to the Armenian Prelacy, 138 E. 39th Street, New York, NY 10016; or St. Illuminator's Armenian Day School, 69-23 47th Avenue, Woodside, New York. ✦

**ԱՐԱՄ Ա. ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ ԱՅՑԵԼԵՑ
ԳԱՐԵԳԻՆ Ա. ԱՄԵՆԱՅՆ ՀԱՅՈՑ ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍԻՆ**



His Holiness Aram I made a one-day trip to Armenia on August 26 to see His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, and personally wish him a speedy recovery. Catholicos Aram I also had the opportunity to meet with President Robert Kocharian who along with Prime Minister Armen Tarbinian also visited Etchmiadzin to welcome Catholicos Karekin home following his medical treatment in the United States.

Չորեքշաբթի Օգոստոս 26-ին, Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Վեհափառ Հայրապետը՝ Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Արամ Ա. Կաթողիկոս, Լիբանանի վարչապետ Ռաֆիկ Հարիրիի անձնական օդանավով ժամանեց Երևան, անձնապես շուտափոյթ ապահովում մաղթելու համար Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Գարեգին Ա. Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոսին:

Այս այցելության ընթացքին Արամ Կաթողիկոսին կ'ուղեկցէին Կաթողիկոսական ընդհանուր փոխանորդ Ս. Արտաւազդ Արքեպիսկոպոս Թրքոնեան, կաթողիկոսութեան կեդրոնական վարչութեան ատենապետ եւ պետական երեսփոխան Մեթր Խաչիկ Պապիկեան եւ գաւազանակիր Ս. Վրոյր Արեղայ Տէմիրեան:

Երևանի Զուարթնոց օդակայանին մէջ Վեհափառը դիմաւորուեցաւ Ա. Էջմիածնի դիւանապետ Ս. Ներսէս Արքեպիսկոպոս Պօզապալեանի, Այրարատեան թեմի Առաջնորդ Ս. Գարեգին Արքեպիսկոպոս Ներսէսեանի, Ամերիկայի Արեւմտեան Թեմի Առաջնորդ Ս. Վաչէ Արքեպիսկոպոս Յովսէփեանի, Արեւմտեան Եւրոպայի Հայրապետական Նուիրակ՝ Ս. Գիւտ Արքեպիսկոպոս Նազգաշեանի, Ս. Շահէ Արքեպիսկոպոս Անէմեանի, Ս. Արսէն Արքեպիսկոպոս Պերպէրեանի, Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոսութեան՝ անդամներէն Ս. Մեսրոպ Արքեպիսկոպոս Աշմեանի եւ Ս. Սեպուհ Եպս. Սարգիսեանի, Հայաստանի Հանրապետութեան կրօնի գործերու խորհուրդի նախագահ Լազար Սուրբեանի եւ Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոսութեան Ազգային Կեդրոնական Վարչութեան անդամ Ռակեբերան Արզումանեանի կողմէ:

Ա. Էջմիածնի Մայր Տանարին մէջ հրաշափառի արարողութեամբ Արամ Վեհափառ մօտեցաւ իջման Ա. Սեղանին իր աղօթքը կատարելու եւ ապա խօսք ուղեւով ներկաներուն ըսաւ. - «Գոհութիւն կու տամ Աստուծոյ որ այս գեղեցիկ առիթը եւ հոգեպարար պահը շնորհեց ինձի, ըլլալու միաձնաէջ այս տանարին մէջ: Ըլլալ Մայր Աթոռ Ս. Էջմիածնի մէջ կը նշանակէ հոգեպես վերանորոգուիլ, զօրանալ մեր բրիստոնէական հաւատքին մէջ, զօրանալ ու ամրապնդուիլ մեր ազգային պատկանելութեան մէջ:

Ապա Վեհափառ Հայրապետը ներկաներուն բացատրեց իր այցելութեան նպատակը, աւելցնելով որ անցնող չորս ամիսներու ընթացքին միշտ կապի մէջ է եղած Ամենայն Հայոց Հայրապետին հետ: «Այսօր մեզի համար մեծ ուրախութիւն է տեսնել, որ Վեհափառ Հայրապետը ապահովման դրական ընթացքին մէջ է, եւ մանաւանդ վերադարձած է Մայր Աթոռ Ս. Էջմիածնի: Միաձնաէջ այս խորանին առջեւ եւ իմ աղօթքս կը բարձրացնեմ առ Աստուած, խնդրելով որ մեր սիրելի Վեհափառ Հայրապետին պարգեւէ ֆաշտող կեանք, որպէսզի ան կարենայ վերանորոգ հաւատով, տեսիլով եւ յանձնառութեամբ շարունակել իր այնքան նուիրական առաքելութիւնը, ազգաշինութեան, եկեղեցաշինութեան եւ հայրենաշինութեան իր սրբազան գործին մէջ:

Այստեղ կը վստահեցնեմ Վեհափառ Հայրապետին եւ Մայր Աթոռի միաբանութեան, ժողովականութեան եւ հայրենի մեր սիրելի ժողովուրդին, որ Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոսութիւնը իր միաբանութեամբ, ժողովականութեամբ, ժողովուրդով, իր բոլոր կառոյցներով, ամբողջականօրէն եւ անվերապահօրէն Մայր Աթոռ Ս. Էջմիածնի հետ է...:

Մենք հայրենիքին կը պատկանինք, ուր որ ալ գտնուինք, հայրենիքը մեզի հետ է, ու մենք հայրենիքի հետ պէտք է ըլլանք բառին ամբողջական ու վաւերական հասկացողութեամբ: Հետեւաբար կ'աղօթեմ առ բարձրեալն Աստուած, որ Մայր Աթոռ Ս. Էջ-

Prelate Accompanies Aram I in Meeting with Archbishop of Canterbury



Bishop Choloyan (left) and Bishop Khajag Hagopian with the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Cary.

Bishop Oshagan Choloyan, accompanied His Holiness Aram I during the Catholicos's recent visit with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geogry Cary.

The Catholicos and his entourage were met at the airport by officials representing the Archbishop of Canterbury, who invited Aram I for an official visit. His Holiness was also met by officials of the Republic of Lebanon. The members of the entourage, which along with Bishop Choloyan included Bishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate of the Western Prelacy; Bishop Khajag Hagopian, Vicar of Canada; and Very Rev. Mashdotz Chobanyan, Staffbearer, were immediately escorted to Lambert Palace where they were greeted by Archbishop Cary and other high level church leaders.

His Holiness participated in services at the Cathedral of Canterbury where he delivered the sermon and was decorated with the highest award of the Anglican Church, the Medal of St. Augustine. His Holiness, in turn, presented Archbishop Cary with the prestigious Cross of the Cilician See.

During their stay in Great Britain, His Holiness and entourage visited the Embassy of the Armenian Republic and St. Peter's Armenian Church where they were greeted by the Prelate of England, Archbishop Yeghishe Kizirian, the diocesan council, and members of the local community. ✦

Everyday Phrases

Most people are not aware that many phrases we use in our everyday conversation originate from the Bible. Here are just a few examples:

- The skin of my teeth.**
"I am escaped with the skin of my teeth" (Job 19:20).
- Wolf in sheep's clothing.**
"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).
- Holler than thou.**
"I am holier than thou" (Isaiah 6:5).
- A drop in a bucket.**
"Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance" (Isaiah 40:15).
- Eat, drink, and be merry.**
"A Man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink and to be merry" (Ecclesiastes 8:15).
- Can a Leopard Change his spots?**
"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jeremiah 13:23).
- The blind leading the blind.**
"If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14).
- Spare the rod and spoil the child.**
"He the spareth the rod hateth his son" (Proverbs 13:24).

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Celebrating the Cross

by Rev. Dr. Gorun Shrikian

Khachveratz or The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Every year *Khachverats* or the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is celebrated in the Armenian Church on the Sunday nearest to September 15. *Khachverats* is one of our Church's five *daghavars* or major holidays. The five holidays are Christmas (*Dzunoot*), Easter (*Zadeeg*), the Transfiguration (*Ailagerbootiun* or *Vartavar*), the Assumption (*Aschvadzadzeen*), and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (*Khachverats*). Each of the above mentioned *daghavars* has a close relationship to the life and the saving work of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

As we know from the history of the Christian Church of earlier centuries, the Cross became a venerated object among the Christians, being accepted as an instrument which led toward the salvation of mankind because of the vicarious death of Jesus on the Cross. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Armenians, as in other Christian Churches, venerate the Cross as a symbol of salvation and eternal life. Jesus, Himself, has said, "Those who take their cross and follow Me will inherit the eternal life." There are numerous events of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and we will elaborate on them at their appropriate times. Let us now explore both the historical and religious connotations of this holy day.

Khachverats is one of the oldest festivals dedicated to the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The first event is connected with a tradition which relates that the first patriarch of Jerusalem, James, the brother of Jesus Christ, elevated the Holy Cross during a religious ceremony chanting the hymn called "Khachee Koh Krisdos Yergeer Bakanemk," which means, "To Your Cross We Bow," thus accepting the Cross as a symbol of salvation and an object of utmost veneration. James was later martyred in Jerusalem and upon his grave stands the enormous Armenian monastery of St. James, comprising one-sixth of the entire city of Jerusalem.

The second event of *Khachverats* is

designed to commemorate the recapturing of the Holy Cross from the Persians. King Khosrov of Persia, while waging a war against the Byzantine Empire, occupied Jerusalem in 610 A.D. The Persians pillaged the ancient monasteries and holy places of Jerusalem and surrounding areas. They also captured the Holy Cross which was placed in the Cathedral of the Holy Sepulcher by St. Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, in the Fourth Century A.D. After almost two decades of captivity of the Holy Cross, the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclitus, called on the help of all the Christians in his empire and surrounding countries in order to recapture the Holy Cross from the Persians. King Khosrov of Persia violently resisted the Byzantines and the Persians defended their country until Khosrov was assassinated by his own son, Gavad Sheero. The Persians surrendered in 627 A.D. and agreed to return all valuable relics and wealth captured in Jerusalem, including the Holy Cross.

The joy of the entire Christendom was overwhelming. The Holy Cross was brought back upon the shoulders of the Christian officers, passing through Armenia. Throughout the entire journey, the Holy Cross was greeted and respected everywhere by the pious Christian population of Armenia and Asia Minor. Later, the cross was shipped to Jerusalem to be instituted in its old place, in the Cathedral of the Holy Sepulcher.

It is called the "Exaltation of the Holy Cross" because in both instances the Elevation (Exaltation) of the Holy Cross is the central aspect of the feast. By its elevation, Christians will witness its saving power and derive from the Holy Cross the necessary strength and the healing powers, as did our ancestors.

"...If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Mark 8:34)

Varakah Khach or The Cross of Varak

In the Liturgical calendar of the Armenian Church, the *Varakah Khach* or The Cross of Varak is celebrated two weeks after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, between September 25 and October 1. While the other events connected to the veneration of the Holy Cross are commemorated by all old churches, the *Varakah Khach* is strictly a national festival and since 653 A.D. has been commemorated only in the Armenian Church.

A group of Christian maidens, known in our church history as *Kahianiank* and *Hripsimiank* were wandering in Armenia because of the persecutions set against them in the Roman Empire. Eventually they decided to settle on the mountain of Varak, which had already been inhabited by cloisters of Armenian hermits who had escaped persecution and were now leading a life of serenity, dedicated to Christ. When these maidens came to Varak, they were welcomed by the hermits, but according to the accepted standards of the cloisters, it was necessary for them to leave as soon as possible. These maidens were carrying with them a piece from the Cross of Jesus. They entrusted this relic to the hermits because their own fate was unknown.

In 653 A.D., a hermit, by the name of Toteeg, having heard about the story, had an obsession to find the lost piece of the Cross, which supposedly was hidden someplace on the mountain of Varak. One night Toteeg experienced a vision. On the rocky top of Mount Varak there was a church resting on twelve glowing columns. Suddenly the glowing cross of the church started to move, eventually resting on the altar of the monastery of Varak.

Toteeg and his companion Hovel rushed to the place where they found a wooden piece which was the piece of the Cross that they were looking for. This event brought an overwhelming joy to the hearts of the inhabitants of Van. The Catholicos, Nerses III, verified its authenticity and placed it in the Monastery of Varak, where it remained until 1021 A.D.

Because of diverse political circumstances, the Cross of Varak was taken to Sepastia for a few years and then returned to Varak. Since the monastery was situated in an isolated area, church leaders decided to move it to a safer location. The relic remained in Khoshap from 1026 to 1651 A.D. In 1655, the relic was placed in the Church of Soorp Deeramair (St. Mary) in the city of Van, whereupon the name of the church was changed to Soorp Nishan (St. Mark). The relic remained there until 1915. Its fate is unknown today because of the Armenian massacres of 1915 and the evacuation of the Armenians from Van and other Armenian states.

What relevance can *Varakah Khach* have for us today? Historical events are void of meaningfulness when they no longer stimulate people toward noble goals. As we mentioned before, this

WCC

(Continued from page 1)

has been the Moderator, the highest elected office, for the past seven years. His seven year term of office will come to an end in Zimbabwe.

Catholicos Aram chaired the final meeting of the 150-member Central Committee last year in Geneva at which time he expressed some observations and reflections on the WCC, calling upon member churches to "recommit ourselves to a fellowship of risks and hopes."

He expressed some concerns he had about the WCC, including his belief that the organization is in "institutional paralysis" because it has become absorbed with structures and programs and finds it difficult to adjust to changing realities in the churches and in the worldwide ecumenical movement.

"As they move towards the 21st century, the churches are called to redefine the way they want to stay and grow together, and recommit themselves to the common vision which sustains this fellowship," he said.

"I am absolutely convinced after my almost 30 years of ecumenical service that one of the major roles of the ecumenical movement is to challenge the churches to define what it means to be a church in the world of today," he said, noting that the world is far different from the one in which the WCC was born in 1948."

In spite of growing challenges he expressed optimism for the future of the WCC stating, "Some of us think that the ecumenical movement is in winter. As we move towards the end of the century, the coming Assembly, the 50th anniversary of the WCC, and the Millennium will become important steps on the way toward ecumenical spring. Let us always remember that the ecumenical pilgrimage is a costly one. We should have the courage to pay the price if we are committed to one faith, one eucharistic fellowship and a common witness to the world."

Mr. Mardoian reiterated the pleasure of the Executive Council that Bishop Choloyan will represent the Cilician See in Zimbabwe and play an important role in the proceedings of the 8th General Assembly. "We wish Oshagan Srpazan and all of the members of our delegation a fruitful and successful ecumenical encounter," he said. ✦

Words are words,
explanations are explanations,
promises are promises,
but only performance
is reality.

շար. էջ 2-էԳ

միածինը միշտ շէն ու պայծառ պահէ, մեր սիրելի հայրենիքը միշտ անսասան պահէ եւ մեր ժողովուրդի բոլոր զաւակներուն՝ հայրենիքի մէջ, թէ հայրենիքէն դուրս, միասնական հոգիով խմբէ մոյն եւ մէկ եկեղեցւոյ, մոյն եւ մէկ ազգի, մոյն եւ մէկ հայրենիքի սրբազան գաղափարին շուրջ», ըսաւ Վեհափառ Հայրապետը:

Վեհաբանի մուտքին Արամ Կաթողիկոս դիմաւորուեցաւ Ամենայն Հայոց Հայրապետ Գարեգին Ա. Կաթողիկոսին կողմէ: Շուտափոյթ ապաքինման իր մաղթանքները յայտնելէ ետք, Արամ Վեհափառ անգամ մը եւս արտայայտեց Ամենայն Հայոց Վեհափառ Հայրապետին ու Ա. Էջմիածնին հետ զօրակցելու ու անսակարկ կերպով գործակցելու իր պատրաստակամութիւնը:

Ամենայն Հայոց Հայրապետը խորին շնորհակալութիւն յայտնեց եղբայրական այս սիրալիր եւ օրինակելի այցելութեան համար:

Նոյն օրը, յետ միջօրէին, Հայաստանի Հանրապետութեան Նախագահ Ռոպերթ Գոչարեան, որ նոր էր վերադարձած դէպի Ֆրանսա կատարած իր այցելութենէն՝ ընկերակցութեամբ Վարչապետ Արմէն Դարբինեանի այցելեց Ա. Էջմիածին, բարի վերադարձ ու շուտափոյթ ապաքինում մաղթելու Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոսին: Ապա երկու Վեհափառ Հայրապետները, նախագահն ու Վարչապետը առանձին ու երկար հանդիպում մը ունեցան:

Նոյն երեկոյեան Արամ Վեհափառ վերադարձաւ Անթիլիաս:

feast in its entirety is an Armenian feast. We, as Armenians, share with the rest of the world our human responsibilities as Christians. We do share and participate in the sacred and stimulating events, both in the history of the life of our Lord and the Church. But this type of common sharing never satisfied the Armenians. We recognize the fact that anything without an Armenian seal or stamp cannot serve our purposes to their extreme efficiency. For this reason we developed our own alphabet, liturgy, rituals, art, and architecture when it would have been easier to copy and follow the footsteps of others. We are like bees. We can take a little from every flower, but what we produce is something different—it is our own. We felt then that we must have our national Cross Festival. We did. Aren't you glad that we did? ✦

Visit to Parishes

(Continued from page 1)

family values and to keep our nation unified and strong.

UAF Milestone

In Washington, D.C., Bishop Oshagan attended a celebration in honor of the 100th United Armenia Fund (UAF) humanitarian airlift to Armenia. Attending were many Senators and Congressmen as well as representatives of the organizations which are part of the UAF, which includes the Eastern Prelacy. Bishop Oshagan addressed the many distinguished guests and expressed thanks to "our American friends, who not only financially but also politically are supporting Armenia."

Attendees included more than 150 Armenian Americans and many political leaders including Senator Bob Dole who heads the \$100 million loan program initiated by Kirk Kerkorian. Others attending included, Armenia's Ambassador, Rouben Shugarian; Maryland Senators Paul Sarbanes and Barbara Mikulski; Michigan Senator Spence Abraham and more than fifteen Congressmen.

Other church leaders attending included Fr. Vertanes Kalaydjian on behalf of the Diocese of the Eastern United States; and Rev. Movses Janbazian, Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

Bishop Oshagan commended the UAF for its impressive record noting that the UAF has made a great impact in improving life in Armenia. Since its first flight in 1989, the UAF has sent more than 16 million pounds of humanitarian assistance with a value of \$235 million. This aid was sent aboard 100 airlifts and 400 sea containers. [See story about latest Prelacy shipment via UAF in this issue—Editor].

Parish Visits Continue

Through the coming months Bishop Oshagan will continue his parish visits. His immediate and primary goal, he says, is to "encourage more active participation at all levels and all ages and to strengthen our religious education and spiritual guidance which, after all, is the foremost mission of the Armenian Church." ❖



Bishop Oshagan is continuing his visits to parishes. Here he is at St. Sarkis Church in Douglaston, New York, on Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin and Blessing of Grapes.

God shares with the person
who is generous.
—Irish Proverb—

17th Centenary:

St. Nersess Church Consecrated in Ichevan, Armenia



The newly renovated St. Nersess Church in Ichevan, Armenia, was consecrated on July 22. It is the only church in that area which has a population of 30,000. Mr. and Mrs. George Nersessian of Massachusetts, the benefactors, attended.

The new St. Nersess Armenian Church located in Ichevan in northern Armenia was consecrated on July 22, amidst emotional excitement by the local faithful and honored guests which included the benefactors of the church, Mr. and Mrs. George Nersessian of Massachusetts.

Performing the consecration were His Eminences Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Diocese of Canada; Archbishop Karekin Nersessian, Vicar of the Pontifical Diocese of Ararat; Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Executive Secretary of the 17th Centenary of the Proclamation of Christianity in Armenia; and His Grace Sebouh Chouldjian, Primate of the Diocese of Gougark where the church is located.

Services began with the singing of Hrashapar and the Procession of Clergy. At the beginning of the Liturgy, which was celebrated by Bishop Chouldjian, the Archbishops consecrated the altar, the sixteen columns and the baptismal font. The Prelate named the church St. Nersess in honor of the 12th century clergyman, St. Nerses the Gracious (Shnorhali), who amongst the catholicoi of the Armenian Church holds a unique place. His talents as a devout clergyman, philosopher, theologian, writer, administrator, ecumenist, and humanitarian have made him one of the most beloved clergymen in the history of the Armenian Church.

In his Sermon, the Prelate of the Diocese of Gougark declared "this place to be a holy place from now on where we can pray to our Lord." He urged the faithful to keep the faith of their forefathers.

Attending the consecration ceremony were the Governor of the Province, Pavel Asadoorian; the Mayors of Ichevan and Diligan, and the benefactors of the church, George (Kevork) and B. Betty Nersessian of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, who contributed the funds towards the renovation of the church. They were accompanied by their daughter, Sonya Nersessian, Esq., and granddaughter, Julie Babayan, both of Weston, Massachusetts.

The church renovation project began with an idea that occurred to the Nersessians at the baptism in 1996 of their youngest grandson, William George Jundanian, by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian. The Nersessians say that without the subsequent assistance of Archbishop Derderian and Bishop Chouldjian, the renovation would not have taken place.

Ichevan is about three hours north of Yerevan and approximately twelve miles from the Azeri border. This is the only

Editor's Note: From now until 2001 we will have a section in Outreach devoted to news and events about the ongoing 17th Centenary Commemoration. The church featured in this article is one of many that will be renovated as part of the 17th Centenary program.

church in this rather large city of 30,000 people, many of whom were at the consecration. Not only is the populace served by the newly renovated church, but the process of renovation provided many of them with jobs.

A requiem service was performed in memory of Nerses Nersessian and Nerses Maranjian, the fathers of Kevork and Betty Nersessian.

Archbishop Nersessian read an encyclical issued by His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, who also gifted a Chalice to the church. In his encyclical the Catholicos said, "We feel that this Church will become a constant source of good deeds in the life of our people, as well as in the life of our nation. Here the word of God through the preaching of the Bible will be a source of spiritual and moral strength. A new spirit will blow in the lives of our youth. The building of the physical church will be crowned with the spiritual building of the faithful."

Besides the dignitaries and local population, the consecration was witnessed by many guests from various parts of Armenia and the United States. A dinner following the consecration provided an opportunity to honor the benefactors.

"The population of Ichevan is 95% non-baptized," said Archbishop Ashjian. "The building of this church, which is a project initiated by the 17th Centenary Committee, will be a milestone for this community. Up until now they had no church. This represents a new beginning for them. Through the generous and meaningful contribution of Mr. and Mrs. Nersessian, the spiritual needs of the people will now be met."

Mr. and Mrs. Nersessian expressed their pleasure at being able to attend the consecration and expressed the hope that other churches in Armenia will also be renovated in time for the 1700th anniversary of the official acceptance of Christianity in Armenia, in the year 2001. ❖



Prelacy and AmeriCares

(Continued from page 1)



Children at Nork Orphanage presented an exceptional program for Bishop Choloyan who was in Armenia to co-chair the central committee meetings of the 17th Centenary Commemoration. The shipment of goods had just arrived and Srpazan participated in the distribution.

seen, offer that morsel of encouragement and hope, and privileges us with being a part of these children's childhood. In closing, I would like to extend special gratitude to AmeriCares, the United Armenia Fund for transporting our shipment to Yerevan; Dr. Vazken Ghougassian, Dr. Arsen Mekaelian, and His Eminence Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, former Prelate, for his enthusiasm and encouragement since the inception of our program ten years ago. Finally, I thank His Grace Bishop Oshagan Choloyan, the new Prelate, for his wholehearted endorsement, as well as plans for future expansion of our humanitarian aid program. I am gratified that His Grace was in Armenia to personally supervise and oversee the distribution of our gifts. Above all, I thank God for the privilege and blessing of working with these exceptional individuals, whose hearts see our mission for Armenia's children. What is truly important is invisible to the eye. ❖