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Armenian Apostolic Church of America  
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## ՀՕՏ ՈՒ ՀՈՎԻՒ

«Ես եմ իրաւ հովիւր: Կը  
ճանչնամ ոչխարներս եւ  
անոնք ալ զիս կը ճանչնան»  
(Յով. 10:14)

Հակոբեմբեր ամսուան ընթացքին Միացեալ Նահանգներու Արեւելեան եւ Արեւմտեան թեմերը ունեցան շնորհաբեր եւ օրհնաբեր այցելութիւնը Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոս Արամ Ա. Վեհափառ Հայրապետին: Եկած էր յատկապէս նախագահելու Հայաստանի մէջ քրիստոնէութեան պետական կրօնք հռչակման 1700ամեակի տօնակատարութիւններուն եւ ժողովուրդին տանելու անոր ոգին, որ ահաւասիկ քանի մը տարիներէ ի վեր կը սաւառնի Հայաստանի թէ Սփիւռքի զանազան գաղութներուն վրայ:

Հայց. Եկեղեցւոյ Կաթողիկոսի մը իր ժողովուրդին տուած այցելութիւնը ունի երկու տեսանկիւն.-

- 1) Դիտուած Հայրապետին կողմէ:
- 2) Դիտուած իր ժողովուրդին կողմէ:

Առաջին պարագային հօր մը իր հոգեւոր գաւակներուն նկատմամբ ունեցած սիրոյն, գուրգուրանքին եւ ուշադրութեան զգացումն է, որ կը համակէ զինք: Ուրախութեան եւ գոհունակութեան ապրումներով կը դիտէ իր ժողովուրդը, որոնց հաւատարիմ եւ հաւատարմ վերաբերումը հանդէպ հայ եկեղեցւոյ արժէքներուն եւ ժողովուրդին, կը նկատէ ազդեցիկ գաղութային կեանքի գործութեան: Ինչ արդար հպարտամէ է հօր մը համար տեսնել իր գաւակին յաջողութիւնը: Ինչ խոր երջանկութիւն է տեսնել անոր յառաջդիմութիւնը: Վեհափառ Հայրապետը այս զգացումներով համակուցեալ երբ գաւակնազան քաղաքներու մեր ժողովուրդին մօտ տեսաւ իր հոգեւոր գաւակներուն նուիրումները եւ կապաւածութիւնը Հայց. Եկեղեցւոյ եւ մեր Հայրենիքին:

Երկրորդը, պարզ հաւատացեալին զգացումն է հանդէպ իր հովուապետին: Բացառիկ առիթ պէտք է ստեղծել ունենալու Վեհափառ Հայրապետը իր ժողովուրդին հետ, ազօթելու միասին, լսելու անոր հայրական ցուցմունքներն ու յորդորները: 1700ամեակով այս առիթը շնորհուցեալ մեզի եւ Վեհափառ Հայրապետը մեզի բերաւ իր շնորհքը, իր օրհնութիւնը, իր իմաստութիւնը: Խանդավառութեամբ իր ներկայութեամբ, հպարտացանք իր հեղինակաւոր գործունէութեամբ հայ թէ միջ-եկեղեցական շրջանակներէ ներս, լեցունեցանք իր իմաստուն խօսքերով եւ խրատներով: Մենք զմեզ զգացինք պատասպարուած, հոգատարուած եւ մեր հօր աչքին՝ համեստօրէն արժէքաւորուած: Իրաւ հովիւր, բարի հովիւր, քաջ հովիւր այցելեց մեզի: Անիկա կը ճանչնայ իր ոչխարները:



A scene from the Ecumenical Service at St. Bartholomew's Church.

photo by Harry Koundakjian

## 1700th Anniversary Celebrated at St. Bartholomew's Church Catholicos Aram Presides

by Florence Avakian

Amid impressive pageantry, Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia, officiated on Wednesday, October 4, at a 1700th anniversary commemoration in St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City, one of the most glorious Byzantine churches in the United States, adorned with stained glass windows, jeweled mosaics, carved woodwork, and soaring arches.

Present at the ecumenical service and concert of Armenian sacred music, under the auspices of the Eastern Prelacy, were several ecumenical leaders including Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim, Patriarchal Vicar of the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese; Bishop Makarios of the Coptic Orthodox Church; the Very Rev. Savas Zembillas representing Metropolitan Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Church; Archimandrite Michael Evans representing Metropolitan Philip Saliba of the Antiochan Orthodox Archdiocese; the Very Rev. Father Leonid Kishkovsky representing Metropolitan

Theodosius, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America; Monsignor Denis Madden, Associate Secretary General of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association; and Rev. James Lougran from Interreligious Affairs of the Catholic Archdiocese of New York.

Also present were Elenie Huszagh, president-elect of the National Council of Churches, USA; Rev. Dr. William Rusch, program coordinator of the National Council of Churches of Christ; Professor and Mrs. Thomas Bird; and fifteen board members of the World Council of Churches, USA. Other dignitaries included United Nations Under Secretary-General Benon Sevan; Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Movses Abelian; Consul General of Lebanon Hassan Saad; and Dr. Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Foundation.

To the strains of the majestic hymn, Hrashapar, a pontifical procession slowly came down the long center aisle, comprised of the ecumenical leaders, Armenian clerical hierarchy including Prelates Archbishop Oshagan Cholyan (Eastern U.S. and Canada) and

Bishop Moushegh Mardirossian (Western U.S.), Bishop Khajag Hagopian (Vicar General, Canada), Bishop Gomidas Ohanian (Venezuela), and almost two dozen priests.

Participating in the ecumenical service were the joint choirs of St. Illuminator's Cathedral, Sts. Vartanantz Church, St. Sarkis Church, the Iranian Armenian Society Chorus, and the Hamazkayin Chorus, all under the direction of Raffi Sevadjan, with Vagharshak Ohanian as soloist.

Master of Ceremonies Richard Sarajian, Esq., in welcoming His Holiness, the dignitaries, and the more than 750 in attendance, noted that it was significant to hold this celebration in this church since St. Bartholomew had been one of the two apostles who brought Christianity to Armenia. Paying tribute to Catholicos Aram I who "strengthened the Armenian Church, bringing it international recognition and respect," he said, "Our mission is to rededicate ourselves to our faith."

(continued on page 3)

by Florence Avakian

"Violence is no longer a conceptual notion. It is an omnipresent reality. Therefore, churches must deal with this reality responsibly," declared Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia. "The whole question of justice is at the core of the problem. We cannot build peace without justice."

His Holiness made this strong statement in an eloquent address to the World Council of Churches USA convention, at the Interfaith Center headquarters in New York, on Wednesday morning, October 4, during their discussions focusing on violence, and its remedies. At that time, he announced that in January 2001, during the Fourth Assembly of this organization, there will be the official launching of the "Decade to Overcome Violence."

Catholicos Aram I was accompanied to the Interfaith Center by our Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Bishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate of the Western USA, and Bishop Khajag Hagopian, Vicar General of Canada.

His Holiness who is the Moderator (chairman) of the Central and Executive committees of the international World Council of Churches, paid a visit to this ecumenical body's two-day convention, during his two-day stay in New York City. He arrived on Tuesday, October 3, to preside over the Prelacy's 1700th anniversary celebrations.

Speaking extemporaneously in fluent English at the World Council of Churches convention, His Holiness stated, "You are here to reflect on violence. It is a global and existential reality. It is part of our lives. It is not on the battlefields, but in our families, streets, communities, and churches. It is an integral part of our society, and is manifested in different ways. Though it has been a permanent concern in the ecumenical assembly, it has acquired crucial urgency in the last ten years," he stated, adding that it has also become the central issue in the woman's decade.

**Justice is the Core Issue**

"Violence is an issue involving all of humanity. We can't look at it in a theological way. We must address the root causes of the problem. The whole question of justice is at the heart of this process. We can overcome the

**Catholicos Aram I, in Address to World Council of Churches, Says Violence Can Only be Eradicated Through Justice**



*The Catholicos addresses the WCC delegates.*



*Robert Edgar, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ, left, and Father Kishkowsky, member of the board of the World Council of Churches (USA) welcome His Holiness.*



*WCC delegates congratulate Vehapar following his address.*

problem by establishing justice. It is the sustaining force of humanity," he declared with great emphasis. "In January, through the commitment of our faith, we are embarking on this question."

During the question and answer session, His Holiness was asked about the current violence in the Middle East. He stated that the church should have a "prophetic role. The church's role is becoming marginalized. We need a comprehensive holistic approach."

Proposing an "active nonviolent resistance," he stressed again and again that the "security of ALL must be considered, not just the security of one group. there must be justice for all, rights for all." It should be a trust-building process." And in this regard, the "role of the United States is crucial!"

He concluded his talk by paying tribute to the ecumenical work of the World Council of Churches, USA. "In the last 50 years, there has been a formidable task in bringing the churches together. It has been a dynamic, creative process, by working and praying together. The World Council of Churches is with you as one family," he stated.

His Holiness is the first Orthodox cleric, the first from the Middle East, and the youngest person to be elevated to the highest position in the World Council of Churches. After serving seven years as Moderator of the WCC, he was unanimously re-elected at the Harare Assembly in December 1998 for another seven years. The membership of this international ecumenical body includes more than 375 churches in all parts of the world.

photos by  
JK Holvhaness

**"God gives every bird its food, but does not always drop it into the nest"**

—Danish Proverb—

**OUTREACH**

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*During His Holiness's visit in New York and Washington he had the opportunity to visit with various members of the diplomatic corp including Armenia, Lebanon, Syria. In this photograph he is exchanging views with the Consul-General of Lebanon.*

**1700th Anniversary Commemorations** (continued from page 1)

**Bond Between Church and National Identity**

Guest speaker Professor Jaroslav Pelikan, the Sterling Professor Emeritus of History at Yale University, the President of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, and author of more than 50 books, in a profound address, made a clear comparison between the Eastern and Western conception of church and language. In the East, the church was identified with the national language and culture, he stated. The West had no such identification since Latin was the official language of Christianity throughout the area.

He also pointed out the "increasing relationship between the Oriental (Armenian, Coptic, Assyrian), and the Eastern Orthodox (Russian, Greek, Slavic) churches. "We have a shared affirmation of faith, as seen in the spiritual unity amid the diversity of national cultures, and liturgical languages. The bond between the church and national identity is symbolized by language. When you leave the language, you leave the church." However, he emphasized that "beyond national identity, the church is ONE, because it is apostolic, catholic, and holy."

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, in welcoming His Holiness, noted that "all our prayers, our martyrdom, our creativity are part of every Armenian. It is found in every page of our history." He reminded the audience that the Catholicosate of Cilicia "has launched this celebration and it will continue in all parishes, culminating next year in Armenia."

Catholicos Aram I, a scholar and theologian who has written eleven books, and lectured at the Armenian Catholic Seminary, and Haigazian University, in his powerful and impassioned message, thanked Archbishop Oshagan, and all who had made this occasion come to fruition. "The church of God cannot be divided. This is the concrete manifestation of togetherness, ecumenism, the oneness of the Church of Christ," he stated, adding that the spirit of ecumenism is one of the main features of the Armenian church throughout its history.

Referring to Professor Pelikan's address, he related that in addition to church and nation, are the concepts of faith and culture. "These are the crucial issues on the agenda of all churches," he stressed. "The church, nation, unity are closely interconnected. The Armenian church, since its inception is a church of a nation. There is a fundamental reality of the people of God, of faith. The church is at the heart of our people," he stated with great emphasis.

**Connection of Armenian Church and People**

"There is a close interrelationship between the church and the people! And in the Armenian case, the Christian faith has penetrated into the culture," he stated, calling it the "Armenization of the Christian faith, the reincarnation of the Christian faith in Armenia. The church is part of the cultural identity, but it must transcend



*Catholicos Aram I is led into St. Illuminator's Cathedral by Archbishops Khajag Barsamian (left), Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church and Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of Armenian Apostolic Church of America.*



photos by JK Hovhanness

*The Faithful Welcome His Holiness following Hrashapar Services at St. Illuminator's Cathedral, New York.*



*His Holiness with members of the Prelacy's religious and executive councils.*



*His Holiness with members of the Prelacy Ladies Guild.*

cultural, national and geographical boundaries. It is this "beyond" which sustains our national and cultural identities. This is the great message of this anniversary. Don't forget the beyond," he urged.

Featured in the sacred music concert was world famous organist Berj Zamkochian offering uniquely beautiful interpretations of the Armenian chants, "Christos Ee Mech" by Gomidas, and "Amen Hayr Sourp," by Yegmalian, as well as the glorious "Giant Fugue" and the meditative "Chorale-Prelude" by Bach, and Cesar Franck's celebratory "Piece Heroique." Acclaimed opera singer Isabel Bayrakdarian, with great virtuosity, performed Armenian hymns "Donemk" by R. Gregorian, "Havoun, Havoun" by R. Atayan, and a rousing "Alleluia" by Mozart. The inspiring service continued with the audience joining the choir in the singing of "Giligia."

**HRASHAPAR SERVICE**

His Holiness had arrived in New York on Tuesday, October 3, the first stop on a visit of several cities in the United States and Canada, for the commemoration of the 1700th anniversary of Christianity in Armenia. On Tuesday evening, there was a Hrashapar service at St. Illuminator's Cathedral in New York City where he was welcomed with the symbolic bread and salt.

Participating in the pontifical procession were His Holiness Aram I, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church; Bishop Moushegh Mardirosian, Prelate of the Western United States; Bishop Khajag Hagopian, Vicar General of Canada, and more than two dozen priests. Also in attendance was Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Movses Abelian.

Following welcoming remarks by Archbishop Choloyan, Catholicos Aram I, in an inspiring message, emphasized that the church has no worth as a building, if the leader is not with the people in his work. He paid special tribute to the work and dedication of Archbishop Choloyan and Archbishop Barsamian, to Bishops Mardirosian and Hagopian, to Ambassador Abelian, to all the Board members and organizations responsible for this visit.

The 1700th commemoration should not be "just an anniversary. It must start before 2001, and continue long afterwards. Numbers don't mean anything," he stated, and stressed three goals—a reigniting of our Christian faith and its traditions; a return to our church's nationalistic traditions and history; and, a strengthening of unity between Armenia and the diaspora, as well as the working together of the four hierarchical Sees of the church—Etchmiadzin, Cilicia, Jerusalem, Constantinople. "We are the children of one church," he stressed. "This is our journey. Join us in this journey."

During his visit to New York, His Holiness, as the Moderator (Chairman) of the World Council of Churches, was

(Continued on page 4)

### 1700th Anniversary Commemorations *(Continued from page 3)*

the guest speaker on Wednesday morning, October 3, at the World Council of Churches USA Board meeting where he emphasized the importance of justice in eradicating violence around the world.

Later that day, he attended at the Prelacy headquarters, a special luncheon, organized with great care by the Prelacy Ladies' Guild, at which time he stressed to the attending priests the importance of service, and the need for commitment to issues of concern for the youth. At this event, Archbishop Cholyan presented to the Catholicos two valuable gifts—a velvet and gold-threaded rug from Iran, and an historic incense holder from Van. Words of tribute were also made by Jack Mardoyan, chairman of the Prelacy Executive Council.

His Holiness concluded his visit to New York with an ecumenical breakfast on Thursday morning, October 5, with sixteen ecumenical leaders in attendance, including Archbishop Demetrios, Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Church in the United States, and representatives of different churches and ecumenical organizations.

#### • • • • • Youth Forum at St. Stephen's Church, Watertown, Massachusetts

On Saturday, October 7, His Holiness held a two-hour dialogue/-conversation with the youth of the New England region at St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown, Massachusetts. Close to one hundred teenagers from six parishes seized this once in a lifetime opportunity to meet with His Holiness Catholicos Aram I and to engage him on a number of faith and church-related issues. The participants came from parishes in New England including St. Stephen's (Watertown); St. Gregory (Indian Orchard); St. Gregory (North Andover), St. Asdvadzadzin (Whitinsville); Holy Trinity (Worcester); and Sts. Vartanantz (Providence).

The program began with Vehapar's moving and interactive message about the nature and importance of identity, highlighting the distinctive characteristics of being Armenian Christians. Our identity is formed from two inseparable dimensions: Armenian and Christian. These two have to be viewed and lived out together, not just one or the other, said Vehapar. "Our primary identity is in God. We find that identity in the Church... God is our Father and we are His children," said His Holiness.

Ample time was allotted for the youth to express their concerns and aspirations. As a prelude to this event and to facilitate this dialogue with His Holiness, youth focus group meetings were held in the New England parishes. A youth representative from each of the four parishes presented a summary report about the focus group meetings to Vehapar. Through these reports Vehapar heard the voices of the youth vis-à-vis the Armenian Apostolic Church—the role and influence of the Church in their lives, their disappointments and frustrations with the Church, their hopes and expectations of the Church.

Having heard the reports, Vehapar thanked the participants, acknowledged



*Top two photos: Ecumenical leaders share breakfast with His Holiness in New York.*



*Photo left:  
Divine Liturgy at  
St. Stephen's Church,  
Watertown, Massachusetts*



*Photo below:  
A scene from the  
youth forum in  
Watertown.*

their concerns and their thoughtful questions, and eloquently addressed them. His Holiness first expounded on the nature and mission of the Armenian Church. He said, "The Church is not a place, building...not a conceptual notion...it is the people. Wherever God is manifested in Christ and worshipped, there is the Church." Commenting on the reasons for going to Church, His Holiness said, "We go to Church to meet God; it is the meeting place between God and His people...the believers." Speaking about the role of the Church, His Holiness asserted that "the Church is to take God to humanity, and people to God." A lively discussion ensued regarding some issues facing the Church.

Classical Armenian (Krapar) used in the church services was the hottest topic of the day. Several people voiced their concerns regarding the fact that they do not understand the liturgical language of the Church. A number of viable solutions were proposed, including reading the Sunday Old and New Testament readings/lessons and certain prayers during the services in English or modern Armenian, as well as providing educational opportunities for the youth to learn more about their faith.

For the youth, the Forum with His Holiness will remain one of the most memorable, faith-enriching and hope-inspiring encounters.

#### Vehapar in Toronto

His Holiness Aram I visited the Armenian community in Toronto, under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Armenian Catholicate of Cilicia, from October 11 to 13.

Vehapar attended a number of functions organized by St. Mary's Armenian Church. The major celebration took place in the church. After the Hrashapar service, the choir offered Armenian Church hymns. This was followed by remarks of the Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan and Bishop Khajag, the Vicar General of Canada.

In his message to the congregation, His Holiness characterized the year 301 and the acceptance of Christianity as a state religion of Armenia, as the encounter between God and the Armenian people. A covenant was established in this year between God and the Armenian people—a covenant which sustained and oriented the whole history of the Armenian people. Speaking about the present, His Holiness said, "Are we faithful today to the covenant that we made with God? Are we responding obediently to the imperatives and implications of this covenant in the world today? This is the great challenge of the 1700th anniversary celebration," he said.

The Catholicos also attended a similar celebration organized by the community school. In his pastoral message to the students, His Holiness made an appeal to remain faithful to Christian faith and all Armenian Christian values and traditions, which have become a source of renewal and transformation to our people.

His Holiness visited the Armenian Catholic and Protestant Churches in Toronto, and shared with them his

*(Continued on page 5)*



*Ecumenical Services at St. James Cathedral, Toronto.*

*(Continued from page 4)*

reflections on this anniversary, particularly its implications today, for the life and witness of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

On the occasion of the 1700th anniversary, His Holiness presided over an ecumenical service in the Anglican Cathedral of Toronto. The Anglican Archbishop of Ontario and representatives of all churches in Toronto joined the Armenian clergymen in the ecumenical service. Archbishop Findlay, the Primate of Ontario, greeted His Holiness, describing the 1700th anniversary a landmark event for the Armenian Church. He also appreciated the important role of Catholicos Aram I in the ecumenical movement and particularly in the World Council of Churches (WCC), considering him to be a highly respected international church leader. In his welcoming words, His Holiness referred to his longstanding relations with the Anglican Church and appreciated the ecumenical commitment of the Anglican Church. In the second part of his sermon, His Holiness spelled out the major features of the life and witness of the Armenian Church with particular reference to its vocation in the life of the Armenian people.

His Holiness also had a number of meetings with various committees and organizations, and community leaders, as well as representatives of churches and ecumenical organizations.

### Cambridge

His Holiness paid a brief visit to the Armenian community of Cambridge in Canada. At the entrance of St. Nshan Church in Cambridge, a huge crowd welcomed His Holiness. After the church service, Aram I gave his pontifical message to the faithful, stressing the vital importance of faith in the life of a Christian.

After the church service, Aram I met with the youth of the community. An interesting discussion took place between the Catholicos and the young generation, concerning issues related to the church, faith, moral and spiritual values and the role of youth in the life of the community.

The visit of His Holiness to the Cambridge community concluded with a reception organized by the Board of Trustees. In his second message to the community, His Holiness spoke about the importance of preserving spiritual and moral values, as the guiding principles of community life. He appealed to the community to "remain faithful to the Gospel and to reject the trends and tendencies which jeopardize our Christian identity." The celebration of the 1700th anniversary of Armenian Christianity, said His Holiness, should be a strong reminder for all of us that we must remain faithful to our Christian heritage.

## Celebrations in Washington, Boston, Detroit

by Florence Avakian

Following his visit to New York City, which included an impressive ecumenical service in celebration of the 1700th anniversary in famed St. Bartholomew's Church, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, Aram I, travelled to participate in 1700th anniversary celebrations in Washington, D.C., Boston, and Detroit.

Arriving in the nation's capital on Thursday, October 5, His Holiness was accompanied by the Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan; Vicar General of Canada, Bishop Khajag Hagopian; Vicar General of the Eastern Prelacy, Very Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian; Staffbearer, Very Rev. Fr. Krikor Chiftjian; and member of the Executive Council of the Catholicate of Cilicia, Mr. Nazareth Karakashian. The entourage in Washington was joined by Vahe Amirian, in Boston by Richard Sarajian, Esq., and in Detroit by Zohrab Tazian, all members of the Executive Council.

A welcoming Hrashapar service took place in Sourp Khatch Church where His Holiness emphasized the pivotal role the church has played in the life of the nation. He explained the history of the 1700th anniversary celebrations, including the committee formed by the late Catholicos of All Armenians, Karekin I, which consisted of all four hierarchical Sees. Each See organized its own functions, he noted, and added that he had come to the United States to personally participate in the programs. He also met, and discussed church issues, with students of the Armenian Saturday school.

While in Washington, D.C., His Holiness visited the Lebanese, Syrian and Armenian embassies and had meetings with the respective ambassadors. At the Armenian embassy, he had a private discussion with U.S. Special Envoy to Karagagh and the Caucasus.



*Traditional blessing of bread, water, and salt in Detroit.*

He also met with the Lebanese ambassador who tendered a special lunch for His Holiness, and paid an official visit to the National Council of Churches in Washington, D.C., where more than 20 ecumenical representatives were in attendance.

On the evening of October 5, the Catholicos presided over a major celebration, held at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral, sponsored by the Washington, DC Armenian community, including an ecumenical service at which Professor Thomas Bird of Queens College, New York, delivered the keynote address. In his own remarks, His Holiness stated that this special anniversary should be a time for all to redefine the vocation of the Armenian Church in the context of a complex world. In attendance were the Papal Nuncio, the Canon of the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, representatives of other churches and religious organizations, several ambassadors, and a large number of Armenians from the Washington area.

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*His Holiness visits the ARS Armenian Day School, Toronto.*



Vehapar with hosts Mr. and Mrs. John and Rose Manoogian. The Manoogians announced their donation of \$100,000 to the Catholicate of Cilicia. A special fund in their name is being established to be used for the preparation of clergy. Mr. and Mrs. Manoogian are active members of the St. Sarkis (Dearborn, MI) community. Mr. Manoogian served for several years at the chairman of the Board of Trustees.

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The program included musical presentations by the *Knar* and *Ani* choirs, under the direction of Arsen Sayan.

**Boston and Detroit Visits**

His Holiness arrived in Boston on Saturday, October 7. An ecumenical service was held in St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, with many clerical representatives participating. Keynote speaker, Dr. Michael Connolly, outlined the principal events leading to the Christianization of Armenia, and the important role of the church in the life of the people. In his remarks, Catholicos Aram defined this Christianization as a "transformation process," whereby Armenia "acquired a new identity and meaning."

On Sunday morning, October 8, before hundreds of the faithful, His Holiness celebrated the Badarak, with the assistance of Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Bishop Khajag Hagopian, and several priests. In his sermon, the Catholicos urged the people to follow Christ as The Way in their life instead of other varying methods in today's world. In the evening, a dinner reception, in honor of Catholicos Aram, was hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Nubar Afeyan in their residence, with 135 people in attendance.

While in Boston, His Holiness had an impressive two-hour meeting with close to 100 young people concerning church, school and community issues. He focused on two inseparable parts of the Armenian identity—that of being Armenian and Christian. "These two have to be viewed and lived out together. Our primary identity is in God. We find that identity in the Church... God is our Father and we are His children," he stated. [See separate article on youth forum—Editor].

Before this meeting, youth focus group meetings had been held in the New England parishes. Through these reports, His Holiness had heard the voices of the youth in their relationship with the Armenian Apostolic Church—the role and influence of the church in their lives, their disappointments and frustrations with the church, their hopes and expectations of the church.

Thanking the participants, His Holiness acknowledged their thoughtful inquiries, and addressed them. He emphasized that the church is "not a place, not a building, not a conceptual notion. It is the people. The church takes God to humanity, and people to God," he stressed. Other important topics discussed were the role of women in the church, and the language of church services, especially the use of classical Armenian (*Krapar*). Solutions proposed included reading certain prayers in English or modern Armenian, and providing to the youth additional educational opportunities to learn more about their faith.

During his Detroit visit on October 9, Catholicos Aram presided over an ecumenical service at St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church. As in Washington, DC, Dr. Thomas Bird was the keynote speaker. Present were representatives of the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Anglican, Evan-

gelical and other denominations. His Holiness focused his remarks on the spirituality of the Armenian Church.

Later in the day, he was the honored guest at a banquet attended by diplomatic and political representatives, and hundreds of parishioners from the Detroit area. In his talk, he highlighted the crucial role that the Armenian Church played in the history of the Armenian nation. On October 11, he was honored at a reception given by the Lebanese Consul General, with several Armenian and Lebanese community leaders in attendance.

On the occasion of His Holiness' visit to Detroit, Mr. and Mrs. John and Rose Manoogian donated \$100,000 to the Armenian Catholicate of Cilicia. A special fund in the name of John and Rose Manoogian will be established with this generous contribution. The income from this fund will be used for the preparation of clergy in the Cilician Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon. During this visit, Mr. and Mrs. Kaloust and Emma Sogioian donated an Aivazovsky painting to the Cilician Museum in Antelias. Both the Manoogians and the Sogioians tendered receptions in their homes in honor of His Holiness.

**A Mini Lesson**

A pilgrimage is an ancient custom for Christians. In the early church, Christians traveled to Jerusalem and Bethlehem to see where Jesus lived, preached, died and rose. In modern days pilgrimages are made to other holy places as well: churches, monasteries, and shrines. The 1700th anniversary commemoration has been an opportunity for this custom to become revived for Armenians worldwide. During the past three years several pilgrimages have taken place and this year there are more planned to various sites including Etchmiadzin, Antelias, Der Zor and Western (historic) Armenia.

**«1700 ՏԱՐԻՆԵՐՈՒ ԱՆՅԵԱԼԸ ՈՒԺԻ ՎԵՐԱԾԵՆՔ»  
ԸՍՏԻ ԱՐԱՄ Ա. ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ ՄՈՆՐԵԱԼԻ ՄԷՉ**

1700ամեակի ծիրին մէջ, քանատահայութեան տուած իր հովուապետական այցի երկրորդ համագումարին, Շաբաթ, 14 Հոկտեմբերին, Մոնրեալի Ա. Յակոբ եկեղեցոյ մէջ խոնուած հարիւրաւոր հաւատացեալներուն ուղղելով իր խօսքը՝ «Միայն չհպարտանանք մեր քրիստոնէական անցեալի 1700 տարիներով: Միայն չհպարտանանք աշխարհի առջին քրիստոնէայ պետութիւնը ըլլալու իրողութեամբ, այլ 1700 տարիներու այդ անցեալը ուժի վերածենք եւ անով ապրինք «այսօրը» մեր կեանքին մէջ», ըսաւ Արամ Ա. Կաթողիկոս:

Երեկոյեան ժամը 7:30-ին, «Շերքըն» պանդոկին մէջ Վեհափառը բացումը կատարեց Հ. Բազէ Խաչերեանի լուսանկարչական ցուցահանդէսին, որուն յաջորդեց պաշտօնական ճաշկերոյթը: Ներկայ էին Լիբանանի եւ Հայաստանի հիւպատոսները եւ աւելի քան 500 հայորդիներ: Արամ Ա. Կաթողիկոս կարեւորութեամբ նշեց հայկական մեր կեանքին վերանորոգման հրամայական անհրաժեշտութիւնը եւ խօսեցաւ մեր եկեղեցոյ դիմագրաւած այժմեական հարցերուն մասին:

Կիրակի, 15 Հոկտեմբերի առաւօտուն, Վեհափառը պաշտօնական այցելութիւն տուաւ Լաւալի քաղաքապետարան, որուն յաջորդեց Լաւալի Հայ Կեդրոնէն ներս հիմնուած Ս. Գեորգ նորակառոյց եկեղեցիին ու կեդրոնին օրհնութեան արարողութիւնը, որուն ներկայ գտնուեցաւ նաեւ քաղաքապետը՝ Ժիլ Վայանքուրի եւ Հայաստանի հաւատարմատարը՝ Վալերի Սկրտումեան: Կեսօրէ ետք ժամը 1:00ին, Մոնրեալի Անկլիքան համայնքի Քրայսթ Բաթերըլի մէջ Հայրապետական պատարագմատուցեց Արամ Ա. Կաթողիկոս:

Հայրապետական պատգամէ առաջ Վեհափառին ներկայութիւնը ողջունեց Անկլիքան եկեղեցոյ Բանատայի արքեպիսկոպոս Մայքըլ Փիրս՝ անդրաառնալով Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ կաթողիկոսութեան առաքելութեան ու անոր զահակալին վաստակաշատ ներդրումին եկեղեցիներու Համաշխարհային Խորհուրդի միջազգային, միջեկեղեցական եւ միջկրօնական աշխատանքներուն մէջ: Երեկոյեան ժամը 7:30ին, Բանատայի առաջնորդական փոխանորդութեան 1700ամեակի երգախումբը Համերգ տուաւ «Բլօս Շամփայն» սրահին մէջ, հայ հոգեւորական երաժշտութեան փունջ մը մատուցելով դեկապարտութեամբ Հրայր քինյ. Նիկոլեանի:

Մոնրեալաբնակ հայ գաղութի կազմակերպ կեանքին մասին Արամ Ա. Կաթողիկոս շահեկան վկայութիւն մը տուաւ Երկուշաբթի, 16 Հոկտեմբերին, Մոնրեալի քաղաքապետ Փիլո Պորիկի հետ հանդիպման պահուն, քաղաքապետարանին մէջ: Վեհափառը գիտատեղեւորեց, Մոնրեալի մէջ Մեծ Եղեռնի Յուշարձանի կառուցման աշխատանքին իր անվերապահ աջակցութեան համար: Յաջորդ օր Վեհափառը իր շքախումբով այցելեց նաեւ նորակառոյց Յուշարձանը եւ հոգեհանգստեան արարողութեամբ աղօթեց մեկուկէս միլիոն մեր նահատակներուն հոգիին համար: 17 Հոկտեմբերին, Վեհափառը այցելեց նաեւ «Ս. Յակոբ» վարժարան, ինչպէս նաեւ հանդիպում ունեցաւ կրթական ու մշակութային գործիչներու եւ գաղութի մտաւորականութեան հետ: Հոգեւոր ու հայեցի դաստիարակութեան այժմու մարտահրաւերներուն մասին երիտասարդութեան հետ գրուցելու առիթ մը եղաւ նաեւ Վեհափառին հանդիպումը հայ համալսարանականներու հետ:



Photo top: Mr. and Mrs. Karl and Emma Sogioian present an Aivazovsky painting to the Catholicos for the Cilician See's museum. The presentation was made during a reception at the Sogioian residence in Michigan.

Photo above: His Holiness and Archbishop Oshagan with Mr. Nubar Afeyan, during visit to Boston area. Mr. and Mrs. Afeyan hosted a special reception in honor of the Catholicos.

**Princeton Symposium**

(Continued from page 7)

Dialogue: The Quest for Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Unity Today," he brought the discussion up to current times. "Recently, relations are improving. The dogmatic issues have been resolved because of modern historical scholarship, and the modern ecumenical movement."

The division today is because of division, and it continues, he pointed out. In the last decade, the unity effort of the 60s and 70s have slowed down. According to the 1990 statement of the Joint Commission, the request to lift the anathemas, placed by the ancient councils, was not done. If the division can be overcome, it is a positive sign for all Christians, "but we should be more tolerant of diversity," he declared in conclusion.

Bringing this special scholarly symposium to a close, Ms. Papazian paid tribute to the tireless and dedicated work of Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, to his assistant Dr. Vazken Ghougassian, and to all those who participated in the forum. The proceedings of this unique symposium will soon be published in a volume.

In his expression of gratitude, the Prelate thanked all the presenters, the chairpersons, the sponsors, the members of the 1700th Commemorative Committee, and the Center of Theological Inquiry, especially Professor and Mrs. Robert Jensen who were responsible for the donated delicious treats which were served to all attendees during the breaks. "This was an occasion to acknowledge the great love of the Armenian Church," he stated. "Let us reflect and transfer into action what we have learned."

by Florence Avakian

"Our knowledge is the amassed thought and experience of innumerable minds," Emerson has written in "Letters and Social Aims." On Friday, and Saturday, October 27 and 28, more than 75 people attended a scholarly symposium where the religious thoughts and deeds of some of these great minds were presented by well known specialists in a forum commemorating the 1700th anniversary of Christian Armenia.

The unique conference was held under the auspices of His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, and sponsored by the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, with co-sponsorship by the Center of Theological Inquiry, in Princeton, New Jersey. The Center is located on the picturesque campus of Princeton University where at this time of the year, was adorned with its magnificent fall plumage of flaming red and orange-leaved trees.

Following welcoming remarks by Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy, and opening remarks by Dr. Vasken Ghougassian, Executive Director of the Prelacy, Catholicos Aram I who had been on a visit to several cities in the United States and Canada for the 1700th commemoration, attended the first session, and delivered a key address. On Saturday morning, he departed for Venezuela to officiate at 1700th anniversary celebrations.

"The important points of Christian thought must be interconnected," His Holiness stated in an eloquent message. "We need a holistic approach to Armenian history, theology, etc. It is vitally important that the church for us has never been a sheer institution. Any faith needs a societal structure, but for the Armenians, the church is not a structure. It is the totality of the life of our people. There is a real interconnectedness between the church and the nation. But our church has also been an ecumenical church."

It is important to note, he continued, "that with the emergence of Armenian Cilicia, our church became a global reality, and with the diaspora, it is a worldwide global church. What is the role of the church in a globalized world?" he asked. "We have to go beyond commemorating the event by looking at ourselves. The 1700th anniversary is an occasion for self-critical assessment. We must embark on a long process, look to our past, and identify lessons for the future. Real theology leads to a dialogue with God. Our church must become a responsive church."

Professor Vigen Guroian, the chairman of the Friday session, paid tribute to the Center of Theological Inquiry as an independent theological center where Christian scholars from around the world are in residence to do research and writing, or participate in research projects. Dr. Wallace M. Olston, Director of the Center, addressed the audience with welcoming remarks.

The Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan,



Participants and committee members at the Symposium: seated, left to right, Professor Vigen Guroian, Professor Robert Jenson, Archbishop Oshagan, and Professor Nina Garsoian. Standing, left to right, Dr. Vazken Ghougassian, Professor Karlfried Froelich, Iris Papazian, Dr. Herand Markarian, Professor John Erickson, and Professor Robin Darling Young.

(photo by Asbed Balanian)

the Acting Dean, and Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Professor of Liturgy at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, and Visiting Professor of Liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, presented a scholarly history of "Prayer and Genuflexion in the Liturgy of the Armenian Church". What is distinct in the Armenian Church is the "pervasive pairing of prayer and prostration—a double prayer with peace and prostration," he said. "So common are the double prayers, that when Armenians worship they pray in twos. There is an intrinsic connection between double prayer and prostration."

Calling genuflexion a "powerful form of worship," he said that it is a "liturgical expression that came from the East to the West." In the Islamic faith, there is complete prostration, while in the Protestant and Catholic churches, there is little bowing down. "On the 1700th anniversary, it is important to trace these pathways to discover the jewels of the faith of our people," he explained.

Adding to this topic of great interest, His Holiness pointed out that in Islam there is a "clear interrelationship between culture and faith, whereas with Christianity, there is an interconnectedness, but faith transcends culture."

Eminent scholar Professor Nina G. Garsoian has been the Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of Near Eastern Studies and History at Princeton University. While she was the Gevork M. Avedissian Professor of Armenian History and Civilization at Columbia University, more than 15 Armenian students received their Ph.D.'s under her tutelage. An author of numerous books and articles, she has been affiliated with several institutions including Harvard University, Dumbarton Oaks, and the Ford Foundation.

She enumerated the thorny "Problems of Early Armenian Monasticism," in a profound treatise. "When does a wandering band of hermits become a stable community," she asked explaining that there are no sources which attest to the evidence of a monastic community before the seventh century. Final archeological exca-

vations and linguistic interpretations are needed to answer this question, she said.

Continuing with this discussion, Professor Robin Darling Young, Associate Professor of Theology at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., tackled the topic, "Features of Monastic Organization in the Collected Homilies Ascribed to St. Gregory the Illuminator." A specialist in several fields of Christian Theology and History, she is fluent in Krapar and Ashkharapar [classical and modern Armenian]. Acknowledging that "little is known of Armenian monastic life," nonetheless, she said that "monks did not live far from human habitation."

Of the 23 homilies, there is no mention of organized monasticism in numbers one to twenty-two, she related, but that in number twenty-three, a late fifth or sixth century creation, there is a detailed description of a monastery, the various orders in it, and the duties of monastic officers. She referred to the first twenty-two homilies as "undeveloped theology, not adapted for monastic life, and probably consonant with the fourth or fifth century."

Under the chairmanship of 1700th Commemorative Committee member Dr. Herand Markarian, the second session began on Saturday morning with Princeton Theological Seminary Professor speaking on "The Chair of Peter: Thoughts on an Ancient Christian Concept and its History." Professor Froelich, who has been the teacher of Archbishops Oshagan Choloyan, and Mesrob Ashjian, as well as the Very Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, at Princeton Theological Seminary, described himself as a "pure Westerner. My link to Armenia is through these students. I learned from them a deep respect for a heritage."

Starting out by asking, "Is there a real chair of St. Peter," he delineated the historic perceptions, and said that the "Chair of Peter is an office, a function, and the function is that of a teacher. *Cathedra* signifies teaching, and in the New Testament, Jesus sits as he teaches, and the Apostles passed on the teaching profession. The dignity and

function of the episcopal office is associated with sitting, and Peter. The East had a greater veneration for Peter than Rome did, but Armenia "kept its identity and independence even during Roman dominance."

From 1971 to 1988, there has been a theological dialogue between the Armenian, Roman Catholic and Oriental churches under the auspices of *Pro Oriente*, especially on the thorny primacy issue, he continued. In 1999, it was decided that a solution can only come from the "political will of ecclesiastical leaders." As to the "real chair" of Peter, he characterized it as a "style of furniture, artistic," represented by all churches sitting around a table equally.

A prolific author of books and articles, and a Senior Scholar for Research at the Center of Theological Inquiry, Professor Robert W. Jenson focused "On Dis/Agreeing with Chalcedon." Though the Latin and Greek churches made a "desperate effort to live with Chalcedon which believed in the two natures of Christ—human and divine, the "monophysite" Armenian Church rejected this concept. He predicted that the "style of Eastern and Western Christianity will probably never be synthesized."

On Saturday afternoon, the third and final session was chaired by 1700th Commemorative Committee member Iris Papazian who also was responsible for the beautifully prepared 1700th anniversary booklet which was given to all attendees.

Professor of Theology and Ethics at Baltimore's Loyola College, and a member of the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary and University, Professor Vigen Guroian has been also a visiting lecturer at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, and a member of the Armenian Religious Education Council of the Eastern Prelacy. Tackling the provocative topic, "Learning How to Die Well: Lessons from the Ancient Church," he asserted that there is a "fear of death in our culture which has led to new technologies to prolong life. Medicine can contribute to a healthy and meaningful life if we don't put all our hopes in it." Relating the different sources of thought from the great Christians, he said many embrace the Hellenic idea that the body perishes, but the soul is immortal.

In the ethos of the ancient Christian church, he related, there are three steps to dying—recalling mortality, seeking the meaning of our suffering, and seeking salvation. "All humans will be patients at death," he said, and emphasized that the "church needs to prepare people for dying. True faith brings inner healing, not a cure. Death and resurrection are interconnected. One must prepare during one's lifetime for a good death. This is the fundamental role of the church."

Professor John H. Erickson, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and Professor of Canon Law and Church History at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York, has had a long and distinguished association with Orthodox and Oriental theology, and the field of ecumenism. Centering his talk on "Beyond

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*"I believe that the Armenian Church cannot and should not ignore anymore the imperatives of changing times."*

## Towards a Renewed Armenian Church

by

Aram I

*Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia*

As I was approaching the conclusion of my recent visit to the United States and Canada and Venezuela, one of our faithful said to me: "Your Holiness, are you going to send us a message from Antelias?"—which I usually do after my pontifical visit to a diocese. My response was, "No, I do not have any message this time, but I believe that the 1700th anniversary of the proclamation of Christianity in Armenia has a clear message to all of us which, as I discern it, is a call for a renewed Armenian Church for the third millennium."

I spent the whole month of October with our people. I met all segments of our church in diverse contexts and in different places. My visitation program, which was organized as part of our 1700th anniversary celebrations, was intended to bring to focus the unique importance and concrete implications of this landmark event in the life of our church. I had frank dialogues with the leadership, the grass roots and our youth. I came to know better their concerns and challenges, their needs and expectations. I believe that the Armenian Church cannot and should not ignore any more the imperatives of changing times. It must become responsive and relevant to emerging new realities and needs. Therefore, the Armenian Church must embark on a dynamic process of *renewal*. This is no more a question of choice; it is an urgent necessity.

It is, of course, beyond the purview of this reflection to scrutinize the question of renewal of the Armenian Church which is a vast and complex area of serious investigation. My intention is to share with our people and particularly our youth, in an informal way, some thoughts which would help us to look at the future of our church in a right perspective. I wanted to write these few lines in order to establish a direct line of communication with our new generation in North America.

1. I want to begin with the *unity* of the Armenian Church. This issue must be located in its proper context and dealt with realistically, honestly and in an unbiased way. I want to affirm clearly and emphatically that the Armenian Church is one; it has never been and will never be two. At a certain period of our history, due to special circumstances, two administrative centers (Diocese—Prelacy) have emerged within the same Armenian Church in the United States and Canada. On various occasions I have strongly articulated my view that this abnormal situation must be normalized. The approaches and methodologies employed thus far to remedy the abnormal situation must be normalized. The approaches and methodologies employed thus far to remedy the actual situation has proven to be counter-productive. Change of hearts, mutual trust and understanding happen only through close collaboration. A comprehensive and well organized collaboration touching all aspects of our community life is essential for the unity of the church.

The church is the people, and not only the structure, the clergy or the liturgy. Therefore, the unity should emerge in a natural way in the life of the people; it cannot be imposed on the people. Unity is a process that must start now.

2. The second major area of concern is the *liturgy* of our church. This is a legitimate concern, indeed. Our liturgy needs basic reformation in its various aspects and manifestations. It must be understood and communicated to everybody. Hence, any step in this respect must be taken in the right direction; otherwise we may jeopardize the integrity and specificity of the Armenian liturgy.

First of all, the reformation of the Armenian Church ought to be perceived essentially as a renewal. Such a goal requires a holistic and realistic approach. This means that one has to take into consideration the tradition, the particularities and ethos of our liturgy as it has been developed in the course of history, on the one hand, and the concrete realities of our time and expectations of young generation, on the other hand. On this basis a clear criterion, methodology and procedure must be established. Such a serious and all-embracing approach will make us avoid arbitrary decisions, provisional arrangements and unclarity which characterize actually the liturgical practices in the Armenian Church in many places.

As for language, in my opinion, the classical Armenian, which is considered by some as a barrier, must continue to remain the basic language of the liturgy. This is the language by which we have communicated with God for centuries; we have created our spiritual and moral values; we have articulated our theological perceptions, and have kept our cultural heritage. We cannot just ignore it; it is an integral and inseparable part of our spiritual heritage. It is necessary however that the biblical readings, the sermons and major prayers be performed in modern Armenian, and even in English or in French according to the context in which our church is called to carry on its Christian witness. In doing so, we should always bear in mind that the goal of liturgy is to create spirituality, which transcends all kinds of language barriers, by which a Christian enters in communion with God.

Our liturgy needs to be at certain points shortened and revised. Some of its practices must be refined and even omitted. Simply, the liturgy of our church must become more communicative and participatory. We must encourage special liturgies for youth and children. These and similar issues should be carefully studied with the active participation of the laity.

3. Moral issues and questions related to human sexuality are priority items on the agenda of many churches. The Armenian Church is a global reality; it is living in different environments and therefore these concerns are also, in one way or another, affecting its very life and witness. Our youth in particular is directly exposed to the new realities and challenges of the present world. They are in search of meaning for their life; they have questions and concerns. The church is called to address these issues seriously and give a clear direction to its youth. If we faith to do so, our youth will leave the Armenian Church and seek the answers to their questions in different churches and movements.

4. There is a growing awareness in our church concerning the crucial importance of Christian education. Christian formation is a long and complex process that starts in the family and continues through the Sunday school and day school. Christian education deserves serious attention if we want to have a strong church.

The family is the foundation stone of any society. It is, in a sense, the extension of the church. Hence, family is a sacred institution and is called to play a decisive role in the Christian formation of our children. At a time when the family is invaded by secularist values and materialist and consumerist ways of life, we must promote a renewed role of family. A morally and spiritually healthy family is a guarantee for a morally and spiritually sustainable community.

The Sunday school remains yet another efficient means for Christian education. The Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia has a well organized network of Sunday schools. In each diocese a considerable number of Sunday schools operate with thousands of students. The Christian education department of our Catholicosate not only organizes and supervises the activities of Sunday schools, it also provides them with many facilities and resource materials. I believe that the present educational structures and methodologies must be reassessed and revised, taking into consideration the new realities and concerns.

The day school, generally known as community school, has a particular role to play in our communities in terms of enhancing Christian values. The very co-existence of church and school side by side is not a mere coincidence. Their educational goals must be seen in their interconnectedness. We must strengthen the educational task of the school by reorganizing courses on religion and providing more space to extra-curricular activities which contribute to Christian formation and growth of the students.

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5. Special attention must be given to the parish. The church is a local reality. The catholicity of the church is expressed through the eucharistic celebration by the local church. Hence, the parish is a basic unit within a diocesan structure. In many of our dioceses, particularly in those with large geographical boundaries, the centrality of parish has been underestimated. This situation must be reversed. The parish structure and parish life of our church requires basic reassessment and revision in its various aspects and dimensions.

Our church must organize youth ministries to integrate fully the youth to the total life and witness of the church. The youth should not remain on the periphery of the church. Youth is called to assume an important role in all spheres and at all levels of the Armenian Church including the decision-making bodies. This is also true with women. Besides the Ladies Guilds, Armenian women must be given more visibility and active responsibility in the life of the church.

The church of Christ acquires its true meaning and unique vocation through social service (*diakonia*). Our church has always played a significant role in the area of social action. Living in different socio-economic contexts, our communities are faced with enormous social problems and concerns. The Armenian Church should develop a responsive *diakonia* to deal efficiently with the growing needs of its people.

Last but not least, the Armenian church cannot address these issues seriously and respond properly to these concerns and expectations with its present clergy. We must be honest to accept our failures and deficiencies. We must be courageous to identify our problems. We need new clergy for new times. The renewal of our church requires a renewed clergy. If we fail to prepare educated and dedicated clergy, who will be spiritually and intellectually equipped to face the challenges of new societies, our church will soon lose its relevance and credibility.

1700th celebrations will soon fade away. The great achievement of the anniversary should be a renewed church for the third millennium. The Armenian Church is the church of the people. Our people, specially the youth, must take an active part in the renewal of the church. Are we ready to take this challenge seriously and responsibly?

### A Mini Lesson

The Jordan, the lowest river in the world, crosses three countries. It rises on the southern slopes of Mount Hebron in Syria, passes through the former Lake Huleh (now drained) in Israel and feeds into the Sea of Galilee, and then flows into the state of Jordan, draining into the Dead Sea. Although it is only about 75 miles (120 km) from the river's source to the Dead Sea, the Jordan is in fact about twice as long because it is so meandering. The river features in many bible stories, in both Old and New Testaments.

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