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

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Christmas Gifts Valued at \$131,880 Arrive in Armenia

by Martha Kouyoumdjian Mekaelian

The Prelacy's most recent shipment of goods to Armenia arrived in time for Christmas distribution. The container of goods, with a weight of 12,228 pounds and a monetary value of \$131,880, arrived in late October and was distributed by the Prelacy's Yerevan office, St. Nerses the Great Charitable Organization.

The Eastern Prelacy, together with AmeriCares and Gulf West (a clothing company in New York) accomplished the meticulous task of securing a substantial quantity of gifts for the general population of Armenia. The project began in August, when a most generous donation was offered by Gulf West, thanks to Mr. Boghos Pidedjian and Mr. Raffi Pidedjian. The company offered more than 4,000 pounds of new clothing for the Prelacy's humanitarian projects throughout Armenia. In collaboration with AmeriCares, the Prelacy gratefully accepted this donation to be added to additional donated items. The contents of the shipped container included: 6,078 pounds of jams and jellies; 378 pounds of tea; 511 pounds of toothpaste; 1,120 pounds of tea mug gift sets; and 4,141 pounds of new clothing such as fleece shirts, sweaters, children's boots, tennis sneakers, knit hats, jackets, sandals, and winter coats.

The container was transported to Yerevan with the assistance of the United Armenian Fund.

"Our objective was for this container to arrive in a timely manner for the distribution of Christmas gifts," said the Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan. "Our gratitude goes out to AmeriCares especially, who has helped Armenia since the earthquake in 1988. They have continued to reach out to Armenia for the past 13 years, and have been a pillar for our continuing humanitarian projects. We are also very thankful to Gulf West for their generous donation of new clothing."

Now, in the shadow of September 11, AmeriCares and Global Health are seeking donations for the victims of the September 11 attacks. I have received emails from both organizations asking for our assistance in helping children who lost one or both parents. These organizations have

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Christmas in the Cathedral: Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, altar servers, and choir members in Pashalian Hall following the Divine Liturgy on Christmas, January 6, at St. Illuminator's Cathedral.

Prelate's Christmas Message

*Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace
Good will toward men.
(Luke 2:14)*

On the occasion of Christmas the words heard most often are the songs of exultation the angels sang on the occasion of the birth of Christ. The angels could not sing anything other than songs of praise and glory to Almighty Lord, who took on human form in order to save Humankind and through His good and miraculous mission bring all creatures closer to God.

Glory to God in the highest.

The angels taught this song to us so that every time, every place and on every occasion, in happiness or sadness, in victory or defeat, we would always praise the Lord for His grace, His goodness and His boundless love and nurturing. The entire universe belongs to Him and the heavens herald His glory (Psalms 19.1). Because of His greatness, when we pray our first obligation is to glorify Him and to bless and hallow Him. He is our creator, our caretaker, our teacher, our

(Continued on page 2)

Սուրբ Ծննդեան Պատգամ

*«Բարձունքներուն մէջ Աստուծոյ փառք,
խաղաղութիւն երկրի վրայ
ու մարդոց միջեւ հանութիւն»:
(Ղկ.2.14)*

Ծննդեան տօնին առիթով ամենէն անկի շատ լուսած խօսքն է այս, հրեշտակներու փառաբանութեան երգը՝ Թրիստոսի ծննդեան առիթով: Հրեշտակները ուրիշ բան չէին կրնար երգել եթէ ոչ գովարանել ու փառաբանել տիեզերքի Տէրը, որ մարդկային կերպարանք կը զգենուր՝ մարդկութիւնը փրկելու եւ բոլոր արարածները դէպի Աստուած տանելու բարի եւ հրաշալի իր առաքելութեամբ:

«Բարձունքներուն մէջ Աստուծոյ փառք»:

Եւ այս երգը սորվեցուցին մեզի, որպէսզի ամէն ատեն, ամէն տեղ եւ ամէն առիթի՝ ուրախութեան թէ նեղութեան, յաջողութեան թէ ձախողութեան, յաղթանակի թէ պարտութեան ատեն միշտ փառաբանենք Տէրը իր շնորհներուն, բարիքներուն եւ անսահման սիրոյն ու խնամքին համար: Ամբողջ տիեզերքը իրեն կը պատկանի, ամբողջ երկինքը իր փառքը կը ցոլացնէ (Սղ.19.1): Իր այսօրեան սփանչելի մեծութեան համար երբ աղօթքի սկսիմք, ամէն բանէ առաջ եւ ամէն բանի համար պարտաւոր ենք փառաբանելու զինք, օրհնաբանելու եւ սրբաբանելու զինք: Մեր ստեղծիչն է, բարեխնամողը, ուսուցանողը, մեր բժիշկը, յոյսն ու ապաւենը, մեր միակ եւ սուրբ Տէրը: Այո, «Փառք քեզ Աստուած, փառք քեզ, յաղագս ամենայնի, Տէ՛ր, փառք քեզ»:

«Խաղաղութիւն երկրի վրայ»:

Մեքեանկան մաղթանք մըն էր այս մէկը Ամերիկայի Միացեալ Նահանգներուն մէջ ապահով ապրող բաղաբաղներու համար: Կը զգայինք խաղաղութեան կարեւորութիւնը ուրիշներուն համար: Կը ցանկայինք խաղաղութիւն պատերազմի մէջ գտնուող ժողովուրդներուն համար: Տակաւին, քիչ յանախ կ'իջնէինք մեր հոգիներուն խորքը՝ հոն խաղաղութիւն փնտրելու ամենէն առաջ մեր անձին հետ, մեր խիղճին հետ: Մեղքի փորձութեանց ենթակա, յանախ կը հեռանայինք

Archbishop Oshagan Joins Religious Leaders In Breakfast with Mayor

The new mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, hosted a breakfast meeting with prominent religious leaders in the city on December 31 at the Academy of Music in Brooklyn. Our Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan, took part.

The new Mayor, who would take the official oath of office the following day, said he wanted to continue his relationship with the city's religious leaders. The Mayor told them that his outreach to the religious community during his campaign was not just political strategy for the benefit of the elections. The Mayor said he wanted to meet with the leadership even before he officially took office in order to follow through with his campaign promises.

The Prelate noted that a good exchange of ideas took place.

Shipment Arrives

(Continued from page 1)

responded very generously to Armenia's needs year after year. They have been, and continue to be, a blessing for Armenia in countless ways. Now it is time for us to show our gratitude and help them help others. Donations can be sent to one or both of these organizations:

AmeriCares
161 Cherry Street
New Canaan, CT 06840
Attention: Ms. Leoni Gordon

Global Health
589 Bedford Street
Stamford, CT 06901
Attention: Mr. Alon Marom

A Mini Lesson

At the end of the Divine Liturgy *Mas* (Holy Bread) is distributed to the congregation. *Mas* is an Armenian word meaning share or portion. Taking *Mas* does not mean Communion. It is the survival of a fellowship meal called "Agape" in Greek which early Christians used to have as part of the Holy Eucharist. It is a sign of Christian charity and spiritual kinship. It is customary to take *Mas* home to those who were unable to attend church service, particularly the sick and elderly.

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138 E. 39th Street
New York, NY 10016
Tel: (212) 689-7810 Fax: (212) 689-7168
E-mail: prelacy@armprelacy.org
Web page: www.armprelacy.org

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate

Iris Papazian, Editor
Mardiros Minas-Haftvani, Business Manager

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Prelate's Message

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physician, our hope and our refuge. He is our one and only holy Lord. Yes, indeed, "Glory to God. Glory to You for everything."

Peace on Earth.

"Peace on Earth," was an automatic wish expressed by those of us living within the safe boundaries of the United States of America. We felt the importance of peace for others. We wished peace for people caught up in war. We seldom descended into the depths of our soul, seeking peace first and foremost for ourselves with our conscience. Subject to our temptation of sin, often we would be distanced from our Savior. Preoccupied with our day to-day concerns we would sometimes forget Him, and delay the cleansing of our inner being.

After September 11, we became like others. We felt the pain. We were left in a state of anxiety. And still we face the uncertainty that weakens us and causes us to be afraid. How heartfelt are our prayers to God as we ask Him to bring peace to the world, to silence the bombs, stop the wars and make us desire and seek peace on earth to recognize goodness, to see God's love, and to enjoy the brotherhood of Humankind!

Goodwill Toward Men.

Heeding and implementing Christ's message guarantees the brotherhood of humanity. He proclaimed all who heard and followed his words to be His brothers and sisters (Mark 3:35). In an environment of brotherhood, love blooms and strengthens our resolve and our willingness to sacrifice for our fellow human beings. Life becomes sweet and mutual goodwill rules over Humankind. With this spirit hatred ends and love reigns. Obedience to Christ defeats sin. Our death in Christ turns into life—righteous life—for which we live and for which Christ sacrificed Himself in order to gain it. We find that road of life when we turn Christ's words into deeds, when love incarnates, when brotherhood becomes an everyday reality. We should not view others as being different or inferior. We have to consider them to be our brothers and sisters, love them and forgive them. Then goodwill will surround us and God's kingdom will spread over all of Humankind.

On the occasion of the New Year and Christmas holidays let us join the angels in their song and with conviction raise our voices to glorify our Lord, "Glory to God in the Highest," and with firm faith sing "peace on earth and goodwill toward Man."

I wish everyone a Happy New Year and Blessed Christmas. May God's grace be with you and God's love within you. Amen.

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan
Prelate

Armenian Apostolic Church of America
Eastern United States

January 6, 2002

V. Rev. Fr. Muron Aznikian conducts the traditional House Blessing at the Prelacy at the Prelate's Christmas Reception, Sunday evening, January 6, attended by a large number of friends in spite of the warnings of an impending snow storm. His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan welcomed the guests including H.E. Movses Abelian, extreme left, Armenia's ambassador to the United Nations.



շար. էջ 1-էն

մեր Փրկիչէն, մտահոգութեանց մէջ մխրճուած՝ երբեմն կը մոռնայինք զինք, կը բերանայինք մաքրել մեր ներսիդին, հոն ուր Աստուծոյ հետ առանձնանալու եւ պարկեշտ ըլլալու պարտաւորութեան եւ անհրաժեշտութեան տակ մնալու էինք, որպէսզի մաքրէինք, քիւրեղացնէինք մեր հոգին:

Սակայն Սեպտեմբեր 11-էն ետք մենք ալ եղանք ուրիշներու մտան, զգացինք ցարը, մնացինք անձկութեան մէջ, ու դեռ կը դիմագրաւենք անորոշութիւնը, որ կը տկարացնէ մեզ, վախ կը պատճառէ մեզի: Որքան արտագին կ'աղօթենք Աստուծոյ եւ կը խնդրենք իրմէ որ խաղաղութիւն պարգեւէ աշխարհին, լռեն ռուսներու ձայները, դադրին պատերազմները եւ այս աշխարհի վրայ խաղաղութիւնը ի՛նք ըլլայ մեր բոլորին ցանկութիւնն ու փնտոտուրը: Որպէսզի մանչնանք բարութիւնը, տեսնենք Աստուծոյ սէրը, վայելենք համամարդկային եղբայրութիւնը:

«Մարդոց միջեւ համութիւն»:

Քրիստոսի խօսքին ու պատգամին գործադրութիւնը աշխարհի մէջ կ'երաշխաւորէ մարդկութեան եղբայրութիւնը: Ինք կոչեց մեզ իր եղբայրներն ու հայրերը, բոլոր անոնք՝ որոնք իր խօսքերը կը լսեն ու կը գործադրեն (Մրկ.3.35): Եւ եղբայրութեան մթնոլորտին մէջ կը ծաղկի սէրը եւ մեր մտանքն հանդէպ կը զօրանայ զոհողութեան պատրաստակամութիւնը: Կեանքը կը դառնայ քաղցր եւ փոխադարձ համութիւնը կը տիրէ մարդոց մէջ: Այս ոգիով մարդկութեան փոխյարաբերութեան մէջ ատելութիւնը կը դադրի եւ սէրը կը թագաւորէ: Քրիստոսի հնազանդութեան մէջ մեղքը պարտութեան կը դիմէ: Մեր մահը Քրիստոսի մէջ կեանքի կը վերածուի, այն մշտնադիւր կեանքին, որուն համար կ'ապրինք, եւ գոր շահելու համար Քրիստոս ինքզինք զոհեց: Այդ կեանքի մարմն մեզ կը գտնենք երբ Քրիստոսի խօսքը գործի կը վերածենք, երբ սէրը կը թանձրանայ, երբ եղբայրութիւնը ապրում կը դառնայ: Պէտք չէ ուրիշը մեզմէ տարբեր եւ նուազ տեսնել, պէտք է զայն մեզի եղբայր եւ հայր նկատել, սիրել զայն ու մերել անոր: Այն ատեն համութիւնը կը պարուրէ մարդկութիւնը եւ Աստուծոյ արքայութիւնը կը տարածուի ամբողջ մարդկութեան վրայ:

Նոր Տարուան եւ Սուրբ Ծննդեան տօներուն առիթով եկեղ հրեշտակներուն երգակից դառնանք, համոզուուով փառաբանենք Տէրը՝ «բարձունքներուն մէջ Աստուծոյ փառք» եւ հաստատուն յոյսով երգենք՝ «խաղաղութիւն երկրի վրայ եւ մարդոց միջեւ համութիւն»:

Մնորհաւոր Նոր Տարի եւ Սուրբ Ծնունդ: Աստուծոյ շնորհիք բոլորիդ հետ եւ Աստուծոյ սէրը բոլորիդ մէջ: Ամէն:

ՕՏԱԿԱՆ ԱՐՔԵՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍ
Առաջնորդ Միացեալ Նահանգներու
Արեւելեան Շրջանի



The Adoration of the Magi, 1619 A.D. Sourp Kevork Church, New Julfa.

"For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."
Psalms 36:9

Prelacy Participates in Third Orthodox Consultation in Stony Point, New York

Over 30 representatives from various Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox families of churches gathered at the Stony Point Conference Center, in Stony Point, New York, December 3 and 4, 2001, for the Third Orthodox Consultation, organized by the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC), USA, under the general theme of "Orthodox Unity and the Ecumenical Movement."

The participants—clergy and laity—represented ten Orthodox Churches. From the Oriental Orthodox side, the participants came from the Armenian (both Eastern Prelacy and Eastern Diocese), Coptic and Syrian Orthodox Churches. The Eastern Orthodox participants represented the Orthodox Church of America, the Antiochian Orthodox, the Greek Orthodox, the Russian Orthodox, the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox and the Serbian Orthodox Churches. The Very Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar General, and Deacon Shant Kazanjian, Executive Director of the Armenian Religious Education Council, represented the Eastern Prelacy.

The goal of the consultation, as highlighted by Mr. Gabriel Habib from the NCC, was to "help clarify further the concept of Orthodox unity, the ecumenical importance of Unity between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches and the contribution of Orthodox Spirituality and Ecclesiology to the developments of the Ecumenical Movement of the third millennium."

Four distinct sessions revolved around the general theme. Each session included two presentations, one from an Oriental Orthodox and another from an Eastern Orthodox. The presentations summarized past achievements in terms of rapprochement and understanding between the two families, highlighted obstacles keeping them from entering into full communion, and reflected on pastoral joys and difficulties on local and diocesan levels.

Wisconsin Legislature Adopts Armenian Christianity Resolution

The Wisconsin State Assembly and Senate have adopted a resolution declaring Armenian Christianity Day throughout the state. Assembly Joint Resolution 72, introduced by Rep. Jeff Plale (D-South Milwaukee) and Rep. Bonnie Ladwig (R-Racine), and co-sponsored by numerous representatives and senators from around the state, was approved by unanimous vote. The resolution designates the Feast of St. Tarkmanchats (Holy Translators) of each year as Armenian Christianity Day.

The resolution was spearheaded by the Wisconsin chapter of the Armenian National Committee of America, in consultation with clergy,

(Continued on page 4)

For a Spirituality of Our Times

by His Holiness Aram I
Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia

It is a great pleasure, indeed, to welcome you to this International Symposium on the Spirituality of the Armenian Church, organized by the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia. I would like to welcome especially His Beatitude Patriarch Mesrob II for being with us in this spiritual and intellectual journey. This event is part of the multiple activities and celebrations taking place on the occasion of the 1700th anniversary. In addition to major themes and issues related to the spirituality of our Church, I am sure that the Symposium will also discuss some of the present problems and future prospects facing the spirituality and, generally speaking, the witness of the Armenian Church.

It is a well-known historical fact that in 301 Armenia came to accept Christianity formally as a state religion. The conversion of Armenia to Christianity did not happen on this very date. It was not a single event but the culmination of a long process that had begun late in the first century with the evangelistic activities of St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew. The seed of the Christian faith was implanted in the soil of Armenia by the Apostles. Hence, the Armenian Church has apostolic origin. Its faith, its spirituality and theology are deeply rooted in the apostolic faith and tradition.

As we come together under the theme of the spirituality of the Armenian Church, it is appropriate, at the very outset of our common reflection, to clarify the meaning of "spirituality." One hardly comes across this word in the classical theological vocabulary. Spirituality has emerged as a key theological concept in the 20th Century. Actually, the term is widely used in ecumenical circles and in theological literature, including that of the other living faiths.

What do we mean by spirituality in a Christian context? Spirituality is the response of human beings to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. It begins when God's gift of life in Christ is accepted obediently by human beings. Therefore, spirituality is a new life in Christ, and it is expressed through prayer, meditation and action sustained by faith. The following aspects deserve our attention:

1. Spirituality begins with the very encounter of God and the human being. God takes the initiative to meet the human person and establishes dialogue with him in Christ. Spirituality is a I-Thou relationship of love and grace. It is a faith-response to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The God of Christianity is one who became man like us and for us, one who died for us.

2. The God-man encounter takes place within the community of faith. The church is Christ-acting now and sanctifying human beings. The church is constantly living the life of Christ, His death and resurrection in time and space. Living Christ means taking Him to the world. Loving Christ means loving one's neighbor. In Orthodox theology this missionary dimension of God-humanity dialogue is referred to as "liturgy after liturgy." Spirituality is not only articulated through the life of prayer and contemplation; it is also expressed through participation in God's mission in the world.

3. God is beyond any of His acts in history. So the life of grace is a supernatural reality that will be fully revealed in *parousia*. We read in I John 3:2, "We know that, when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He is." The supernatural, uncreated grace appears in created order through the redemptive work of Christ, which is described by St. Paul as re-creation. Human beings share in divine uncreated

For a Spirituality of Our Times is the opening address delivered by His Holiness Aram I at the International Symposium on "The Spirituality of the Armenian Church" which took place last year in Bossey, Switzerland, organized by the Catholicate of Cilicia. Some of the papers presented on this occasion will be published in forthcoming issues of *Outreach*.

grace through the process of transformation, sanctification and divinization (Theosis).

In so, spirituality is Christ-centered life. It is not escape from the world; it is taking the Christ-event to the world. It is not anti-temporal drive in human beings, but participation in the life of Triune God through Jesus Christ. *Koinonia*, *Kerygma* and *diakonia*, the three ways of the church's self-expression, are at the heart of Christian spirituality.

Christian spirituality is anchored in the Bible. All Christian meditation, reflection and action emanate, in one way or another, from the Bible, which sustains and guides Christian spirituality in all times and places. We must not divorce the Bible from the *Tradition* of the church. By *Tradition* is not meant the collection of beliefs, practices, and customs. Tradition expresses the totality of the life of the church in all its spheres, aspects and dimensions. Tradition is, therefore, a living reality; one cannot understand the life of the church without it. Tradition gives content and identity to the church and ensures its integrity and continuity. The Bible has emerged from the Tradition and, in a sense, is part of it. That is why the Bible must be understood within the context of the living Tradition of the church. They condition and enrich each other. Such an integrated and holistic approach is essential if one is to understand the particularity of Christian spirituality.

The Bible and Tradition must be related to a concrete *context*. This is an important feature of Christian spirituality. The context is a key factor. Christian spirituality is always contextual. It emerges from a God-humanity encounter taking place in a given locality and within a concrete community. The peculiarities of that locality affect the ethos, the forms and expression of spirituality.

The major traditions of Christianity, Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism, lay different emphasis on spirituality. Generally speaking, the Protestant Churches stress the personal dimension, the Orthodox Churches the community character and the Catholic Church the institutional manifestation of spirituality. These different approaches are due to the different socio-cultural milieus in which these churches have developed their understanding and experience of spirituality.

The spirituality of the Armenian Church is rooted in the Orthodox spirituality; yet it has its own specificities and characteristics. In the coming days we shall study in greater detail the major sources, as well as the salient marks and various faces of Armenian spirituality. In dealing with Armenian spirituality, it is important to bear in mind the following points: (1) Spirituality is more than contemplation or mysticism; it is an incarnational reality; (2) Spirituality is not confined to the institutional church and has

not remained within ecclesial confines; it has always embraced the whole life of the people. (3) Liturgy occupies an important place in Armenian spiritual life. Liturgy is more than a church service. It is a living expression of our faith and hope, our suffering and vision, our values and perceptions, that make-up Armenian Christian ethos. (4) The Armenian culture has been an efficient instrument of developing, shaping and expressing our spirituality. (e) The Armenian spirituality is simple, transparent and people-oriented.

Since we are meeting in an ecumenical setting, it is worth highlighting some significant aspects of ecumenical spirituality. On the last day we will have a special session on spirituality and the ecumenical movement. At this point, I would like to share with you a few perspectives.

First of all, I wonder whether one can speak about "ecumenical spirituality." The ecumenical movement has not made any attempt to develop a spirituality of its own. It has only provided an open space for a creative interaction between various spiritualities rooted in different histories and traditions. Thus, in ecumenism, what I call an interactive spirituality was emerged.

What contributions did the Orthodox Churches make to the development of such spirituality? Let me pinpoint some characteristic features of the Orthodox contribution:

(1) Spirituality is not only a personal matter; it deals with the whole community. (2) In addition to the Word, the eucharist as well has a central place in spirituality. (3) "The Bible and Tradition must be taken in their inter-relatedness. (4) History is the place where spirituality takes place. Besides the text the context has a decisive role in shaping and expressing spirituality. (5) Spirituality is a holistic reality; it touches all aspects and dimensions of human life. (6) Spirituality also has a cosmic scope; it includes the nature and whole universe

Ecumenical spirituality, in its turn, has impacted Orthodox spirituality in the following way: (1) It reminded the Orthodox Churches not to perceive spirituality only as going to the past, but also as opening to the Christ-event which is taking place here and now. (2) It challenged the Orthodox Churches to move from self-contained to interactive spirituality, from triumphalistic spirituality to the spirituality of simplicity.

Let us go back to Armenian spirituality. We have inherited a rich spirituality. We are proud of it. At the same time we must be humble and realistic. Our spiritual life is declining. The signs of the increasing decay of spirituality are almost everywhere. Let us not address only the symptoms, but identify and treat the root causes. It is time for us to move from idealism to realism, from conceptualization to the concrete realities of life, from triumphalism to humility. In the coming days while displaying the profound richness of Armenian spirituality, we cannot overlook its existential dimension and its implications. How do we live out our spirituality today? Is there any real connection between the sources of Armenian spirituality and the present conditions and ways of our life? How are the church-related and secular spirituality inter-related?

The theme of this meeting presupposes a large area of investigation. We cannot of course embark on such a long and complex process. It is, therefore, important that at this stage we spell out clearly our expectations from this Symposium. (1) to explore the major sources of Armenian spirituality; (2) to highlight the significant

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Spirituality of Our Times

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aspects and specificities of Armenian spirituality; (3) to spell out the relevance of Armenian spirituality to present times.

While reflecting on topics and issues pertaining to Armenian spirituality, we must take into consideration the following points: First, there are still aspects in Armenian spirituality that require serious exploration. Second, in spite of some remarkable attempts made in recent decades to make the sources of Armenian spirituality available to the non-Armenian public, more substantial work still needs to be done in this respect. Third, concrete steps must be taken to make Armenian spirituality relevant to new environments and credible to new generations. Our spirituality must be fully re-appropriated and re-articulated by modern Armenian men and women.

It is my firm expectation that this meeting will tackle these issues with a clear perspective and vision and will thereby assist the Armenian Church to come out of its institutional, administrative, theological and psychological captivity, and open itself to the future.

Before I conclude my introductory remarks, I want to say a few words about the composition of this group. Along with the Armenian Orthodox, there are also Armenian Catholic and Protestant among us. We have deliberately invited them to remind ourselves of the holistic nature of Armenian spirituality. Eventually, Armenian Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Protestantism belong to the same roots. It is worth noting also the presence of representatives of other churches and ecumenical organizations. We wanted them to join us as a tangible expression of our common belonging to Christian spirituality. They are not here as guests, but as full participants. Moreover, this Symposium represents a rich diversity of different categories. We have among us theologians, academicians, representatives of the clergy, laity, women and youth. This highly representative group will certainly provide different perspectives, thus significantly enriching our deliberations.

Last, but not least, our common objective should be: How we can reflect together, with a critical spirit and realistic approach, on issues and problems of Armenian spirituality by identifying their implications to present times. Simply, how can we make our centuries-old spirituality a spirituality of our times?

Wisconsin Legislature

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board members, and parishioners from the four Armenian churches within the state: Holy Resurrection in South Milwaukee, St. Mesrob in Racine, St. Hagop in Racine, and St. John the Baptist in Greenfield.

"The passage of this resolution is a fitting tribute to the Armenian American community in the state of Wisconsin," said Wisconsin ANC chairman Dr. Levon Saryan. "It notes the fact that the Armenian people have remained steadfast in their Christian faith despite martyrdom, persecution, massacres, and genocide. It recognizes the crucial role of the Armenian alphabet in spreading the new faith among the people, and emphasizes the artistic and cultural contributions of the Armenian Church in the fields of architecture, painting, sculpture, music, and literature."

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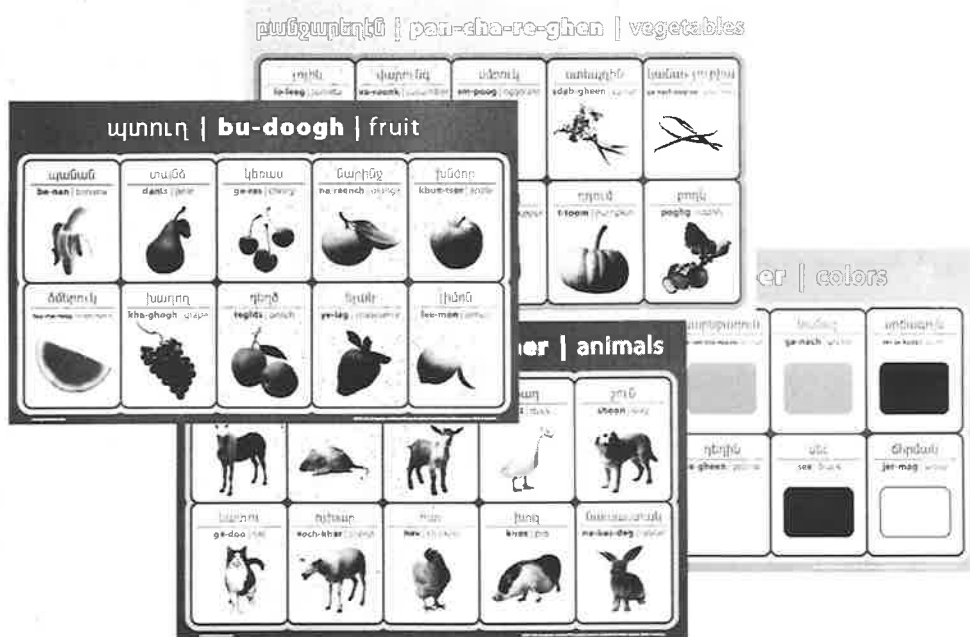
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