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OUTREACH

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ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԵՐԵՍՓՈՒՆԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԺՊՂՈՎ
Ամերիկայի Արեւելեան Թեմին
Մայիս 14-16, 2003
National Representative Assembly, 2003
North Andover, MA

From the Editor

This issue of *Outreach*, as you can see, is devoted primarily to the National Representative Assembly (NRA), which convened in North Andover, Massachusetts in May. I had the pleasure of attending the Assembly and I can attest to the spectacular job accomplished by the host parish, St. Gregory Armenian Church of Merrimack Valley. A relatively small parish, they undertook this endeavor when it was proposed to them with enthusiasm, and proved once again that enthusiasm is a key component to any success.

You may remember from our profile of this parish in our January/February issue that St. Gregory is amidst an ambitious fundraising drive for the building of a new church, on the same property as the current church. In that profile there was an omission, which I want to rectify now. The name of Deacon Berj Karibian was left out as one of the original founders of this parish. Deacon Karibian, along with Becky Mooradian and Olga Sarkissian, were the original members of the "Armenian Church Committee Fund of Merrimack Valley," which was authorized to purchase the property for the church in 1969. Mr. Karibian has served the Armenian Church faithfully for 60 years beginning in France where he served as a candleholder at the age of seven and became one of the first ordained deacons, along with James Apovian, Sr., at St. Gregory Church in North Andover.

* * *

This issue of *Outreach* begins Volume 26. The last issue completed one full year of *Outreach* in its new format

The next issue will be devoted to the clergy and will include the texts of some of the presentations made at the NRA concerning the recruitment and education of clergy. It will also include a very thoughtful presentation made by Yeretzgeen Joanna Baghsarian to the National Association of Ladies Guilds at their Annual Conference, which takes place each year concurrent with the Assembly.

* * *

Our *Profiles in Giving* (page 22) is the story of Dr. Bedros Mangikian and his decision to establish an endowed fund in memory of his mother and sister, for the benefit of elderly, destitute citizens in Armenia and Artsakh. During one of my several telephone conversations Dr. Mangikian said that while he did not seek the publicity, he hoped that the story would inspire others to establish funds with the Prelacy Endowment Fund because there are so many good causes.

* * *

One of the recent excitements at the Prelacy was Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian's graduation from Columbia University with a PhD degree (see page 35). Hayr Sourp's accomplishment is more fully appreciated when one knows that he worked toward this for many years, while serving as the pastor of the growing and active St. Sarkis Church in Douglaston, New York, and also serving as Vicar General of the Prelacy, chairman of the Religious Council, and director of the St. Gregory of Datev Institute. Congratulations, Hayr Sourp!

* * *

The Prelacy's Bookstore is a source of many books in English and Armenian. I believe it has one of the largest—if not the largest—collection of books in Armenian in the U.S. Whenever I am at the Prelacy a visit to the Bookstore is mandatory. The Bookstore's manager

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Front cover: Delegates to the 2003 National Representative Assembly, North Andover, Massachusetts.

Back cover: Delegates to the 1939 National Representative Assembly, New York City.

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Առաջնորդ Սրբազան Հօր Խօսքը

Պատգամ Ազգային Երեսփոխանական Ժողովի

Մայիս 15, 2003, Նորթ Անտովըր

(Ցապաւուած)

Սիրելի՛ ժողովականներ,

Ինչպէս կը տեսնէք այս ժողովը տեղի կ'ունենայ մեր Թեմի փոքր համայնքներէն մէկուն մէջ, որ շրնորհիւ անցեալի աշխատանքներուն եւ պատասխանատուներուն ծրագրումներուն հետզհետէ կը մեծնայ: Քիչ առաջ, մենք յանդգնութիւն անուանեցինք Նորթ Անտովըրի հոգաբարձութեան որոշումը, որ խորքին մէջ ցուցանիչ մըն է այն երեւոյթին որ դրականօրէն կը պարզուի մեր Թեմի համայնքներէն մէկուն մէջ: Ուրիշ ոչ-դրական կացութիւններ կը պարզուին այլուր: Ահա այս իրականութեանց դիմաց եւ պատճառով, Ազգային Վարչութիւնս որոշեց այս տարուան Երեսփոխանական Ժողովը յատկացընել մեր համայնքներու կեանքին, քննելու գանձնք մէկ առ մէկ, հարցարաններու ճամբով մօտաւորապէս ճանչնալու անոնց քանի մը տասնամեակներու կեանքը, յառաջդիմութիւնը կամ տեղատուութիւնը եւ փնտռելու պատճառները: Մեր այս երկու օրերու աշխատանքին համար անհրաժեշտ է իրապաշտ եւ պարկեշտ մօտեցում: Եթէ թերացումներ կան՝ ընդունինք գանձնք, ինքնաքննադատութեան եւ ինքնասրբագրութեան ոգիով մօտենանք անոնց, ճիշդ ախտաճանաչումներ կատարենք, անոնց պատճառները որոնենք, բայց մանաւանդ շինիչ միջոցներ եւ լուծումներ առաջարկենք մենք զմեզ աւելի զօրացնելու համար:

Վստահաբար բոլորիդ ծանօթ է պատմութիւնը Ամերիկայի Թեմին, այսինքն՝ մեր ժողովուրդի

գաղթին դէպի Ամերիկա՝ ԺԹ. դարու վերջաւորութեան եւ յատկապէս ցեղասպանութենէն ետք: Թէ ինչպէս հետզհետէ համայնքները կազմուեցան, եկեղեցիներ կառուցուեցան եւ պաշտօնական Թեմ հռչակուեցաւ: Կազմակերպութեան առաջին իսկ օրէն սկսեալ Թեմը բաղկացնող մեր ժողովուրդը գաղափարական տարբերութիւններ եւ տարակարծութիւններ ունէր, որ երբեմն եկեղեցական, երբեմն ընկերային եւ երբեմն ալ քաղաքական-կուսակցական կեանքին մէջ արտայայտութիւն կը գտնէր: Հատուածական շահերը, միջազգային գաղափարախօսութիւնները այնքան զօրեղ կերպով մուտք գործեցին մեր ազգային կեանքէն ներս, որ ընդգրկեց իր մէջ եկեղեցական կեանքն ալ: Թեմական վերին մարմինէն սկսեալ մինչեւ հոգաբարձական կազմերը դիտաւորեալ ու ծրագրուած կերպով «կողմ» սկսան դառնալ, պայքար մը սկսաւ ազգային-եկեղեցական կեանքին մէջ, որ հետզհետէ սաստկացաւ, բառացի իմաստով ծեծկուռութի վերածուեցաւ, թշնամութիւնը խորացաւ եւ նոյնիսկ ընտանիքի անդամներ իրարու դէմ լարուեցան: Հոգեւոր թէ՛ ազգային անհեռատես վերաբերմունքներ ու որոշումներ մեզ կը վերածէին երկուքի, որուն այլքները մինչեւ այսօր կը հասնին մեր յիշողութեան եւ գործելակերպին:

Այստեղ կ'ուզեմ աւելցնել, որ 1915-ի ցեղասպանութենէն եւ քրտինքով ու արիւնով շահուած մեր Հայրենիքէն բռնի տեղահանութենէն ետք, Հայց-Եկեղեցին ազգային իր դերակատարութեան հաւատարիմ՝ մեր բեկորներու մէկտեղման եւ անոնց վերապրումի գործին լծուած, ինչպէս այլ գաղութներուն մէջ, Ամերիկայի մէջ ալ շեշտուած կերպով կորսնցուց իր հիմնական առաքելութիւնը, այսինքն հոգեւոր սնուցումը եւ պարտականութիւնը: Եկեղեցի-

ները բացի խորհրդակատարութիւններէ կլանուեցան քաղաքական ու գաղափարախօսական գործերով, դէպի իրենց քաշելով «հաւատարիմ» համակիրներ:

Ահա ճիշդ այսպիսի հոգեբանութեան մէջ հետզհետէ սաղմնաւորուեցաւ Կիլիկեան Թեմը Ամերիկայի մէջ՝ հոգատարութիւն ցոյց տալու համար անտեսուած հատուածին, Հայ քրիստոնեայի կենսական արարողութիւններէն զրկուած հաւատացեալներուն: De facto գոյութիւն ունէր Կիլիկեան Թեմը իր հաւատացեալներով նախ քան de jure հռչակումը անոր, 1957 թուականին: Համայնքին պատկանող անհատը, եկեղեցի, սրահ, կեդրոն եկող Հայը ինքզինք կ'ուզէր գտնել գաղափարական իր ուզած պատկանելիութիւնը ընդունող եւ յայտարարող կեդրոնէն ներս: Ժողովուրդին ու հաւատացեալին նման եկեղեցին ալ քաղաքականացած էր եւ գաղութի մը եկեղեցւոյ անդամ հաւատացեալը այս ձեւով կը գտնէր թէ՛ հոգեւոր գոհունակութիւն եւ թէ՛ գաղափարական գոհացում:

Ահա այս էր բաղկացութիւնը մեր համայնքներուն եւ եկեղեցիներուն նոյնիսկ 1957-էն առաջ: 1957ը եկաւ պաշտօնականացնելու բաժանումը, իւրաքանչիւր թեմ — էջմիածնական եւ Կիլիկեան — իր դերակատարութիւնն ու առաքելութիւնը կատարելով հանդէպ գաղափարական բաժանումով երկուքի վերածուած մեր ժողովուրդի գաւազներուն: Այս հոգեվիճակը անհրաժեշտ է գիտնալ, որպէսզի իմանանք նաեւ այն կենսունակութիւնը որ մեր Թեմի հիմնադրութեան ժամանակ հաւատացեալները եւ ղեկավարները ունէին: Ըլլային անոնք հաւատացեալ կամ ոչ (քրիստոնէական հասկացողութեամբ) կողմերը եկեղեցի ու կեդրոն կ'երթային, որովհետեւ բաժնուած էին, որովհետեւ պայքար կար:

* * *

Այսպիսի ենթահողի վրայ հետզհետէ սկսան բարձրանալ Կիլիկեան Թեմի եկեղեցիներն ու գաղութները: Գաղափարաբանութիւնը իրենց որպէս զսպանակ եւ մղիչ ոյժ, հաւատարիմ մարդիկ անսակարկ գոհողութիւններով, թէ՛ նիւթական եւ թէ՛ կարողութիւններու պատրաստակամութեամբ կազմեցին մեր հոգաբարձական մարմինները, անընդհատ աշխատեցան, նուիրումով գործեցին, որպէսզի Թեմը իր եկեղեցական-ազգային ծառայութիւնը բերէր

մեր անտէր մնացած ժողովուրդին գաւազներուն: Երախտագիտական խոր զգացումներով կը յիշատակենք իրենց կատարած աշխատանքն ու գոհողութիւնը, բարձրօրէն գնահատելով նուիրեալ այդ անձերը:

Այսօր, Թեմս ժառանգած է նկատառելի փորձառութիւն եւ յառաջդիմութիւն: Մեր նախորդ առաջնորդները՝ հոգելոյս Հրանդ Արք. Խաչատուրեանը, Երջանկայիշատակ Գարեգին Ա. Ամենայն Հայոց Հայրապետը եւ Թեմիս քսան տարիներու ժրջան եւ բազմաբեղուն Առաջնորդ՝ Բարձրաշնորհ Տ. Մեսրոպ Արքեպիսկոպոս Աշճեանը, ձեռք-ձեռքի գործակցելով հոգեւոր հովիւներուն, Ազգային Վարչութեան անդամներուն եւ հոգաբարձական կազմերուն ու յանձնախումբերուն հետ մեր Թեմը վերածեցին ծրագիրներով հարուստ ու արդիւնաւէտ, մասնակցութեամբ մեղուաջան իրականութեան մը, որ յարգանք պարտադրեց մեր ժողովուրդին եւ պատիւ բերաւ մեր եկեղեցւոյ օգտաշատ աշխատանքներուն եւ առաքելութեան:

Այստեղ անհրաժեշտ է շեշտել այն փոփոխութիւնը որ մեր Թեմը բաղկացնող գաղութները ունեցան բնակչական տեսակէտէ: Վերջին երեսուն տարիներուն Միջին Արեւելքի երկիրներէն մեծ թիւով հայերու հոսքը դէպի Միացեալ Նահանգներ եւ Քանադա ոչ միայն թիւի յաւելում մը արձանագրեց, այլ սովորութեանց, ըմբռնումներու, յարաբերութեան եղանակներու եւ մտայնութեան, ինչպէս նաեւ լեզուի տարբերութիւններու նոր կացութիւն մը պարզեց, որ ունեցաւ թէ՛ դրական եւ թէ՛ ժխտական անդրադարձներ: Անհրաժեշտ է ստեղծել այնպիսի վիճակ ու կացութիւն, որ ղեկավարութիւնը պայծառատես աչքով կարենայ տեսնել եւ առանց կորսնցնելու մեր եկեղեցւոյ ազգային դիմագիծն ու ծիսական, աստուածաբանական իւրաքայտիկութիւններն ու սրբազան ավանդութիւնները հաստատէ մեր ազգին անգին նուէրն ու սրբութիւնը հանդիսացող Հայցեկեղեցին ճիշդ հունի մէջ: Որպէսզի եկեղեցին ծառայէ բոլորիս, եկեղեցւոյ շուրջ մէկտեղուինք բոլորս եւ մեր ապագային մէջ ապահովենք մեր գոյութիւնը:

Հետեւաբար անհրաժեշտ է մեր եկեղեցական գաղութները կենդանի, աշխոյժ, գործող եւ արդիւնաւորող դարձնել, փոխարինելու համար անցեալի քաղաքական կամ զգացական կապուածութիւնը: Այս աշխատանքին համար անհրաժեշտ է ունենալ բոլորիս մասնակցութիւնը, բոլորիս գործունեայ ներկայութիւնը: Անտարբերութիւնը մեր մեծագոյն թշնա-

մին է. անհոգութիւնը քաղցկեղի պէս մեզ կրծող հիւ-
ւանդութիւնը, լուսանցքի վրայ կանգնած անհիմն
քննադատութիւններ ընելը՝ մեզ զսպանակող ոյժե-
րուն ջլատումը:

Եւ որպէսզի մեր կատարելիք աշխատանքը իր
հունաւորումը գտնէ, այս պատկառելի ժողովին կը
ներկայացնեմ կարգ մը աշխատանքային կէտեր, ո-
րոնց մասին խօսելով, զանոնք խորաթափանց քնն-
նարկելով պիտի կարենանք յառաջիկայ տարիներու
մեր ծրագիրներ կազմել առողջ գաղութներ ունենա-
լու ամրակուռ յոյսով:

Առաջին մարզը որուն համար պէտք է խօսինք ա-
մէն բանէ առաջ՝ եկեղեցին է, իր հաւատացեալներու
ամբողջութեան հասկացողութեամբ: Այսինքն, եկե-
ղեցին ժողովուրդն է ամէն բանէ առաջ եւ ան-
հրաժեշտ է այդ ժողովուրդին ներկայութեան ապա-
հովումը: Ամերիկայի թեմերու կառուցը այնպէս է,
որ եկեղեցւոյ անդամ է այն անձը, որ իր թէ՛ նիւ-
թական եւ թէ՛ բարոյական պարտաւորութիւնները
կը կատարէ ամէն տարի: Հետեւաբար անհրաժեշտ է
բազմացնել եկեղեցւոյ անդամակցութիւնը, որ պիտի
հանդիսանայ այն աղբիւրը, որմէ պիտի օգտուին բո-
լոր տեսակի ծրագիրները որ հաւաքաբար եւ կամ ժո-
ղովական որոշումով գործի պիտի լծենք: Մտահո-
գութեամբ կը հաստատենք, որ հակառակ անոր որ
գաղթի պատճառով Հայ բնակչութեան թիւը եթէ ոչ
բազմապատկուած՝ գոնէ կրկնապատկուած է շատ
մը մեծ գաղութներու մէջ, այսուամենայնիւ անդամ-
ներու թիւը չէ արձանագրած նկատառելի աճ:

Ուստի, պարտականութիւն կը յանձնեմ բոլոր
հոգեւոր հովիւներուն, հոգաբարձութիւններուն եւ
եկեղեցւոյ անդամներուն, որ ամէն ճիգ թափեն, կեր-
պեր ու միջոցներ որոնեն եկեղեցւոյ անդամակցու-
թիւնները բազմացնելու, որոնք խթանիչ ու մղիչ ոյ-
ժը պիտի հանդիսանան եկեղեցւոյ կենսունակու-
թեան, աշխատանքին ու գործութեան:

Երկրորդ, անգամ մը որ ունեցանք մասնակցող
ոյժերու ներկայութիւնը եւ քանակը, անհրաժեշտ է
մեր գաղութներուն մէջ ստեղծել երկու պատրաս-
տուած ոյժեր.՝ մէկը հոգեւոր հովիւն է, եւ միւսը՝ ա-
նոր աւուրթեր, անոր գործակից հոգաբարձական
կազմը:

Եթէ յետադարձ ակնարկ մը նետենք մեր թեմի
զանազան գաղութներուն վրայ, պիտի տեսնենք որ
անոնցմէ շատեր մնայուն հոգեւոր հովիւներ չունէ-
ին: Կարիքը մեծ էր եւ այդ էր պատճառը որ Կիլիկ-

եան Կաթողիկոսարանէն միշտ խնդրուեցաւ քահա-
նաներ ուղարկել Ամերիկա անյետաձգելի պարտա-
կանութիւնները կատարելու համար — մկրտութիւն,
պսակ, թաղում, պատարագ: Մէկ խօսքով խորհրդա-
կատար քահանայի կարիքը ունէր թեմը, եւ բարե-
բախտաբար առաջին իսկ օրէն Ամերիկա ոտք կոխած
մեր քահանաները կրցան անհրաժեշտ կարիքները լի-
ովին գոհացնել, միեւնոյն ատեն ազգային դերակա-
տարութիւն վերցնելով: Թէ՛ երկրին եւ թէ՛ լեզուին
անծանօթ հոգեւորականները իրենք զիրենք պատ-
րաստեցին գոհացում տալու համար մեր հաւա-
տացեալներու հոգեւոր ու ազգային պէտքերուն: Ո-
մանք հետեւեցան բարձրագոյն ուսման եւ իրենք զի-
րենք զինեցին անհրաժեշտ գիտութեամբ: Ներկայիս,
Առաջնորդարանս նոր դիմում կատարող քահանայ
հայրերուն համար ունի յատուկ պայմաններ, որ-
պէսզի ունենան հիմնական գիտելիքներն ու կարո-
ղութիւնները գաղութի մը եկեղեցական-ազգային
աշխատանքը առաջ տանելու համար:

Միւս մարմինը որ անհրաժեշտ է գաղութի մը
կազմակերպեալ կեանքը յաջողութեամբ վարելու
համար հոգաբարձութիւնն է: Եթէ նայինք մեր եկե-
ղեցիներու հոգաբարձական կազմերու անդամնե-
րուն, պիտի նկատենք որ սերնդափոխութիւն մը տե-
ղի կ'ունենայ: Աւելի երիտասարդ են եւ իրենց հետ
չեն բերեր այն զգացումները, որոնք ունէին թեմի
հաստատումին համար աշխատող անձերը, ուր հա-
ւատքին աւուրթեր նոյնքան մեծ դեր կը կատարէր
գաղափարախօսութիւնը, բան մը որուն մասին եր-
կարօրէն խօսեցայ քիչ առաջ: Երիտասարդ մեր հո-
գաբարձուները միշտ ալ պահանջողն են նոր ծրա-
գիրներու, յաւելեալ դասընթացքներու, շինիչ ուղ-
ղութիւններու: Այս է պատճառը որ քահանայէն կը
պահանջեն յաւելեալ ճիգ, աշխատանք եւ արդիւնա-
ւորում: Մենք ալ նոյն պահանջքը ունինք գաղութնե-
րէն: Սակայն մեր սպասումն է որ հոգեւոր հովիւ եւ
հոգաբարձութիւն միասնաբար ծրագրեն, միասնա-
բար գործեն: Որքան քահանային պատրաստութիւնը
կարեւոր է գաղութի հոգեւոր կարիքներուն գոհա-
ցում տալու համար, նոյնքան ալ հոգաբարձուներ-
րուն պատրաստութիւնը եւ գործակցութիւնը ան-
հրաժեշտ է ներդաշնակ եւ աշխոյժ աշխատանքի եւ
արդիւնաւորութեան համար: Այս է մեր ակնկալու-
թիւնը, որովհետեւ իրարու հետ ներդաշնակօրէն
գործակցելով մենք յաջողութիւն կը գտնենք:

Երրորդ, մենք կը խօսինք թեմը բաղկացնող գա-

ղուծներուն մասին, սակայն կարելի չէ պատկերացնել առանձինն-առանձինն գաղութներ, որոնք կը գործեն անջատաբար, առանց նպատակի մը, առանց հաւաքական տեսլականի, առանց համագաղութային, համագային տեսիլքներու: Այս բոլորը ունենալու համար կենսական կը գտնեմ Ազգային Վարչութեան պարտաւորութիւնները: Ճիշդ է որ Ազգային Վարչութիւնը անմիջականօրէն իր ուսերուն առած է Առաջնորդարանի վարչական պատասխանատուութիւններէն բխող կարիքներուն գոհացում տալու պարտականութիւնը, սակայն անոր դերակատարութիւնն ու պաշտօնը սոսկ տեղականէն անդին կ'անցնի եւ պէտք է ներառէ մեր գաղութներուն ի նպաստ կատարուելիք զանազան աշխատանքներ: Ամենէն առաջ իր պարտականութիւնն է թէ՛ կրօնական եւ թէ՛ ազգային դաստիարակութեան բաժանմունքներով ծրագրել, պատրաստել եւ գործի լծել գործնական ծրագիրներ: Այս բոլորին համար հաղորդակցութեան մէջ պէտք է մտնէ գաղութներուն հետ, որպէսզի նոր սերունդին կրօնական եւ ազգային դաստիարակութիւնը արդիւնաւորուի:

Ազգային Վարչութեան պարտականութիւնն է նաեւ Առաջնորդարանը տանիլ ժողովուրդին եւ գաղութներուն: Առաջնորդարանը պէտք չէ ըլլայ միմիայն գրասենեակ եւ Առաջնորդի նստավայր, այլ անկա ներկայ պէտք է դառնայ իւրաքանչիւր գաղութի մէջ: Թեքնոլոճիի յառաջդիմութեամբ հաղորդակ-

ցութեան ձեւերն ալ կը փոխուին: Մաս պէտք է կազմենք այս յառաջխաղացքին, որպէսզի կեդրոնը չըճահանայ, այլ, ընդհակառակը, իր ունեցած փորձառութիւնը, փոխադարձ տեղեկութիւններն ու յաջողած ձեւերը հասարակաց դարձնէ բոլոր գաղութներուն համար: Անցնող տարուան ընթացքին Նիւ Ինկլընտի հոգաբարձութեանց հետ մեր տեսակցութիւնը եկաւ ապացուցելու կարեւորութիւնը այս տեսակի յարաբերութեանց, որպէսզի Առաջնորդարանը ըլլայ բոլորիս Առաջնորդարանը, միասնաբար բաժնելով եւ օգտուելով անոր կատարած ծրագրային զանազան տեսակի աշխատանքներէն, ինչպէս նաեւ համագործակցութիւն ստեղծելով գաղութներուն միջեւ:

Ահաւասիկ մարտահրաւէրը որ կ'ուղղուի 2003 թուականի Երեսփոխանական ժողովին: Գաղութներու զօրացումը նպատակ ունենալով մտածենք այդ ուղղութեամբ, գործենք առաւել յաջողութիւն ձեռք ձգելու կամքով, որպէսզի արժանաւոր գաւակները ըլլանք մեր Թեմը հաստատող նուիրեալ անձերուն, որպէսզի մեր հայրապետները գոհունակ սրտով օրհնեն մեր կատարած աշխատանքը:

Բոլորիդ կը մաղթեմ յաջողութիւն: Այս յաջողութիւնը կ'ուղղուի մեր եկեղեցւոյ եւ մեր ազգին:

ՕՇԱԿԱՆ ԱՐՔԵՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍ
 Առաջնորդ Ամերիկայի Արեւելեան Թեմին

Message to the National Representative Assembly

(abridged)

Dear Delegates and Guests,

As you see, this Assembly is taking place in one of our smaller communities, which thanks to the work and planning of current and previous leadership, continues to grow. A little while ago, I described the decision of the North Andover Board of Trustees to host this Assembly as "daring" because it is a barometer of the positive attitude shown by one parish community. Other less positive attitudes are evident in other places. In face of this, the Executive Council decided to devote this year's NRA to

the life of our parishes, to study each parish one by one, to understand more clearly their several decades of existence through questionnaires, their advancement or decline and to seek the causes. During the coming two days it is necessary for us to be realistic and honest. If there are failures, let us acknowledge them in the spirit of self-criticism and self-correction. We must have a true diagnosis, recognize the causes, and, especially, set forth constructive means and solutions in order to strengthen ourselves.

* * *

Certainly, it is familiar to all of you—the story of the beginning of the Armenian diocese in the United States, the emigration of our people to the U.S. in the ending days of the 19th Century and specifically following the Genocide. Communities were formed; churches were built. And an official diocese was established. From the earliest days our diocese had ideological differences and opinions, which at times were church-related, at times social, and at times national and political in nature. The increase in divisiveness and the international ideologies for partisan gains, harmed us with such intensity that it came into the life of our Church. Beginning with the higher ranks of our diocesan bodies, down to the parish boards, people intentionally and systematically started to take sides, bringing the struggle into our national and church life. It continued to escalate, became violent, the enmity intensified and even family members were against one another. Short-sighted behavior and decisions on a spiritual and national level would divide us into two, reverberating to this day in our memory and the way we perform.

At this point I want to add that following the 1915 Genocide and the displacement from our ancestral homeland, which we gained with blood and sweat, the Armenian Church was faithful to her role, gathering up the fragments of our nation. Survival became uppermost. As in other communities, in the United States as well, the Church lost her basic mission—the spiritual nourishment of the people and other obligations. Besides administering the Sacraments, our Churches became embroiled in nationalistic and ideological work, thereby attracting “faithful” sympathizers.

It was exactly with this psychology that little by little the Cilician See was conceived in the United States—to show its care of the neglected Faithful deprived of the Armenian Sacraments. The Cilician diocese had *de facto* recognition before its *de jure* recognition in 1957.

The community members, those who came to Church, the hall, the center, wanted to find themselves in a center that preached their beliefs, a place that accepted their organizations.

Like the people and the faithful, the Church also became political and the Faithful members found their Church in this state, satisfying both spiritual and political concepts.

This was the composition of our communities and churches even pre-1957. 1957 came and certified the separation. Each diocese, Etchmiadzin and Cilicia, performing its role and mission for the children of our

nation divided in two because of political differences. It is necessary to know this condition in order to understand the vitality that the faithful and leaders of our Prelacy had. Whether they were believers or not (in a Christian sense), the factions went to the churches and centers because they were separated, because there was a struggle.

* * *

Thus, thereafter, the churches and communities within the Cilician Prelacy grew on this foundation with ideology as their springboard and force. Faithful people with uncompromising sacrifice both financially and morally formed our Boards of Trustees, worked continuously, with dedication, so that the Prelacy could serve the children of our neglected remnant people. It is with deep gratitude that we remember and highly commend the work and sacrifice of those dedicated individuals.

Today, our Prelacy has inherited considerable experience and progress. Our former prelates, the late Archbishop Hrant Khatchadourian, of blessed memory; the late Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Karekin I, of blessed memory; and my immediate predecessor who served for twenty diligent and fruitful years, His Eminence Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, all worked hand-in-hand with the clergy, the Executive Council, the Boards of Trustees and committees, and enriched our Prelacy with abundant and practical programs, bringing respect to our people and honor to our Church’s positive endeavors and mission.

At this point it is necessary to point out the changes that occurred in the demographic composition of our communities. During the last thirty years, large numbers of Armenians emigrated to the United States and Canada. This not only changed the numbers, but also introduced new habits, understandings, relationships, and mentality, along with differences in language that created new circumstances that had both positive and negative repercussions. It is necessary to establish a situation and condition where the leaders can clearly see, and without losing our Church’s national uniqueness, nor the distinctiveness of our rituals, theology, characteristics, and sacred traditions, establish the right course for the Armenian Church—the precious gift and holiness of our nation.

In order for the Church to serve all of us, let us all encircle and embrace the Church to insure our future existence.

Therefore, it is necessary for our church communities to be vivacious, lively, working and fruitful in order to replace our political and emotional attachments of the past. For this endeavor it is necessary to have the participation of all—the working presence of all of us. Indifference is our greatest enemy. Negligence consumes us like cancer. Standing on the sidelines and criticizing is the weakening of our forces.

And in order for the work before us to find its limit, I present to this august assembly some points, which by discussing and examining deeply we will be able, in the coming years, to form our programs with the strong hope of having healthy communities.

The first area we must speak about, before all else, is the Church, with all of her Faithful. That is to say, the Church is the people before anything else and it is imperative to secure the existence of the people. The structure of the Church in America is such that an individual is a member of a Church by providing his or her financial and moral support each year. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the Church's membership, which will create that source which will benefit all programs by collective or assembly decisions. It is with concern that we note that contrary to the influx of Armenians, which if not multiplied, at least doubled the Armenian population in some large communities, the number of church members has not increased considerably.

I ask all of our clergy, boards of trustees, and church members to consider it their duty to make every effort to increase church membership, which will become a driving force for the Church's vitality, work and strength.

Second, once we have the presence and quantity of participants, it is necessary for us to create two prepared forces: one is the pastor, the other the pastor's close-working partner, the board of trustees.

If we look back, we will see that many of our communities did not have permanent pastors. The need was great and that was the reason it was repeatedly requested of the Cilician Catholicosate to send clergy to the United States to perform duties that cannot be postponed—baptism, marriage, burial, liturgy. In one word, the Prelacy needed clergy to perform the Sacraments. Thankfully, from the first day the clergy who came to America were able to perform the necessary duties and at the same time assume national roles. The clergy were unfamiliar with the country and the language, but they prepared themselves to give satisfaction to the spiritual and national needs of the Faithful. Some of them pursued higher education and taught themselves

the needed skills. Currently, the Prelacy has certain requirements for new clergy, so that they have the fundamental education and ability to advance the religious and national work of a community.

The other body that is necessary for a successful and organized community is the boards of trustees. If we look at our boards we will see that they are experiencing a generational change. Board members are younger and they do not bring with them the feelings that the individuals who worked for the establishment of the Prelacy had; besides the Faith, a great role was played by ideology, something that I spoke about at length a little while ago. Our young board members are always requesting new program, more educational program with edifying direction. This is the reason that we ask our clergy to expend more effort and work towards productive results. We have the same expectations from the communities. Therefore, it is our expectation that the clergy and boards of trustees plan together, work together. Just as the preparation of the clergy is important to satisfy a community's spiritual needs, so also is the preparation and work of the boards of trustees for harmony, vitality and productivity. That is our expectation, because working together harmoniously will result in success.

Third, we speak about the composition of our communities, but it is not possible to picture individual parishes that work separately, without purpose, without a collective vision, without a pan-community and pan-national vision.

The Executive Council's obligations are essential in order to achieve all this. It is true that the Executive Council has taken upon its shoulders the Prelacy's administrative duties. In order to give life to the needs of the community, hereafter the Executive Council's role and position goes beyond a single topic and must include the work in various endeavors that will benefit our communities. First and foremost the Executive Council's responsibility is the educational programs for both religious and national education; to prepare and implement the programs. In order to do this the Executive Council must communicate with the communities, so that the religious and national education of the younger generations becomes a reality.

It is the Executive Council's responsibility also to take the Prelacy to the people and communities. The Prelacy should not just be administrative offices and the seat of the Prelate. Its presence should be felt in all of our communities. Technological advancements have changed the methods of communication. We must be part of this

advancement so that the center is not stagnant but rather active in sharing mutual information and successful ways with our communities. During the past year our meeting with the Boards of Trustees of the New England parishes showed the importance of communication, so that the Prelacy becomes a Prelacy for all, sharing the benefits of various programs and also establishing cooperation among the communities.

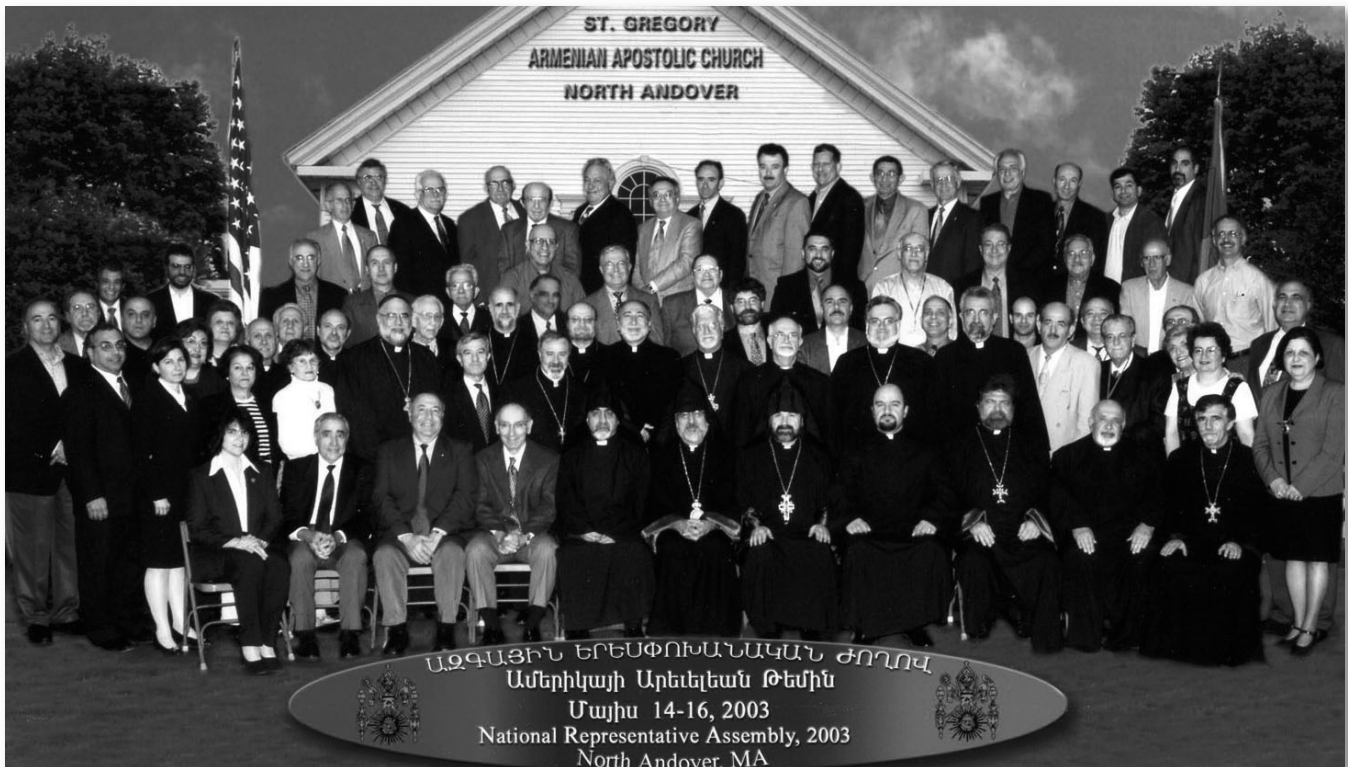
This is a challenge addressed to the 2003 National Representative Assembly. With our goal of strengthening

the parishes, let us think toward that goal; work hand in hand, so that we will be the worthy children of our Prelacy's founders, so that our Holy Fathers will bless our work with gratified hearts.

I wish all of you success—success aimed at our church and nation.

ARCHBISHOP OSHAGAN CHOLOYAN
Prelate
May 15, 2003

2003 National Representative Assembly—North Andover, Massachusetts



The National Representative Assembly (NRA) is the highest authority of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, Eastern United States, and is charged with the task of supervising the ecclesiastical and administrative bodies of the Eastern Prelacy. The Assembly is composed of one-seventh clergy and six-sevenths lay delegates. The clergy delegates are elected by the Clergy Conference, and the lay delegates by their respective parishes. Although the membership changes, the NRA is a permanent body. Delegates are elected for a four-year term. Those delegates who complete their four-year term, may be elected for

another four-year term. Thereafter, the delegate is eligible for election after a period of two years.

This issue of *Outreach* is for the most part dedicated to the NRA. Thanks are in order to the St. Gregory parish, which spared no effort to make this NRA one of the smoothest ever. The next issue of *Outreach* will include some of the lectures that were presented during the Assembly and at the 20th annual conference of the National Association of Ladies Guilds (NALG), which each year convenes concurrently with the NRA.—Editor.

Eastern Prelacy's National Representative Assembly Convenes in North Andover, Massachusetts, May 14-16

The National Representative Assembly (NRA) of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America (Eastern United States), met in North Andover, Massachusetts on May 14-16,



Above and below right: Scenes from the Assembly.

during which time the clergy and lay delegates deliberated on long-range planning for the future of the Armenian Church in America. The host church was St. Gregory the Illuminator of Merrimack Valley.

Several awards were conferred during the closing banquet on Friday, May 16, including the "Man of the Year" award to Mr. Varkis Markarian of Rhode Island, and the "Spirit of Armenia" award to Ambassador Movses Abelian. The Youth Leadership award, a new category introduced last year, went to Tahleen Ovian and Christian Hidirsah, both members of the host parish. Rev. Fr. Archpriest Arshag Daghlian was given a poignant and well-deserved recognition in honor of his 35 years of service to the Armenian Church.

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, the Prelate, welcomed the delegates to the National Representative Assembly with special words of praise and thanks to the host church and its priest, V. Rev. Fr. Yeghishe Manjik-

ian, for accepting the challenge of hosting the NRA—a challenge he described as "daring" for the relatively small parish.

In his keynote address, His Eminence focused on the main theme of the Assembly, strengthening the parishes. "During the coming two days," His Eminence said, "it is necessary for us to be realistic and honest. If there are failures, let us acknowledge them in the spirit of self-criticism and self-correction. We must have a true diagnosis, recognize the causes and set constructive means and solutions to strengthen ourselves."

The Prelate presented a brief history of the Armenian Church in the United States. "Today our Prelacy has inherited considerable experience and progress. Our former prelates, the late Archbishop Hrant Khatchadourian, of blessed memory; the late Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Karekin I, of blessed memory; and my immediate predecessor who served for twenty diligent and fruitful years, His Eminence Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, all worked hand-in-hand with the clergy, the Executive Council, the boards of trustees and committees,

and enriched our prelacy with abundant and practical programs, bringing respect to our people and honor to our Church's positive endeavors and mission."

His Eminence touched upon the duties of church members, the Boards, and the Prelacy, and the need to strengthen and define the roles of each entity. His Eminence acknowledged the role that the Executive Council must play for overall success.

"It is the Executive Council's responsibility to take the Prelacy to the people and communities," he said. "The Prelacy should not just be administrative offices and the seat of the Prelate. Its presence should be felt in all of our communities. Technological advancements have changed the methods of communication. We must be part of this advancement so that the center is not stagnant but rather active in sharing



the benefits of various programs and also establishing cooperation among the communities.... This is a challenge addressed to the 2003 NRA. With our goal of strengthening our parishes, let us think toward that goal; work hand in hand, so that we will be worthy children of our

Prelacy's founders, so that our Holy Fathers will bless our work with gratified hearts."

Religious Conference

A report from the Prelacy's Religious Conference which took place prior to the full Assembly (May 13-14) was offered by Rev. Fr. Antranig Baljian, pastor of St. Stephen's Church in Watertown, MA. Two lectures presented at the conference pertained to clergy recruitment and training by Rev. Fr. Antranig Baljian and conflict management by Dr. Haikaz Grigorian.

Dr. Grigorian, a well-known and respected psychiatrist who now spends a good part of the year volunteering in Armenia, provided the clergy with some valuable insights and tools in diffusing potentially volatile situations. He showed how



Religious Council Members, left to right: Rev. Fr. Gomidas Baghdarian, V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Rev. Fr. Sarkis Aktavoukian.

sometimes unimportant issues become magnified because of improper and emotional responses to situations.

Rev. Fr. Baljian's presentation focused on clergy recruitment and the goal of attracting native born candidates. "The need for native clergy is based upon a very simple fact. The psycho-social development within a particular type of society can best be understood—and therefore

utilized—by those who have been born and bred within that society," he said.

Der Hayr expressed his belief that in our parishes right now there are many young men who have a calling and it is important to recognize, nurture, develop and strengthen this calling. He described how often times these young men lose interest, and are even discouraged by some. "Time is running out. If we wish to have a third and fourth generation church in this country, we need to act now." He then presented a detailed outline of a proposed plan of action.

Executive Council Report

The Executive Council report was presented by the chairman, Richard Sarajian, Esq. He described the technological advances that have been made in the communications field including the redesigned and expanded bimonthly Outreach publication, the Prelacy web site which is updated on a more orderly fashion with much more information, the use of the internet to publicize Prelacy events and services, and a planned electronic newsletter that will be sent out on

a weekly basis.

Elaborating on some observations from the written report of the Council, Mr. Sarajian emphasized the following: "Although we continue to face many challenges in an ever-changing fiscal environment, this has been an exciting year for the Prelacy. During the past year, we continued to strengthen our Religious Education and Armenian Education programs, hosted and planned four

events that reinforced our presence as a religious and cultural leader in the Diaspora, substantially increased the visibility of the Prelacy and our programs through improved and varied communications, made efforts to improve the level of contact and communication between the Prelacy and the Parishes, and made significant technological upgrades at the Prelacy offices.... Even so, we acknowledge that there is much more work to do. Our fiscal situation must be dramatically improved if we are to continue to build upon these actions and develop more



Richard Sarajian, Esq., presents the Executive Council's report and responds to questions from the delegates.

programs to strengthen the Prelacy and our Parishes.... It is clear that the Prelacy must provide more, not fewer services. Our parishes and our communities are looking for more religious education programs, more youth-oriented initiatives, more clergy training, and more Armenian education programs. He emphasized that we must think of ourselves collectively and not as single entities. "We must think regionally, nationally, and internationally. The Catholicosate, the Prelacy and the Parishes make up one church and we need your commitment to work not only for our local parishes but also for our parishes on a regional level, and for

our Prelacy on a national level.” In this vein he described the six meetings the Executive Council had with Boards of Trustees. “I don’t mean just representatives, but the entire Executive Council, met with the Boards. This type of dialogue is very important and we hope to continue this practice during the coming year.” In terms of fundraising he described the successes in adding substantially to the Endowment Fund, but on the other hand acknowledged that the overall financial situation was not good. “We are proud of what we



Archbishop Oshagan delivers his message to the Assembly.

have done, but we wish we could have done more,” he concluded.

Letter to His Holiness Catholicos Aram I and to the President of the United States of America

The Prelate, on behalf of the NRA, forwarded letters to His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, the President, George W. Bush, and the Governor of Massachusetts, Mitt Romney.

The letter to the President said in part, “Your support of the Armenian American community is widely recognized and deeply appreciated. It is my hope that through the efforts of our lay delegates and clergy, we will help in building a bet-

ter society.... Your leadership during the Iraq war resulting in the toppling of a despotic regime will hopefully bring peace, democracy and justice not only to the communities in Iraq, but to all peoples in that troubled part of the world. Mr. President, allow us to suggest that we not be selective as we rightfully condemn regimes that deny basic rights to people or commit state-sponsored terrorism or genocide. In that spirit, we remain hopeful that under your leadership our government will join a growing number of countries in unequivocally recognizing the 1915 Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenian people.”

Keynote Address by Carnegie Calian

The Keynote Address was delivered by Dr. Carnegie Samuel Calian, President of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Dr. Calian is the author of several books including: *Survival or Revival: Ten Keys to Church Vitality*; *Ideal Seminary: Pursuing Excellence in Theological Education*; and *Theology Without Boundaries: Encounters of Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Tradition*.

According to Dr. Calian the ten keys to church vitality are: Worship God alone; be Biblically literate; honor your heritage; be a welcoming church; promote prayer; nurture the youth; address issues knowledgeably; practice forgiveness; work for peace and justice; and be people of trust.

In an informal, down-to-earth presentation filled with personal anecdotes, he kept the delegates captivated. He emphasized that, “Neither pastor nor congregation are static entities. Both are subject to the reali-

ties of change. If either party is unwilling to listen to the other, trouble is not far behind. The good pastor can become the disillusioned pastor and the good congregation can become the disgruntled congregation.”

He told the delegates that first and foremost a good pastor must be a passionate believer, thoughtful and in touch with God. He stated



The keynote speaker, Dr. Carnegie Calian with Archbishop Oshagan.

the other attributes needed, but emphasized “there are no perfect pastors any more than there are perfect congregations.”

During a lively question and answer period, with many of the questions focusing on “financial concerns,” and “endowments,” Dr. Calian passionately emphasized that a living church’s best endowment is its people. If the spiritual needs of the faithful are being ministered to, the finances will follow. A church’s first goal must be to use resources to meet the needs of the people, rather than building a large endowment.

An NRA Marked for its Efficiency

The efficiency and congeniality at this NRA deliberations can be attributed to competent chairmen, Jack Papazian, from St. Gregory Church, Philadelphia; and Artin Dermenjian, All Saints Church, Glenview, Illinois and the delegates who came with the express purpose of finding practical solutions. The recording of the bilingual minutes were undertaken by the secretaries, Rev. Fr. Serop Azarian (Armenian) and Janet Haroian, (English).

Without doubt the extraordinary efforts of the host parish and an incredible committee led by Mrs. Sosie Jeknavourian, were the major reasons for the overall trouble-free and high-quality of the entire event.

Workshop Sessions

Topics tackled by the various workshop sessions included: Role of the Lay Leadership in the Parish; The Struggle of Language; The Evolving Role of Spirituality in the Armenian Church; Bylaws and Constitution;



Rev. Fr. Antranig Baljian presents a lecture on clergy recruitment and training.

and Budget and Audit. The Workshops on the Armenian Religious Education Council and the Armenian National Education Committee provided their conclusions and

recommendations in a powerpoint presentation. [The recommendations of the AREC and ANEC workshops are on the Prelacy's web site, www.armenianprelacy.org].

National Association of Ladies Guilds

Concurrent with the NRA the 20th Annual Conference of the National Association of Ladies' Guilds (NALG) took place. During the two-day conference, three interesting presentations were made by Mrs. Janet Jeghelian, Director of Rehabilitative Services, Stone Institute of Newton, MA, who spoke about "A Woman Breaking Barriers in a Man's World;" Yeretzgin Joanna Baghsarian, of Sts. Vartanantz Church, Providence, Rhode Island, spoke about "Relationships: Wife, Mother, Child of God" and John Baronian, Trustee Emeritus of Tufts University, Boston, Massachusetts spoke about "Academia Today."

Elections

As a final duty the delegates elected council members. Elected to serve on the Religious Council were Rev. Fr. Sarkis Aktavoukian, Holy Trinity Church, Worcester (reelected) and Rev. Fr. Nerses Manoogian of St. Gregory Church, Philadelphia.

Incumbent Richard Sarajian, Sts. Vartanantz Church, New Jersey, was reelected to the Executive Council, as were two new members, Bedros Givelekian, St. Sarkis Church, Douglaston, NY, and Noubar Megerian, St. Gregory Church, Philadelphia.

Elected to serve on the Auditing Committee were, Edward H. Dombalagain, Sourp Khatch Church, Washington, DC; Stepan Stepanian and Avedis Movsesian, both of Sts. Vartanantz Church, New Jersey.

Diocese Representative Addresses the Delegates

In his closing remarks Archbishop Oshagan again thanked and praised the host church and told the delegates, "Now we must go home and start real work." He acknowledged the representative of the Eastern Diocese, Mr. John Amboyan,



Jack Papazian, delegate from St. Gregory Church, Philadelphia, served as co-chairman of the NRA.

and asked him to convey his warmest regards to the Primate, H.E. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. "Khajag Srpazan and I have a good, congenial relationship which is very gratifying," he said. Mr. Amboyan addressed the delegates offering the greetings of Archbishop Barsamian, and noted that the "Prelacy's problems and concerns were very similar to those expressed at the recent Diocese

Assembly."

Raffle Drawing

The annual raffle drawing is a major fundraising effort which enriches the youth programs. Chaired for the last four years by Mr. Antranig Boudakian, this year's raffle once again topped the previous year's sales. In spite of a sluggish economy, the sales netted considerably more than last year thanks to the efforts of Mr. Boudakian and a last

minute push at the NRA banquet when Varkis Markarian, Jr., son of the “Man of the Year,” announced that he would match each ticket sold during the banquet.

Closing Banquet

With the banquet Friday evening the NRA came to an official conclusion. Executive Council chairman Richard Sarajian guided the program. Addressing the delegates and friends were the host parish priest, V. Rev. Fr. Yeghishe Manjikian who said, “We are here for only one reason—for the advancement of the Armenian Church, to bring the Word of our Lord to our faithful people.”

Jim Apovian, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the host parish, added his words of appreciation to the organizing committee and all

“Man of the Year” was Varkes Markarian in appreciation for his devoted service to the Armenian Church. In introducing him, Rev. Fr. Vartan Kassabian described him as a man with a “big heart” who does not know the word “no.”

The winner of the “The Spirit of Armenia” award was Ambassador Movses Abelian, who could not attend, but would accept the award in New York at a later date.

“Youth Leadership Awards” went to Tahleen Ovian and Christian Hidirsah, under the watchful eyes of their proud parents.



Mrs. Olga Sarkissian, a faithful member of the host church, was presented with a Certificate of Merit in appreciation of her years of dedicated work.

32 years, but still finds time for other duties and chores for the church. “If you need some work done, just ask Olga,” said Jim Apovian. “She always does a good job with good humor.”

In a moving and emotional tribute, Rev. Fr. Archpriest Arshag Daghljian was honored for his 35 years of service to the Armenian Church. V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar General, read a Letter of Blessing from His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia. In a humorous and nostalgic presentation Hayr Sourp described what “retirement” means in the Prelacy dictionary. “It means keeping your luggage packed and ready to take a flight each weekend to a different parish.”

The final words were those of Archbishop Oshagan who inspired the delegates to go back to their parishes and convey to their fellow parishioners the work that was done during this Assembly. “With each other, for each other, for the glory of God and the Armenian Church,” must be our guiding motto in all of our deliberations and labor. God bless all of you.” ✠

[See following pages for more details on the awards.]



The clergy serving the Eastern Prelacy.

of the members of the parish who helped in many ways.

Award Presentations were made as follows:

Olga Sarkisian, a member of the host parish, was honored with a “Certificate of Merit” for her dedicated service. Mrs. Sarkisian has been the treasurer of the church for

Youth Leadership Awards Presented at Prelacy's National Representative Assembly

Honoring individuals at the National Representative Assembly (NRA) is a long-standing tradition for the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America. The "Man of the Year," the "Spirit of Armenia," and "Certificate of Merit" awards have been presented for many years. Last year a new category was added—the "Youth Leadership" awards, presented annually to two worthy young members of the host church.

This year's awardees, Christian Hidirsah and Tahleen Ovian, received their well-deserved recognition from the Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, during the NRA's concluding banquet in North Andover, Massachusetts.

In presenting the awards, His Eminence praised the two young parishioners of St. Gregory Church of Merrimack Valley, for their dedicated service to the church. He also had eloquent words of praise for the parents of both awardees. "Parents and the home are the first teachers," he said.

Tahleen Ovian

Tahleen Ovian, daughter of Vanessa and Larry Ovian, was introduced by Ms. Gilda Kupelian, Executive Director of the Armenian National Education Committee (ANEC). Ms. Kupelian told the audience about the many good qualities of the honoree including being a high honors student at Burlington High School and a member of the National Honor Society. She participates in sports, plays clarinet in the school concert and marching bands,

sings in the chorus, and served on the Principal's Advisory Committee. "And that's not all," Ms. Kupelian said. "She is just as active in the Armenian community. She has attended



Youth Leadership Award winner Tahleen Ovian with her parents and Archbishop Oshagan.



Youth Leadership Award winner Christian Hidirsah with his parents and Archbishop Oshagan.

Armenian and Sunday School since the age of three. She is currently the president of the North Andover Armenian Youth Federation juniors. She belongs to the Armenian Children's Chorus of Greater Boston, helps teachers as a student intern, and sings in the church choir when she is not assisting in the Sunday School." She is a past recipient of an Ancient Armenian coin from the Se-

tian collection awarded each year by the Armenian National Education Committee to students who excel in Armenian Studies.

Christian Hidirsah

Christian Hidirsah, son of Joanna and Armand Hidirsah, was introduced by Deacon Shant Kazanjian, Executive Director of the Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC). Dn. Shant described Christian as "a well-rounded and community oriented young man who is already influencing the upcoming generation by tutoring at an elementary school near his home. He also serves as a mentor to younger students in the Armenian and Sunday Schools of St. Gregory Church, where he serves as an acolyte at the altar. Active in sports—soccer and basketball—he has also earned a black belt in the martial arts. Christian has also been the recipient of the Setian coin award.

Archbishop Oshagan noted that both Tahleen and Christian are shining examples and models for future generations. He praised them for being active contributing members of the Armenian community while excelling in their studies and being participating members of the greater American community. His Eminence invited Tahleen and Christian's parents to join their children at the podium as the audience gave them a rousing standing ovation. ❖

Rev. Fr. Archpriest Arshag Daghljan Honored During National Representative Assembly

In a presentation that was both poignant and humorous, Rev. Fr. Archpriest Arshag Daghljan was honored for his 35 years of dedicated service to the Armenian Church during the Eastern Prelacy's National Representative Assembly.

Rev. Fr. Daghljan was honored during the closing banquet. Richard Sarajian, Master of Ceremonies of the banquet, set the tone when he invited Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian to speak about Archpriest Daghljan. "Before I invite Hayr Anoushavan, I just want to say from a personal standpoint that I have never met a finer man than Der Hayr and I am proud to be his son-in-law."

Hayr Anoushavan's presentation intertwined humor with wisdom. "When I was asked to do this presentation the first thing I did was to consult dictionaries for the definition of retirement. All of the dictionaries more or less said the same thing. Retirement means to *withdraw from business or public life*. Except for one dictionary—a dictionary not yet published—the Prelacy Dictionary. In the Prelacy's Dictionary retirement means: Congratulations, if prior to retirement you were accustomed to taking out your luggage once or twice a year, now just don't put it away. If you checked flight schedules once or twice a year, now just keep the schedule next to your Bible. If you were used to enjoying your family during weekends, forget it, you won't be home on weekends. Brace yourself. As a devoted and experienced clergyman you will now carry the burden of many parishes

instead of just one."

Hayr Sourp provided a short biographical sketch of Der Hayr, describing him first and foremost as a role model of the highest order for his spiritual brothers. Der Arshag was born in Dikranagerd and went to Aleppo with his family in 1924. He graduated with honors from Haigazian College. In 1953 he married Lucy Baghdassarian. They were blessed with four daughters and one son, Sonia, Nora, Aida, Houri, and John. A few years ago they faced the



Archbishop Oshagan presents gift to Rev. Fr. Archpriest Arshag Daghljan in appreciation of his years of service, as Yeretzgeen look on.

tragedy of the death of their daughter, Aida. Today they have the added comfort and enjoyment of their seven grandchildren all of whom dote on their special grandparents.

Always deeply tied to the Armenian Church, he followed his calling later in life and graduated from the Cilician Seminary. He and his family came to the United States in 1967 where he was ordained that same year at Sourp Azdvadzadzin Church in Whitinsville, Massachusetts.

He served St. Paul Church in Waukegan, Illinois, St. Stephen's Church, New Britain, Connecticut,

and St. Gregory Church, North Andover, Massachusetts. As an outreach priest he travels more than 40 weekends a year to the small communities without a full time pastor to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and perform the Sacraments. His pastoral services are often utilized in other parishes, as well. It is safe to say that Der Hayr has celebrated the Sacraments in virtually every parish within the Eastern Prelacy.

Hayr Anoushavan then read a special "Letter of Blessing" sent by His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia. His Holiness noted that he knew Der Hayr from his days in the Seminary and later through his service to the Eastern Prelacy. His Holiness acknowledged and praised Der Hayr's years of complete devotion to the Church and praised his willingness to continue his service into his retirement years.

Archbishop Oshagan added his own words of appreciation. "I have known Der Hayr for forty years," he said, "I know him as a man, an Armenian and a clergyman and in each he personifies the very best. He is a role model for us to follow and I want to say that I value his friendship very highly."

A slide presentation depicting the major events in Der Arshag's life was narrated by his son, John. When it was his turn to speak, Der Hayr offered his words of thanks in his soft and gentle voice. He first thanked Aram Vehapar for his generous words, and paid tribute to all of his spiritual brothers, especially the

current Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, and the past Prelate, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, “for giving me the honor to serve the Church.”

He paid special tribute to Yerezgeen and his children acknowledging that without their encouragement and support his life would have been difficult. “During the past fifteen years my children have taken me to the airport each Saturday and then picked me up on Sunday evening, no matter what time.”

Der Hayr and Yerezgeen have transmitted their love of the Church to their children. Son John is a Deacon, has served as a board member and this year was a first-year delegate to the National Representative Assembly. Daughter Nora was a delegate for eight years. She taught Sunday School in St. Gregory Church, North Andover and now teaches in the Sunday School of Sts. Vartanantz Church (NJ).

The true effect of Der Arshag’s service can best be seen through the observations of Dr. Levon Saryan, a delegate to the Assembly representing St. Hagop Church in Racine, Wisconsin, a church that Der Arshag has served as an outreach clergyman. “Der Arshag flew to our area twice each month. He worked with us and participated in the important events in our community. He encouraged us. He prayed with us. He helped us keep our small community alive. Much of our resilience and growth can be credited to Der Hayr’s efforts,” said Dr. Saryan.

As the banquet guests stood to give Der Arshag and Yerezgeen a standing ovation he said, “I became enriched by my spiritual brothers and my faithful friends. This has been the treasure of my life.” ❖

Varkis Markarian Honored as Man of the Year During Eastern Prelacy’s National Representative Assembly

Varkis Markarian of Cranston, Rhode Island, a member of Sts. Vartanantz Church of Providence, was honored as the Eastern Prelacy’s “Man of the Year” and was given well-deserved recognition at the National Representative Assembly.

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy, presented the award, which said in part, “Presented with love and gratitude for outstanding service to the Armenian Church. A grateful community salutes you for your generous spirit that has touched the lives of Armenians everywhere, and thanks you for the extraordinary affection and nourishment you bestow upon the Prelacy.”

His Eminence praised Varkis for his loving and gregarious nature. “It is always a happy time for me to be with Varkis. I can’t think of anyone more deserving to be honored. God bless Varkis and Lillian for their dedication to good deeds.”

Introduced by Rev. Fr. Vartan Kassabian, pastor of St. Gregory Church, Granite City, Illinois, for the past eleven years and recently assigned as the pastor of St. Gregory Church, North Andover, Massachusetts, who presented the life and times of the honoree including a slide presentation with vintage and recent photographs.

A long-time staunch supporter of the Prelacy, Varkis Markarian was described as a man who can never say no. “The word no just does not exist in his vocabulary,” said Rev. Fr. Vartan. “I felt truly honored when Varkis and Lillian, my Godparents, asked me to make this introduction tonight. But, then I thought what can I say that will not take hours because truly there is so much that can be

said.”

Varkis and Lillian have been married for fifty-five years. During those years they have been the epitome of what St. Paul describes as a “cheerful



Varkis and Lillian Markarian with Archbishop Oshagan. Varkis was honored as the Prelacy’s 2003

giver.” Their community-wide generosity has spanned many decades.

“Those of us who know him best, and even those who just met him, are captivated by his genuine sincerity, humanity and his ability to speak his mind. Coupled with this is the sense that he has a responsibility to be helpful to others. I have personally been enriched by this man’s generous spirit,” said Rev. Fr. Vartan. “He served as my Godfather at my ordination and he made it possible for me to travel to Armenia and see my Homeland and participate in the baptism of 523 children to whom he became Godfather.”

He started to work at an early age

in order to help his parents. During World War II he served in the U.S. Navy in three years of active duty in the South Pacific. His marriage to Shoushan (Lillian) Rafaelian was the beginning of a loving and respectful relationship. Today the couple enjoys the love of their family—children and grandchildren—as well as their large extended family of friends.

Varkis served on the Board of Trustees of Sts. Vartanantz Church, Providence, for six terms and was a delegate to the National Representative Assembly for 17 years. He has also served on the Eastern Prelacy's Executive Council.

Throughout his adult life he has been significantly generous, especially by producing beautiful medals, crosses, flags, and commemorative items, such as the most recent item—a Cross—dedicated to the 1,000th anniversary of St. Gregory of Narek's Book of Lamentations. In 2001 His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, asked him to produce a commemorative pewter plaque to be presented to Pope John Paul II and other world religious leaders on the occasion of the 1700th anniversary of Christian Armenia.

When the Eastern Prelacy decided to re-design and expand its publication, *Outreach*, it was Varkis and Lillian who came forth to sponsor the inaugural issue with the hope of inspiring others. The Prelacy has been the recipient of the Markarian generosity for more than four decades.

After the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, he immediately offered to help in whatever way needed. Today his charitable projects in Armenia are considerable under the auspices

of Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, the past Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy, who now lives in Armenia. Most of the projects are related to young people, be it the mass baptisms or the renovation of schools. He is also an avid supporter of the "written word" and sponsors the printing of many books in Armenia.

In 1995 he served as a delegate to the World Assembly, which elected His Holiness Aram I as Catho-



Varkis and Lillian Markarian with their children and grandchildren

cos of the Great House of Cilicia. In 1997 he joined His Holiness on a visit to Pope John Paul II at the Vatican.

In 2000, during a visit to Armenia, Varkis became aware of a school that was in desperate need of renovation. He found out that the World Bank had allocated \$150,000 for the renovation, if the school could raise 10% of that amount. In two years time the school had managed to raise only \$1,000 and the school's condition was deteriorating rapidly. A man of action, he took matters into his own hands, and donated the 10% required in order for the school to qualify for the World Bank's allocation.

In 2001 he traveled to Armenia with his grandson, Mark, at which time he and Mark became Godparents to 2,300 young people baptized into the Armenian Church by Mesrob Srpazan.

He was a close personal friend and admirer of Catholicos Karekin I, of blessed memory, and commissioned a bronze bust in memory of his beloved friend. Varkis and Lillian attended the unveiling of the bust and sponsored a memorial luncheon for more than 2,000 people.

The slide presentation gave the audience a small glimpse of the richness of Varkis Markarian's life, from his navy days to the present day with family and friends. Varkis' influence as a role model was vividly seen when his son, Varkis, Jr., announced that he would match the amount of all Prelacy raffle tickets sold that evening in honor of his father. His gesture encouraged many of those

in attendance to purchase additional tickets.

Varkis expressed his deep gratitude to Archbishop Oshagan and the Executive Council for the honor. "I have a confession to make," he said, "I always thought up until tonight that I was more joyous than the recipient. Tonight I feel good, and I am the recipient. It's like winning the lottery."

His message, filled with humor, took on a somber tone when he described with all sincerity how much he and Lillian have enjoyed the opportunity to give back. "I thank God that we have been able to do these things. And we intend to continue. Everyone should. It is life's most gratifying experience." ❖

Spirit of Armenia Awarded to Ambassador Movses Abelian

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy, presented the “Spirit of Armenia” award to Ambassador Movses Abelian in appreciation of his years of service as the Armenian Republic’s representative to the United Nations.

The award was presented on June 27 during a reception at the Prelacy for Armenia’s new representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Armen Martirosian.

The Prelate described Dr. Abelian’s service to Armenia as truly “inspired” and related how impressed he was by Dr. Abelian’s immediate understanding of the needs and problems of the Armenian Diaspora. “He realized that Armenia and the Diaspora must have a partnership role,” said the Archbishop. “Besides being a diplomat of the highest order, I consider him to be a true personal friend and I am delighted to present this recognition on behalf of the Prelacy.”

Dr. Abelian first came to the United States in 1992 to pursue academic research and to assist the newly independent Republic of Armenia. For the last six years he has served with distinction as Armenia’s ambassador to the United Nations.

Dr. Abelian stepped down from his post to accept a high-ranking administrative position with the U.N. He is now U.N. Secretary of the Committee for Program Coordination and

Administrative and Budgetary Committee. In this new position he will be instrumental in developing the U.N. budget.

The “Spirit of Armenia” award is usually presented during the Prelacy’s National Representative Assembly. Because Dr. Abelian had just started his new position, he was unable to attend. Therefore, the presentation was made in New York.

Dr. Abelian accepted the award with thanks and promised his wholehearted support for Armenia and the Diaspora. ❖



Archbishop Oshagan presents Movses Abelian with the “Spirit of Armenia” Award

Prelacy’s Annual Raffle Drawing Enriches Many Educational Programs

For the fourth year in a row the Eastern Prelacy’s annual raffle campaign topped the previous years’ sales thanks in large part to the chairman, Mr. Antranig Boudakian. This accomplishment is doubly impressive because of the general economic situation. A last minute push by the chairman, his coordinators, and individuals especially at the National Representative Assembly (NRA), succeeded in surpassing last year’s sales by a

considerable number.

The winners were as follows: First prize (\$5,000), Mr. & Mrs. Hamo Dersookian, Bethesda, Maryland. Second prize (\$3,000), Mr. & Mrs. Ken Sarajian and Mrs. & Mrs. Jim Kennelly, of New Jersey; third prize (\$2,000), St. Gregory Church Ladies Guild, Philadelphia; fourth and fifth prizes (\$1,000 each), Daniel Guegikian, Lincolnwood, Illinois, and Henry H. Ohanian, St. Louis, Missouri.

The funds raised through the raffle are allocated to the Prelacy’s various religious and language education programs. “Without this extra financial resource we would be unable to offer the type of programs we currently maintain,” said Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, the Prelate. “We are very grateful to Antranig Boudakian for his extraordinary and impressive results for the past four years,” said the Prelate. ❖

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Յիսուսի Համբարձումը կը տօնուկի Ձատիկէն քառասուն օր ետք՝ յարութեան վեցերորդ կիրակիին յաջորդող Հինգշաբթի օրը: Այս քառասուն օրերու ընթացքին, բացի այլազան առիթներով Երուսաղէմի եւ Գալիլիոյ Յիսուսի երեւումները իր աշակերտներուն եւ հետեւորդներուն, յիշատակելի դէպքեր չեն պատահիր: Այս երեւումներու ընթացքին էր որ տեղի կ'ունենայ հրաշալի ձկնորսութիւնը Տիրերիոյ ծովակին մէջ, ուր Յիսուս Պետրոսի կ'ողղէ երեք անգամ միեւնոյն հարցումը, ըսելով. «Մի՞մ'ն, Յովնանի որդի, կը սիրե՞ս զիս»: Իր հարցումով Յիսուս կրկնել կու տար Պետրոսի ապաշխարութիւնը իր երեք ուրացումներուն համար, միաժամանակ կը հաստատէր առաքելութեան մը յանձնառու խոստումը իր եւ միւս առաքեալներուն արքայութեան նոր Աւետարանը քարոզելու (ՅՀ 21.1-19):

Յիսուս իր երկրաւոր առաքելութիւնը ավարտած, երկինք համբառնելէ առաջ, առաքեալներուն կը յանձնէ իր սկսած գործը: Կը պատուիրէ անոնց Երուսաղէմ մնալ ու սպասել միսիթարիչ Սուրբ Հոգիէն ստանալիք զօրութեան: «Երուսաղէմէն մի՛ հեռանաք, մինչեւ ստանաք Հօրը խոստումը... երբ Սուրբ Հոգին իջնէ ձեր վրայ, զօրութեամբ պիտի լեցուիք եւ իմ վկաներս պիտի ըլլաք Երուսաղէմի, ամբողջ Հրէաստանի եւ Սամարիայի մէջ, եւ մինչեւ աշխարհի ծայրամասերը» (Գրծ 1:3-8):

Իր առաքեալներուն եւ աշակերտներուն հետ ունեցած Քրիստոսի մտերիմ զրոյցը, զանոնք յարուցեալ եւ փառաւորեալ Փրկիչին հետ կենդանի հաղորդութեան մէջ կը դնէր եւ անոնք կը տեսնէին, կը լսէին եւ կը շօշափէին յարուցեալ իրենց Տէրը: Քրիստոս այն ինչ որ Հօր Աստուծմէ ստացած եւ լիազօրուած էր, նոյն լիազօրութիւնը եւ առաքելութիւնը կը շնորհէ իր աշակերտներուն: «Ամէն իշխանութիւն տրուեցաւ ինձի երկինքի մէջ եւ երկրի վրայ: Ինչպէս որ Հայրը զիս զրկեց, այնպէս ալ ես ձեզ կը զրկեմ: Գացէք եւ բոլոր ժողովուրդները ինձի աշակերտ դարձուցէք» (Մտ 28.18-19): Քրիստոս համահաւասար Հօր Աստուծոյ փառքին, ամէն իշխանութիւն, զօրութիւն եւ հեղինակութիւն ունէր երկինքի ու երկրի վրայ: Որպէս մարդացեալ Աստուածորդի իրեն կը պատկանէր շնչող ամէն արարած. Ան ամբողջ մարդ-

կութեան վրայ իշխանութիւն ունէր յաւիտենական կեանք տալու բոլոր անոնց՝ որոնք իրեն կը պատկանին (ՅՀ 17.2): Հետեւաբար ամէն իշխանութիւն եւ հեղինակութիւն պէտք է ծուներ դնէ, պատուէ ու պաշտէ զինք եւ ամէն լեզու խոստովանի թէ Քրիստոս Տէր եւ Փրկիչ է: Քրիստոսով փրկութիւնը որպէս ճիշդ պարգեւ տրուեցաւ բոլորին անխտիր: Առաքեալներ որոնք փրկութեան Աւետարանը պիտի քարոզէին ու ամբողջ աշխարհի ժողովուրդներուն տարածէին, ունէին մէկ նպատակ՝ Քրիստոսի իշխանութեան, հնազանդութեան ներքեւ բերել աշխարհը իր բոլոր թագաւորութիւններով:

Գործք Առաքելոցի 1.9-12, Մարկոսի 16.19-20, եւ Ղուկասի 24.50-53 համարներուն մէջ համբարձման դէպքը յուզիչ այլեւ յուսադրիչ տողերով կը նկարագրուի ուր, Յիսուս՝ իր վերջին թելադրութիւնները եւ հրաժեշտի խօսքերը արտասանելէ ետք, Ձիթենեաց լեռ կ'ելլէ. իրեն կը հետեւէին մայրը, բարեպաշտ կիներ, առաքեալներ եւ աշակերտներու բազմութիւն մը: Անսովոր եւ վեհօրէն խորհրդաւոր լուսութիւն մը կը տիրէր միջոցին եւ հոգիներուն մէջ: Բոլորին հայեացքը իրենց Փրկչին սեւեռած, հաւանաբար կը սպասէին որ Տէր Յիսուս այդպէս ընդերկար հոն իրենց մօտ մնար, խօսէր, ուսուցանէր, հրաշագործէր՝ իրենց հետ միշտ ըլլար: Ահա Յիսուս սլացիկ կանգնած երկնքի կապոյտին նայող բարձր ժայռի մը վրայ ձեռքերը վեր բարձրացնելով կ'օրհնէ բոլորը... մինչ այդպէս հիացիկ յափշտակութեամբ վեհացած ու թաց աչքերով կը դիտէին իրենց Տէրը, աշակերտները կը տեսնեն որ Յիսուսի ոտքերը հանդա՛րտ կ'անջատուին երկրէն ու շքեղ տեսքով ան դէպի երկինք կը համբառնայ: Առաքեալներ երբ այսպէս տակաւին շշմած աչքերով Յիսուսի դէպի երկինք վերթեւումը կը դիտէին, ահա ամպերու մէջէն երկու սպիտակագգեստ մարդիկ կը յայտնուին անոնց ու կ'ըսեն. «Ո՛վ Գալիլիացիներ, ինչո՞ւ կեցեր երկինք կը դիտէք: Այս Յիսուսը որ երկինք համբարձաւ, օր մը դարձեալ պիտի գայ այնպէս՝ ինչպէս անոր երկինք երթալը տեսաք» (Գրծ 1.11): Ապա ամպ մը զանոնք իրենց աչքերէն կը ծածկէ: Յիսուսի աշակերտները երկինքի ամպերուն մէջ անյայտացող համբարձեալ Քրիստոսի երկրպագութիւն ընելէ ետք սրտատրով ու մեծ ուրախութեամբ Ձիթենեաց լեռնէն կը վերադառնան

Երուսաղէմ՝ խաչեալ, յարուցեալ եւ փառաւորեալ Տիրոջ կենդանի վկայութիւնը ընելու, Աւետարանը քարոզելու եւ հրաշագործելու (Մր 16:20): Անոնք Երուսաղէմի մէջ մատնիչ Յուդայի տեղ աղօթելով եւ ապա վիճակ ձգելով երկու ընտրելիներէն — Յովսէփ Բարսաբա եւ Մատաթիա — կ'ընտրեն Մատաթիան՝ որպէս տասներկրորդ առաքեալ (Գրծ 1:26):

Համբարձումը ժողովրդային լեզուի վրայ նաեւ վիճակի օր ալ կը կոչուի: Որովհետեւ այդ օր հետեւողութեամբ առաքեալներուն հայ-քրիստոնեայ կանայք եւ աղջիկներ բախտաւոր եւ երջանիկ կեանքի մը հեռանկարներով իրենց բախտին վրայ վիճակ կը ձգեն եւ այդ օր կ'անցնեն դաշտագնացութիւններով, մասնաւոր երգերով, պարերով, ուրախութեամբ եւ գուարճալի մթնոլորտի մէջ:

Եկեղեցական արարողութեանց առընթեր Համբարձման տօնը նաեւ առիթ կ'ընծայէր որ հայ իգական սեռը առօրեայ առտնին պարտականութիւններէն եւ պատշաճութիւններէ ձերբազատուի, խումբ-խումբ ընկերուհիներով բնութեան ազատութիւնն ու գեղեցկութիւնը վայելելու, բայց մանաւանդ ազատ եւ անկաշկանդ արտայայտուելու, խոստովանելու իր ներքին զգացական եւ յուզական ապրումները՝ բանաստեղծական եւ ինքնեկ յօրինումներով:

Համբարձման տօնակատարութեանց ամենէն ժողովրդայինը կարելի է համարել վիճակահանութիւնը: Համբարձումը նախորդող ցերեկին աղջիկներ գոյնզգոյն հագուստներ հագած՝ դաշտագնացութեան կը մեկնէին: Ամբողջ օր մը բնութեան բարիքները եւ կազդոյրը վայելելէ, խաղալէ, պարելէ եւ երգելէ ետք, երեկոյեան վերադարձին իրենց հետ կը բերէին փունջ-փունջ կազմած ծաղիկներ: Այդ ծաղիկներով կը շինէին մեծ խաչ մը որ Ծաղկամայր կը կոչուէր, ու գայն կը գետեղէին ջուրով լեցուն մեծ տաշտի մը մէջ ծաղիկներու այլ փունջերու հետ: Ապա իւրաքանչիւր մասնակից իր սեպհականութիւնը եղող զարդեղէն իր մը, ինչպէս՝ մատանի, օղ, ապարանջան, ծամակալ, զարդակոճակ, մանեակ թէ այլ առարկայ մը տաշտին մէջ կը նետէր, ու վարդի տերեւներով կը ծածկէին ջուրին մակերեսը: Յաջորդ որ Պատարագէն վերադարձին կը խմբուէին ծաղիկներով ու վարդերով զարդարուն տաշտին շուրջ: Ժողովրդային թէ այլ խանդավառ երգեր երգելէ ետք,

փոքրիկ աղջնակ մը տաշտի ջուրերուն մէջէն կը հանէր ներկաներէն մէկուն պատկանող զարդեղէնը, միաժամանակ իր բախտին կը կարդացուէր քառեակ մը: Իրենց բախտին կարդացուած թղթիկին բովանդակութիւնը ընդհանրապէս սիրոյ, գեղեցկութեան, յաջողութեանց, կեանքի բախտաւորութեանց, յոյսերու, ակնկալութեանց, կարօտներու, սպասումներու թէ գեղեցիկ երազներու շուրջ հիւսուած բանաստեղծական քառեակներ էին:

Համբարձման առթիւ կազմակերպուած վիճակահանութեան աւարտին՝ ներկաներու միջեւ ծաղիկները կը բաժնուէին, իսկ կեղորոնի խաչանիչ Ծաղկամայրը եկեղեցի կը տարուէր:

Քրիստոսի համբարձումը անոր մարմնապէս երկինք վերացումն է, միաժամանակ վերջին երեւումը եւ դիմառնական խօսակցութիւնը իր հետեւողներուն եւ աշակերտներուն հետ: Այնուհետեւ համբարձեալ եւ փառաւորեալ Տէրը՝ Եկեղեցւոյ եւ Ս. Հոգւոյ միջոցաւ, առաքեալներու եւ եկեղեցւոյ պաշտօնեաներու, հաւատացեալ սուրբերու միջոցաւ է որ պիտի խօսէր, գործէր, ուսուցանէր եւ հրաշագործէր:

Քրիստոսի մարմնապէս երկինք համբարձումը երաշխիք մըն է բոլոր քրիստոնեաներու թէ՛.

ա.- Այն Քրիստոսը որուն կը հաւատան եւ որուն յարութեան եւ համբարձման ականատես վկաները եղան առաքեալները, մինչեւ աշխարհի եւ ժամանակներու լրումը իրենց հետ ապրող ներկայութիւն է (Մտ 28:20):

բ.- Թէ յարուցեալ եւ համբարձեալ Քրիստոսի հաւատացողներ, մինչեւ Քրիստոսի Երկրորդ Գալլստեան ժամանակը եթէ դեռ կենդանի կը մնան, եւ իրենց հաւատքը առ Քրիստոս անշեղ ու անաղարտ կը պահեն՝ իրենք եւս ակնթարթի մէջ երկինք պիտի յափշտակուին, իսկ անոնք որոնք Քրիստոսի հաւատալով ննջած են՝ յարութիւն պիտի առնեն ու Քրիստոսի հետ երկինք համբարձան: (Ա.Թս 4:15-17):

գ.- Քրիստոսի համբարձումը զօրաւոր երաշխիք է թէ յարութեանական եւ յարուցեալ կեանքը ապագային տեղի ունենալիք մէկ իրականութիւն է, որուն արժանանալու համար յարատեւ հաւատքը անհրաժեշտութիւն է:

դ.- Քրիստոսի համբարձումը կը հաստատէ թէ

Քրիստոսի հաւատացող ննջեցեալներ, ժամանակներու լրումին, երբ Աստուածորդին երկնային իր զօրաց փառքերով աշխարհ վերադառնայ ու հրեշտակներ յարութեան փողերը փչեն, ննջեցեալներ յարութեանական նոր մարմիններով կեանքի պիտի կոչուին, այնպէս ինչպէս Քրիստոս, նոյն բայց տարբեր՝ անապական մարմինով յարութիւն առաւ: Նոյնպէս ալ կենդանի մնացողներ՝ ակնթարթի մէջ անապական մարմին պիտի զգենուն ու պիտի դատուին: Միայն արդարները Քրիստոսի հետ երկինք պիտի համբառնան՝ ժառանգելու համար երկնից արքայութեան անսպառ յաւիտենական կեանքի ուրախութիւնը (Ա. Կր 15.42-44):

Ե.- Համբարձման տօնը գեղեցիկ ու երջանիկ ապագայի, վերանորոգ հոգեւոր վիճակի եւ իրականութիւններու կենդանի մէկ պատկերացումն է, որուն շօշափելի եւ իմանալի յարութեան սանդղատամատը հո՛ս աշխարհի վրայ հաստատուած ունինք եւ որուն միւս ծայրը կ'երկարի համբարձման լեռնէն ալ անդին՝ դէպի երկինք ուր Աստուծոյ Գահը հաստատուած կայ:

Գ.- Համբարձումը տօնախմբութիւնն է վսեմ խոփալի, յաւերժական կեանքի եւ երջանկութեան որոնումին: Հոն ուր աստուածային սէրը, անկեղծութիւնը, բարութիւնը, կատարելիութիւնը եւ ճշմարտութիւնը անվարագոյր կը թագաւորեն:

Քրիստոս երկինք համբառնալով եւ վերադառնալով հոն՝ ուրկէ եկած էր, թանձր վարագոյրով չի փակեր Աստուծոյ եւ մարդոց ճամբան, այլ՝ ընդհակառակը համբարձմամբ ու շատ օրեր չանցած Հոգեգալստեան դէպքով աշխարհ նոր դարաշրջանի մը սկիզբը կը ճանչնայ, Աստուած վերստին կը ծնի, այս անգամ իր Եկեղեցոյ մէջ յաւիտենապէս աճելու, մեծնալու եւ օր մըն ալ ամբողջ աշխարհն ու մարդկութիւնը իր լոյսով եւ սիրով ողողելու, խմորելու:

Քրիստոս իր ծննդեան ժամանակ իջեւանին մէջ տեղ չունեցաւ, ոչ ոք անոր տեղ տուաւ (Ղկ 2.7): Սակայն Քրիստոս իր համբարձման ժամանակ, երբ աշխարհի յաղթած երկինք իր Հօրը քով կը վերադառնար, ան ամբողջ երկնի անհամար հրեշտակներու զօրքերը կ'ունենար որոնք զինք կը դիմաւորէին եւ կը փառաւորէին:

ՄԻԻՌՈՆ Ծ. ՎՐԴ. ԱԶՆԻԿԵԱՆ

A Graduation Sermon
Be A Light and Dispel the Darkness

by Rev. Fr. Nerses Manoogian

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Prov. 1:7)

This verse was the first biblical text our forefathers translated into Armenian. And it is this text that I offer to the graduates of our parish whom we honor today.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to address you from this pulpit, and the entire congregation feels honored to see so many graduates sharing this Sunday with them.

The book of Proverbs says, "By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches," (Prov. 24:4). And our sanctuary, I may say, is a pleasant place in the presence of our learned graduates. In this season academic institutions throughout the land are hosting graduation ceremonies. Last Thursday, Ascension Day, was the graduation of the class of 33 A.D. Their number was eleven and they all majored in discipleship. Their commencement was in the remote village of Bethany. They did not wear cap and gown, nor walk in a stately commencement procession. Jesus was their dean, their teacher, the head of the department, the only cheering audience and, at the same time, their featured speaker. It was as if he were handing them their diplomas before ascending into heaven. In his commencement speech he told them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age," (Matt. 28:18-20).

I find a connection between those graduates of 33 and those of 2003. Two generations of students more than 1,900 years apart are bound by the same rules and concerns. Universally, students do two things. They learn and then they put their education to use in the arena of life.

Three disciples of Jesus went through many difficult times, as you did. They had their ups and downs and their struggles. Their teacher was ever trying to fill their brains

with celestial truth while their minds were wandering in the Sea of Galilee, as your minds sometimes wandered away in many directions. What they knew was to cast the net and catch fish; now their teacher was telling them he was going to make them “fishers of men.”

Their classroom was the wilderness. They learned while they walked with their teacher from one place to another. Many times they felt starved as you may have felt, and all they could do was to pluck wheat from the fields and eat. “At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat,” (Matt. 12:1).

I’ll bet that it tasted as good as the late night pizzas you used to gulp down after a long study session.

As they learned a few things they were sometimes driven by a spirit of competition as perhaps you were. One who was still a freshman among them asked his teacher who was going to be greatest of them. The teacher’s response was very stern. “Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave.” (Matt. 20:26-27).

As in any student body, there are different characters amongst them. Peter was known as the most flamboyant and aggressive student. He tried to walk on the sea, but because of his little faith he almost drowned. Judas, who betrayed his teacher, had no desire for education, but was very much driven by greed and the color of money. He failed altogether and dropped out of “the school,” as many students these days drop out.

As many college students these days have their co-ops, the disciples had their own. One time, without their teacher, they went to a village and successfully healed a few people. As excited students, they returned to their teacher and bragged about their achievements.

Thomas had a very inquisitive mind. When he met his risen teacher, Thomas asked Jesus to show his wounds so that he could believe him. I’ll bet you that today he would be a good engineer or computer programmer.

After a long period of study, they all failed miserably at their final exams. Why? Because when their teacher was arrested, they denied having any relationship with him. They ran away as fast as they could.

But after Jesus’ Resurrection they were given a chance for a re-take exam. They passed with flying colors.

After the Ascension, they went, like college graduates, into the world to market their knowledge. They did not meet recruiters nor did they have job interviews. They marketed themselves slowly but surely. One day, if you

have a chance, read their resumes in the book of Acts. How did they achieve so much in so short a time and with the few resources available to them?

In the arena of work they demonstrated two great qualities, which, I hope, will be yours also.

First, they had a strong desire to effect a positive change to the world. That desire was the driving force of their careers. They were never derailed from this conviction, but remained steadfast and resolved.

I hope that those of you who start a career will not lose sight of this conviction. Don’t be so taken up with material compensation that you neglect opportunities to enhance human life. What can you contribute toward the betterment of the world? Do not underestimate yourself. All it takes is a spark to set the forest afire. There is a spark in each of you waiting to start a fire. Go for it. Speak the language of justice and peace. Set an example by your caring spirit. The world is in dire need of honest men and women. People of good stature and high morals are sought after in all places. Be a light and dispel the darkness.

Second, they were not greedy. As we say in America, they worked for “peanuts.” Some days they starved and relied on the kindness of a few good friends. Their message to you college graduates is, don’t be greedy. Greed will grind your heart. Greed will wear you out. Greed will always

bring failure and destruction. Who can forget the recent scandals in mighty corporations like Enron and World-Com? The greed of a few executives brought these corporations down and threw thousands of their workers into the misery of unemployment.

Be content with what you receive and remain on track in terms of helping the world be a peaceful and pleasant place to live.

“There is gold, and abundance of costly stones; but the lips informed by knowledge are a precious jewel,” (Prov. 20:15)

Keep that precious jewel, and put the best of yourselves into “The treasure of the world.”

Today, I congratulate all of you for your academic achievements. Let history judge you by your actions, and in the end, let the Lord reward you for your honest and upright spirit. ❖

...Ascension Day was the graduation of the class of 33 A.D. Their number was eleven and they all majored in discipleship.

Rev. Fr. Nerses Manoogian is the pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Philadelphia. This sermon was delivered on the Sunday when the parish’s graduates were honored.

Profiles of Giving

Mangikian Memorial Fund Established to Assist Needy Senior Citizens in Armenia and Artsakh

by Iris Papazian

Dr. Bedros P. Mangikian, following consultations with Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, recently made a generous donation to the Prelacy's Endowment Fund of \$225,040, for the establishment of a new Fund, "The Mangikian Memorial Fund," in memory of his mother, Ardemis Vosgueritchian Mangikian and sister, Yeran Mangikian Garian. "The objective of the Fund is to assist needy senior citizens in Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh)," said Dr. Mangikian.

Archbishop Oshagan commended Dr. Mangikian's humanitarian effort with the sad observation that the "elderly are a segment of the population in Armenia and Artsakh that is easily forgotten. Yet the need is there. Many are in dire situation because they only have a very small government pension."

Ardemis and Yeran with their families were communicants of St. John the Baptist Armenian Apostolic Church of Syracuse, New York. They loved the community and cherished their Sundays at the Church and Community Center. Dr. Mangikian relates that they especially cherished their camaraderie with Virginia Kalebdjian with whom they shared Armenian cooking recipes and skills.

"My mother and sister were very sensitive to the misfortunes of the elderly, specially those destined to end their 'golden years' of their lives destitute or in institutions," recalled Dr. Mangikian. "My mother lamented the weakening of the extended Armenian family. She could

not bear to hear the stories of destitute seniors who were helpless and suffering. This Fund is planned and will be directed to assist deprived and helpless elderly in a manner to fulfill the wishes of my mother and



Ardemis Mangikian
1902 - 1987



Yeran Garian
1922 - 1981

sister."

Dr. Mangikian commented that in his correspondence with Archbishop Oshagan, the Prelate wrote: "I believe, that how we treat our mothers and fathers in their autumn

years is an indication of the humanity of our nation." Dr. Mangikian says this poignant statement, along with the deep concern his mother and sister had for the elderly, encouraged him to bring "his means and efforts for this heartfelt cause."

Why Armenia and Artsakh? Dr. Mangikian explains: "Because of our ROOTS, without which a tree cannot sustain its long existence. Armenia became an independent state for the second time in the Twentieth Century, both occasions in turbulent geopolitical environments. Physical boundaries alone do not make a Homeland. We need the people and must reduce emigration. We need a government to protect the Homeland and elevate the social well being of the people. We need cooperation and planning with the Diaspora in constructive partnership. Charity should come into the country with love, without obstacles, undue bureaucracy or unwarranted taxation. Compassion and understanding with constructive leadership should take full advantage of this opportunity, to have a country and a flourishing creative nation."

Dr. Mangikian became very aware of the plight of seniors in Armenia. They were left with meager pensions if any, a high cost of living, in a devastated economy. "Where is the margin of choice between food, medicine and shelter from the harsh winters without heat?" he asks. "Helping our elderly is not only moral, but it also sets an example on how we want to be treated down the road. After all, aging is a common

and inevitable road.”

Ardemis: An Armenian Matriarch

Ardemis Vosgueritchian Mangikian was born in 1902 in Arabkir, Turkey, and was one of six children in a well to do family of silk merchants. She lost her parents in the 1915 Genocide. Two siblings died soon after. Four lived to adulthood and formed families of their own.

Ardemis married Yervant Mangikian, also from Arabkir, and had four children, Yeran, Arshag, Bedros, and Dertad. They along with their first-born child, Yeran, moved to Aleppo where the rest of the children were born and raised.

Dr. Mangikian recalls that his mother was the “quintessential Armenian matriarch.” A refugee family, she raised the children with the means available to meet the needs of the family. “She was creative in her cooking, sewing and knitting. Above all she engendered dignity within the family and was very motivating in a gentle yet persuasive manner.” We, as parents, are doing our best, she would say and then add, you children are hopefully destined to do better. It was to become a mantra that carried the Mangikian children along with their Hovanessian cousins who lived in close quarters and were equally motivated by their parents, toward education and into professional fields.

Yeran and Arshag, being the eldest children, shouldered the responsibility of securing the purse strings of the family. They also provided significantly to the wherewithal for higher education. For Bedros and Dertad it was medical school. The family had work ethics, convictions, and perseverance that paved the road to their dreams.

Family Comes to the United States

Between 1966 and 1975 the

families immigrated to the United States.

Bedros, who had graduated from the American University of Beirut, with distinction, as a Doctor in Medicine, continued specialty training in general and vascular surgery at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, New York and established his private practice in the same area.

Dertad also graduated from the American University of Beirut



*Dr. Bedros P. Mangikian
Benefactor of the Fund*

and specialized in Ophthalmology, and established a private practice in McLean, Virginia.

Yeran had her education at the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Aleppo. She was an honor student and was very much liked. She did teaching for a short while, and then moved out into the “forbidden world,” of women in the work force. She took a job as a switchboard operator and soon was on international lines, a coveted position. She married Diran Garian in Aleppo, and had two children, Thomas and Nora. Immigration was a great challenge for her with two young children. But she and her husband set their minds and energies for a better future, especially for the children. In three months of home education, they learned conversational English. The parents

found employment; the children enrolled in school and were able to match the accomplishments of their classmates and successfully graduated. Both went to college; Thomas received a Bachelor of Science degree and Nora a Master’s degree in Business Administration.

Yeran: A Special Person

“My sister Yeran was a special person,” says Dr. Mangikian. “She was the fair and mitigating individual in the family. She earnestly believed that faith and kindness could conquer all adversity. She was a giving person to her family and community. She was all heart!”

As Bedros prepared to attend pre-med school, Yeran helped her brother towards his dreams with all her savings. The bank manager, an Armenian, warned her that of some 200 students only 30 would be accepted as first-year medical students. Her response was classic Yeran: “I am making a sure win bet.”

Her compassion and organizational skills were evidenced by the upbringing she gave her family resulting in a well-adjusted, mainstream Armenian American life. She adapted to her new homeland, became a citizen, sent her children to college, and lived in a nice home. But fate and destiny were not kind to her. Tragedy knocked on her door when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She fought valiantly and survived for more than two years. Her final words were for her extended family, “I hope I am leaving you on a good footing. I will miss you all.”

“Death, of course, is inevitable,” says Dr. Mangikian. “Yet any loss is tragic, especially at a young age. My mother agonized over burying her child, her closest friend and confidant. They were so close that sometimes the men in the family felt there was a good-natured conspiracy

to leave us out.”

Six years after Yeran’s death, Ardemis, the matriarch of the family, died. “She died a quick death at age 85,” says Dr. Mangikian, “which is what she wanted. She prayed that, God forbid! she would not be hospitalized or confined to bed.”

She was close to and enjoyed her eight grandchildren. For many years she helped raise them with love and joy. She advised them to be good, respectful and faithful.

“Mother and sister are together now. This Fund will serve their greatest wishes and desires. Above all, it will reflect on two mothers of great caring, sacrifice, and compassion towards their families and fellow human beings—mothers who knew that our existence is so miniscule in planetary time on this earth. I have a feeling they will, by their kind and persuasive ways, nudge a few angels to lend an extra helping hand, so this Fund goes a long way in its mission and serve their persistent belief that there is always room to do more and do it better,” said Dr. Mangikian.

Here on earth it is the angel-like compassion and generosity of Dr. Mangikian that is making it possible for the elderly in Armenia and Artsakh to conclude their earthly lives with a little more comfort and the knowledge that there are people who care about them.

The Mangikian Memorial Fund, is managed by a committee comprised of Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Dr. Bedros Mangikian, MD, Nora Garian O’Donnell, MBA, and Ruben Siraganian, MD. Since its inception seven months ago the assets have grown to \$260,000.00. ❖

Pastor’s Corner

Would You Have Been A Disciple?

by Rev. Fr. Vartan Kassabian

Would you have been a Disciple? Think about that question for a moment and do not answer it too quickly. Let us be honest and ask ourselves another question. Do we know what true Christian discipleship is?

One of the greatest tragedies of our own modern times is that Christians have completely lost sight of the fact that Christianity is defined not only by faith but also by genuine discipleship. It is spiritual poverty for us to claim to be followers of Christ and then take such a casual attitude toward our faith.

What, in fact, did Christ mean when He said to His disciples: Those who will walk with me must pick up their cross and follow me...Those who love the world more than they love me cannot be called my followers.

Could we have become His disciples? It was a difficult challenge that our Lord posed to them, to follow Him. They doubted whether they could live up to what they had been called to do.

Many of us are strictly Christmas and Easter Christians. The beauty and the mystery of the church on those particular days may transform us to believe that we could in fact become true disciples. However, this is easier said than done. Action speaks louder than words.

Think for a moment about the twelve Disciples of Christ called to follow Him—someone they had heard about but never knew. Someone who called Himself the Son of God. Someone who was tried, and crucified for His preaching, which was considered to be revolutionary.

When we look at ourselves today as Christians we need to realize just how very nominal we have become in these very trying modern times. It is as if our faith has become more of a stabilizing force in times of trouble, pain and sorrow rather than the driving force in our everyday lives. Especially here in the United States, being a faithful Christian would seem on the face of it to be very difficult. The true obstacle is neither the world nor the times. The obstacles are within us—our ego, our prejudices, our pride, and our concern only for ourselves. ❖

Rev. Fr. Vartan Kassabian is the pastor of St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley, North Andover, Massachusetts.

*The Year of the Bible***The Bible in the Armenian Christian Tradition**

by Very Rev. Fr. Karekin Sarkissian

When I consider the role of the Bible in the Armenian Church and in the life of the Armenian people, I am reminded of the role played by blood as it circulates in the human body. Throughout the history of the Armenian Church, the Bible has occupied, as it does today, a central place. It gives the liturgy a special significance, a strong sense of communication with the presence of God. And the dominant presence of the Word of God in the liturgy is intended to communicate to the Armenian people the love and care of God.

Let me then begin with the very name of the Bible. The full Armenian name for it is *Astouadsashoonch Matean*, regularly used by the ordinary people, and not confined to a class of ecclesiastics or theologians. It means “Divinely Inspired Book.” But the Bible is often called simply *Astouadsashoonch*, which means “The Breath of God.” The name has its origin in the writings of St. Paul (see especially the Second Epistle to Timothy 3:16); but whereas Paul used the idea in a casual way, the Armenians have recognized in it a rich theological reality that defines the Bible in its deepest and truest sense. The word points to the very essence of the Armenians’ attitude. For them, the Bible actually is the Breath of God that spreads out in the form of a spiritual and intellectual power, to bestow grace and wisdom, which transcends the literal meaning of the words as such.

If the Bible, as we shall see later, has exerted a strong influence upon the life of the Armenian people and has occupied a unique place in Armenian history, this word, *Astouadsashoonch*, with the spiritual and theological connotation it generates in the minds of the Armenians, has a great deal to do with its impact.

The Bible in History

Let us now look at the Bible from the perspective of Armenian history. When did the Armenian people first come into direct contact with it?

The Christian faith preceded the text of the Bible in Armenia. As early as the first century, apostolic missions brought Christianity to our country. According to an early tradition, St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew, two of the twelve Apostles of Jesus, first preached Christianity in Armenia. A continuous stream of missionaries came from both Cappadocia, northwest of Armenia, and from Edessa in the southwest, representing the two main traditions in Eastern Christendom: those molded in the Greek and Syriac languages and cultures. The foreign

missionaries trained Armenians to help them in their evangelistic task, and the Bible was liturgically read in Greek or Syriac, depending on the area of cultural affinity. Thus, the southern regions of Armenia received the Syriac influence, and the western and central areas heard the Bible in Greek. Until the beginning of the fifth century—and particularly in the second half of the fourth—organized groups of monks traveled around the country, preaching Gospel, reading from the Bible in Greek or

Syriac, and then orally translating these readings into Armenian and commenting on them in Armenian. These monks were officially known as “Translators” (in Armenian, *Verdsanoghke*, which also means “interpreters”).

But this method of spreading the Word was discouragingly ineffective. Historiographers of the fourth and fifth centuries offer unenthusiastic testimonies about the state of Christianity in Armenia. Although the people were baptized as Christians, these commentators usually complained about the indifference and apathy of the people; in fact, the new converts were not being led to a Christian life, because they had no direct access to the Word of God in their own language. They *knew* of the Bible, but they did not *know* the Bible. Christianity seemed to be something outside their national, domestic lives—something imposed upon them and alien to their native cultural ethos.

In the words of a fourth-century writer, Faustus of

The word [Astouadsashoonch] points to the very essence of the Armenians’ attitude. For them, the Bible actually is the Breath of God that spreads out in the form of a spiritual and intellectual power, to bestow grace and wisdom which transcends the literal meaning of the words as such.

Byzantium (Pavstos Biuzandatzi), “Day and night the monks intensely poured Christian teaching upon them [the people], as if it were a torrential rain falling from clouds; but none of them, not one single person, could understand a word.” [Pavstos Biuzandatzi, *History of the Armenians*.]

There was a kind of unseen but impenetrable umbrella between the Word and the people. The Bible, in the ears of the Armenians, was a foreign language, which could find no direct way to their hearts and minds.

A fifth-century historian, Lazarus of Pharbi (Ghazar Parbetsi), describes the lifelessness of Christianity in Armenia at the opening of the century: “The church worship and the scriptural lessons were conducted in the Syriac language in the churches and monasteries of the Armenian people. The inhabitants of this big country (Armenia) received no benefit from them, because they could not understand the Syriac language.” [Ghazar Parbetsi, *History of the Armenians*.]

Under such circumstances, evangelistic work could at best be a slow process with disheartening effects on the preachers. It is true that St. Gregory the Illuminator had officially converted the Armenians, and King Tiridates III had proclaimed Christianity as the state religion as early as A.D. 301; but this conversion was simply of a formal and official nature. The nation needed to deepen its Christian faith by absorbing the religion into the whole fabric of its national life.

And surely there could be no better means of achieving such a vital task than by allowing the people to have direct access to the original record of the Christian Faith—the Holy Scriptures. A church without the Bible in the hands of her faithful could neither stand very long nor remain very firm in the midst of a pagan world. The Armenian Church fathers were deeply conscious of the urgent need for an Armenian translation of the Bible. But at this time, no Armenian alphabet existed.

Finally, at the beginning of the fifth century, a Church divine—Mesrob Mashtots, a monk devoted to missionary action in the remote provinces of Armenia—succeeded in devising an alphabet adequate to render all the subtleties of Armenian pronunciation. The great work of translation followed, under the wise and masterly guidance of St. Sahak (the catholicos of the time) and St. Mesrob himself.

The translation was first made from a Syriac version

of the Bible. Later, between A.D. 430 and 440, it was thoroughly revised on the basis of a text of the Greek Septuagint, which was brought from Constantinople by Armenian students who had been sent there, as to other centers of high learning, to become acquainted with the Greek Christian culture. The Greek text was considered more accurate and trustworthy than the Syriac version (known as the “Peshitta”). The revision proved to be such a radical one that the result was almost an entirely new Armenian version.

It would take a large volume to cover the various textual and historical problems related to this translation. And it would also take long chapters to describe the impetus this version gave to the life of the Armenian people, and the permanent impact it had on Armenian history and literature. Let me simply offer two illustrations of the impact and the consequences of this translation, as eloquently expressed in the context of the life of the Armenian nation in the fifth century. The accounts are those of eyewitnesses.

The first illustration comes from Koriun, a disciple and the biographer of St. Mesrob. After describing the return of the saint from Edessa (where Mashtots had created the Armenian alphabet), and after relating the story of the completion of the translation of the Bible, Koriun says:

The new converts were not being led to a Christian life, because they had no direct access to the Word of God in their own language. They knew of the Bible, but they did not know the Bible.

“At that time, our blessed and desirable country of Armenia became surely an admirable land. For here, at the hands of the two equals [i.e., St. Sahak and St. Mesrob], Moses the law-teacher, together with the ranks of the Prophets, and Paul the forward-looking Apostle, together with the band of the Apostles and with the world-sustaining Gospel of Christ, all suddenly found themselves to be speaking Armenian.

“What a heart-filled joy! What a beautiful sight to behold! A whole people who had not even known the names of the places where the marvelous divine deeds had been accomplished, suddenly, all at once, became aware of all events: not only those that had happened in the course of time, but those that occurred before time, in eternity, and those yet to come as well—those of the beginning and those of the end, and all the God-given traditions.” [Korium, *The Life of Mashtots*.]

The second illustration is provided by Lazarus of Pharbi (Ghazar Parbetsi), known as the most reliable historian of the fifth century. Writing about the events immediately following the translation of the Scriptures,

he says: “Schools were at once opened for the instruction of the written Armenian language; copyists increased in number and competed with each other; Church services were enriched, and multitudes of men and women were spiritually nourished at the feasts of the Lord and at the commemoration of the martyrs. Those who were filled with spiritual benefits by the great mystery of the Eucharist went forth to their homes, old and young alike, singing responsively psalms and spiritual songs in the streets, in the public places, and in their dwellings. Churches prospered; chapels dedicated to the martyrs flourished; streams of expository preaching flowed unceasingly from the commentators who, bringing to light what was hidden in the words of the Prophets, prepared tables of spiritual food for the enjoyment of the people of God, according to the Psalmist who says: *sweeter than honey and drippings of the honeycombs*. In one word, Armenia was filled with the knowledge of God as the water that covers the sea. [Ghazar Parbetsi, *History of the Armenians*.]

Indeed, the translation of the Bible generated within the Armenian people an entire transfiguration or transformation whose benefits were felt not only in the fifth century but also in subsequent centuries. The whole of Armenian literature—it would not be an exaggeration to say the whole of Armenian culture—was deeply affected, not only in linguistic and literary ways, but also and particularly in psychological, intellectual and spiritual ways. In the words of a famous Armenian scholar, the historian and Byzantinist N. Adontz: “The Latin Vulgate did not have the same importance to the Latin countries as the Armenian Bible did to the Armenian people. Latin literature had been in existence for a long time when the Vulgate appeared; whereas the Armenian Bible inaugurated the beginnings of a new era in which the Armenian people, learning for the first time the use of the pen, came to take their place in world civilization.”

In the entire classical literature of Armenia, one can see the predominant influence of the Bible. Not only did it herald the dawn of Armenian literature as such, but it also became the inspiration for the whole course of that literature for many centuries afterwards.

Between both the aristocrats and the less privileged classes of the Armenian people, the Bible enjoyed the

greatest prestige and authority. The people in the parishes could recite psalms by heart, and the nobles could discuss religious and philosophical problems with constant reference to the Bible. Until the twelfth century, priests had to learn all 150 Psalms by heart. The study of the Bible, particularly its exegesis, flourished as a branch of higher education. The largest number of surviving Armenian manuscripts are Bibles in integral text or as separate books—mostly New Testaments and Psalms. Princes and princesses were generous in sponsoring the preparation of copies of the Holy Scriptures and distributing them to monasteries throughout Armenia. A fourteenth-century Armenian historian, Stepanos Orebelian, tells us that in one single province of Armenia, Siunik, more than ten thousand “testaments” (Old and New) were seized, scattered or destroyed, when the Seljuk invaders occupied the province and destroyed the fortress of Baghabert in 1170. It was at the well-defended fortress of Baghabert—with its geographically secure and unapproachable location—that the holy relics, the manuscripts, the church vestments, vessels and other sacred objects of the monasteries of the surrounding neighborhood had been assembled for safekeeping and protection.

To give an idea of the attitude of the ordinary people of Armenia towards the Bible, let me bring to your attention a colophon copied from a Bible

manuscript in a village church in the province of Sebastia. The manuscript itself is now lost or destroyed; but at the end of the text, the copyist tells the following story: “Four brothers inherited a house from their fathers. It could be divided into only three sections. But the father had also left a Bible, which was considered to be a fourth share of the whole legacy. When the brothers cast lots, he who received the Bible felt himself the most fortunate, and was envied by the other three....”

The Bible in Worship

One of the greatest gifts God grants to Christians is the ability to worship Him. We cannot worship Him with purely our own meager human resources. To worship God—that is, to unite with Him—we need His grace.

If the ultimate end of Christian worship is union with God—and this is one of the most salient aspects of

A church without the bible in the hands of her faithful could neither stand very long nor remain very firm in the midst of a pagan world. The Armenian Church fathers were deeply conscious of the urgent need for an Armenian translation of the Bible. But at this time, no Armenian alphabet existed.

the theological thought of the Eastern churches—we can easily understand why the Word of God has enjoyed a position as the supreme object of veneration in the Eastern liturgical traditions, including that of the Armenian Church.

Originally, as in many Eastern churches, the liturgical texts of the Armenian Church were confined to the vocabulary of the Bible. Worship was such a sacred act that words of purely human origin were thought to be inadequate. Early liturgical prayer consisted of the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms and Scriptural passages. These remained the basic structural elements in Armenian liturgy throughout the course of its development.

The liturgy of the Armenian Church, as shaped in its fundamental components during the fifth century, maintained that same tradition; and even in its present elaborate form, the liturgical passages taken from the Holy Scriptures are quite extensive. The Old Testament is read every Sunday, preceding the readings from the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles and the Gospel. All of the Old Testament books are used, except for Judges, First Chronicles, First and Second Esdras, Nehemiah, Ruth, Tobit, and Second and Third Maccabees. Next to the Psalms, most of the selections read are from the books of Genesis, Exodus, Proverbs, Job, and the Prophets (especially Isaiah).

All of the New Testament is read, and the Gospels are read in their entirety more than once a year. During Holy Week and the fifty days following Easter, the Scriptural readings are intensified more than at any other time during the liturgical year.

Certain liturgical practices also emphasize this attitude of reverence towards the Word of God. At particular times during the eucharistic liturgy or other church services, the Book of the Holy Gospel, which is always touched with a piece of clean cloth, is held up high by the priest in an act of exaltation and veneration. Every time a priest, a deacon, or a choir member enters the chancel in the church, he kisses the Book of the Gospel, which is always laid exposed on the *bema* of the altar. The Gospel is also permanently displayed on the altar table. At the conclusion of church services, and before leaving the sanctuary, members of the congregation approach the priest, who presents them with the Book of the Gospel for blessing. The priest sometimes gives the blessing by using the Holy Gospel.

Of course, all of these acts have a symbolic meaning: they eloquently and suggestively signify the spiritual reverence of the Armenian people towards the Holy Bible. The power of God's Word is thus recognized in a liturgical act. As I indicated above, the term "The Breath of

God" used by the Armenians for the Bible is not just a name: it expresses an inner attitude that is made manifest in the liturgical experience, the very heart of the people's spiritual life.

The Bible is not a precious book in the sense that it contains truths conceived and formulated by highly talented people of great genius. It is the Holy Book because the Holy God has revealed Himself in words and deeds, which have been recorded in the Bible by men in communion with Him and under His divine guidance and inspiration. His power is there in the Book. Through the use of the Bible in the worship of the Church we are not merely instructed intellectually in the Christian truth, but are touched by the power of God—the Breath of God.

The Bible Today

Unfortunately, for much of the present century, the historic influence of the Bible on the life of the Armenian people endured a rather discouraging period—mostly due to the indescribable persecutions and vicissitudes suffered by the Armenian nation in recent history.

However, during the past generation there have been positive signs of a genuine awareness of the need for reinstating the Bible's historical place in the Armenian Church, and for rediscovering and reviving the spiritual wealth of the Bible in the life of the Armenian people. The younger generation of clergy—who are being trained in the seminaries, where Biblical studies are receiving more and more attention—and the Sunday Schools—where the Bible is regularly read and studied—will hopefully be the main instruments for renewing the Biblical tradition in the Armenian Church in this century.

And here arises one of the thorniest problems faced by the Armenian Church: What is the proper form for this revival? Should we adopt the methods and principles of our Western brethren, or return to the early tradition of the Armenian Church? Neither of these ways is really possible or advisable. We cannot overlook the changes that have taken place in the life of our people of today; nor can we disregard the valid aspects of our tradition, which for centuries has kept alive the Word of God in the life of the people.

The way that I consider the best—the most healthy, productive and beneficial—involves reviving the ancient method of making the treasures of the Bible come to life again in new terms that are (a) compatible with the fundamental theology of the Church, and (b) relevant for the actual life of men and women of today. It seems to be that the Word of God should be perceived and received within the framework of the life of the Church, where the text found its original shape and true meaning. The

Word of God is an integral part of the life of the Church, for it is the Breath of God.

Our forefathers have given us a golden rule to this effect. From the fifth century, they have bequeathed to us the most illuminating guideline in our approach to the Bible. They have solemnly proclaimed that, “we recognize the Holy Gospel as our Father, and the apostolic universal church as Mother.” [The History of Vartan and the Armenian War, by Yeghishe Vartabed, translated by R. W. Thomson.]

The Bible and the Church cannot be separated. They have *never* been separated. In my understanding of the historical experience of the Church and of the present-day predicament of our Christian engagement, the Bible must be understood and lived in the context of *the whole life of the Church*—namely, in the inter-related fields of Christian thought and witness: theology, spirituality, liturgy, mission and service. ❖

This essay is based on a lecture delivered by V. Rev. Fr. Karekin Sarkisian to a Bible conference in Jerusalem in 1962. At that time he was the Dean of the Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon. He went on to hold the two highest positions within the hierarchy of the Armenian Church as Catholicos Karekin II of the Holy See of Cilicia, and Catholicos Karekin I of the Holy Mother See of Etchmiadzin. The unedited text was published in the volume, In Search of Spiritual Life, by the Cilician See, Antelias, Lebanon in 1991. An edited version was published in Challenge to Renewal, by the Diocese of the Armenian Church in 1996.

Millennium Celebration of the book called *The Narek*.

Prayer 85

Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart,

And now, since our waking vigilance
appears like some kind of stupor to you
and our profound silence, owing to our orthodox faith in you,
seems to you sleeping with open eyes,
direct me with your Holy Spirit's wisdom
to finish this the work of my hands
and have you hear prayers of my sighing voice.

Strengthen me, Lord, in my courageous labors
To fight the good fight.
Be my aid against human frailty.
Lighten the task of my repentance, for it has only just begun.
Quicken, always capable Lord, the work I have set before me.
Ease the course to its conclusion.
Help me achieve the bliss of accomplishment.
Help me reach the destination I hope for.
Be my companion through the end of my journey.

In my ascending flight, speed me on the course toward the good.
Be at my right side when I am in danger.
Make your voice heard in my time of need.
Grant me life with your hand in the hour of my death.
Intervene with your finger in my time of alarm.
Level the most harmful obstacles of alienation.
Send an angel, as you did to Habbakuk, to help me.
Inspire my speech before the tribunal of judgment.
Plant wisdom in me when I am being scrutinized.
With the cloud of your will miraculously protect me.
Calm my stormy seas with your tree of life, the cross.
By your command, bridle my earthly impulses.
For if your mercy will its, Lord,
the fluid waves of the sea will become harder than stone.
And if you abandon me on dry land, Lord,
the earth upon which I stand will move
and crumble beneath me.

This year the Armenian Church is celebrating the 1,000 anniversary of the Book of Lamentations (The Narek), by St. Gregory of Narek. The work is considered to be the masterpiece of Armenian Christian literature, and has been a source of comfort and inspiration for one thousand years. This translation of Prayer 85 is by Thomas J. Samuelian from his book, *St. Grigor Narekatsi: Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart*. The book is available at the Prelacy Bookstore.



News from the Catholicosate

Thanksgiving Service on the 8th Anniversary Of Consecration and Enthronement of Aram I

Special Thanksgiving services were held on Sunday, June 29, in all the dioceses of the Holy See of Cilicia in celebration of the 8th anniversary of the consecration and enthronement of His Holiness Aram I. After the Divine Liturgy, the congregation gathered in the main hall of the Catholicosate where His Holiness thanked the members of the brotherhood and all those present for their commitment and good wishes. "Anniversaries should not be occasions to praise leaders but should serve as moments of accountability to God and to the people," His Holiness said.

Graduation Ceremony at Seminary

Catholicos Aram I presided over the Cilician Seminary's graduation services on June 20, in Bikfaya, Lebanon. Seminary students presented a short program, which included readings from the Holy Gospel and from the Nareg Book of Prayers, followed by Liturgical and Armenian folk songs. The dean of the Seminary, Rev. Fr. Barteve Gulumian, presented a detailed report on the achievements of the past academic year.

Cilician Seminary in Renovation

Thanks to a special grant of \$125,000(US) from the Armenian department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Cilician See's Theological Seminary located in Bikfaya, Lebanon, is undergoing an overall renovation. Built in 1983, the building, which includes classrooms, dormitories, dining rooms, study rooms, offices, has never undergone major renovation. The work will be completed well before classes resume in the fall. The Seminary continues to play a significant and vital role in the life of the

Church. "The Seminary is more than ever conscious of its engagement in the life and witness of the Armenian Orthodox Church," said His Holiness. "The preparation of committed and visionary clergy is and must remain a top priority for the Armenian Church."

His Holiness thanked the Caloust Gulbenkian Foundation, community members and benevolent organizations for their continued encouragement and support.

James Miller, Producer of "Armenia: the Betrayed" Is Decorated Posthumously

James Miller, a journalist who died recently while



His Holiness washes the feet of a seminarian, symbolizing the act of Christ washing the feet of His disciples, during Holy Week.

preparing a documentary in the Middle East, was posthumously awarded the Mesrob Mashdotz Medal by His Holiness Aram I. His Holiness said, "The tragic death of James Miller filled me with profound sorrow. Indeed, his death was a great loss not only for British journalism, but for international journalism. James Miller was not an ordinary journalist; he was a man of profound faith, firm commitment and clear vision. One of his latest documentaries,

entitled, *Armenia: the Betrayed*, was an eloquent expression of the human and moral values and principles that marked his work. While preparing that documentary last year, he interviewed me and during the interview he confirmed his strong belief that one cannot ignore the collective memory of a people. He was firmly convinced that confession is the only way towards forgiveness and reconciliation.... The Armenian people will cherish his memory for his commitment to searching out and then communicating the truth of the Armenian Genocide.... May God bless his soul. May God spiritually strengthen his family, colleagues and friends."

Aram I Calls for Religions to Work Together for Peace

In his Easter message addressed to the heads of churches and religious leaders, His Holiness Aram I made a strong call to work for peace. He said, "Working for peace means working for justice; working for peace means struggling for human dignity and reconciliation; working for peace means achieving a quality of life where spiritual and moral values are given concrete expressions; working for peace means developing a model of society where God's diversities are respected and enhanced. The world needs a peace that is sustained by these values and this vision."

V. Rev. Fr. Krikor Chiftjian Receives

Rank of Archimandrite (*Dzayrakooyñ Vartabed*)

Rev. Fr. Krikor Chiftjian, Media Relations Officer of the Catholicosate, received the rank of Archimandrite at the hands of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I. During the ceremony the Pontiff questioned the candidate on his confession of faith and on his Orthodox doctrinal and canonological beliefs. Fr. Krikor then read the Confession of Faith as a testimony to his unshaken faith and his confession of the Mother Apostolic Church.

Members of Cilician Brotherhood

Continue University Studies

Aram I continues to give great importance to the intellectual growth of the members of the Brotherhood, and follows their course of study and advancement.

His Holiness is pleased to announce that V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, after years of hard work, graduated with distinction with a PhD from Columbia University in New York.

V. Rev. Vaghinag Meloyan returned to Antelias after two years of study at Pittsburgh Seminary where he followed Biblical Studies.

Bishop Nareg Amezian continues his doctoral studies at Vancouver Reformed Seminary.

V. Rev. Fr. Nersess Merdjanian is studying church history at Salamanca University in Spain.

V. Rev. Fr. Massis Zobouyan is studying dogmatic theology at the University of Strasbourg.

V. Rev. Fr. Krikor Chiftjian is following a special course of studies in the English language in Geneva.

International Women's Mission Conference

A conference on "Women in Mission" took place in Bossey, Switzerland, under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. The conference brought together participants from various church traditions from forty

countries. His Holiness appointed Mrs. Nora Bayrakdrian-Kabakian, a lecturer at the University of Lebanon, as representative of the Cilician See. The conference evaluated the importance of mission in the life of churches and peoples, stressing in particular the unique role of women in the educational and social sphere of service.

Atom Egoyan and Arsinee Khanjian Honored

On June 30th, His Holiness awarded the "Cilician Order" to the internationally acclaimed filmmaker, Atom Egoyan, and the distinguished actress, Arsinee Khanjian. The Catholicos praised the film Ararat calling it a "living testimony" of the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian Cause.

Catholicos Aram Meets with Youth

At a youth gathering organized by the Armenian Church University Association in Antelias, Lebanon, His Holiness Aram I addressed a number of critical issues and challenges facing the youth. His Holiness first emphasized the pivotal role of youth in the life of societies spelling out the characteristic features of the contribution that youth can bring to the progress of a society. "I will never accept the youth to be on the periphery of society. I will never accept to see the youth in a passive state, as observers and followers. By youth I understand engagement, participation, commitment, vision, leadership. It is my firm expectation that youth participates actively and responsibly in community life, with this self understanding," His Holiness said.

WCC Delegate in Antelias

His Holiness Aram I received World Council of Churches (WCC) delegate, Rev. Dr. Georges Tsetsis, in the first of a series of meetings between the WCC and spiritual heads in the Middle East. They discussed the WCC Executive Committee's decision to relocate the Geneva-based Middle East office in the region. This decision was made in order to facilitate communication between the WCC and its member churches and the regional council, and in order for the Office to be able to respond appropriately to the needs of the region. The work of this office involves regional networking and advocacy, mediating between communities and regions in conflict, and helping churches to act as responsible partners in society. By being based locally, the office will be able to build solidarity inside the region and between the regions more effectively. ❖

C R S S R O A D S

A R e v i e w o f P r e l a c y a n d P a r i s h A c t i v i t i e s

[For more information and photographs on most of the items listed please visit the Prelacy's web site, www.armenianprelacy.org].

Reception for Armenia's UN Ambassador

Armen Martirosian, the new Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations, was introduced to a small gathering of community leaders on June 27. Ambassador Martirosian replaces the former ambassador, Movses Abelian, who has accepted an administrative position with the UN. Prior to this post, Ambassador Martirosian served as Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister. He was also a two-term member of Armenia's Parliament.

Archbishop Oshagan welcomed all of the guests and told the Ambassador, "The Prelacy is prepared to help you and the Mission to the best of our ability."

Ambassador Martirosian addressed the gathering with words of thanks for the warm hospitality offered to him. He expressed the importance and value of Armenia's participation in the United Nations.



Ambassador Armen Martirosian, the new Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations, addresses the guests during a reception at the Prelacy on June 27. From left to right, Dr. Movses Abelian, former Ambassador to the United Nations, and now Secretary of Administrative and Budgetary Committee and Committee for Program Coordination; Archbishop Oshagan, Prelate; Ambassador Martirosian; Rev. Fr. Unzag Nalbandian, pastor of the Church of the Holy Ascension, Trumbull, Connecticut, representing His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church; and V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar General of the Prelacy.

Martyrs Day Commemorations

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan participated in several commemorative events on the occasion of the 88th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

On April 24th in the New York City offices of Governor George Pataki, His Eminence offered the invocation for the Martyrs' Day proclamation ceremony hosted by the Governor.



Archbishop Oshagan delivering the invocation at the April 24th Commemoration in Times Square.

In his prayer, His Eminence, said: "Lord, we ask You to be mindful of Your faithful servants, the Armenian people, who for 88 Aprils have lived with the memory of the mass murder of one and one half million of their nation. The pain of the deep wounds in our hearts remain fresh and agonizing because the truth of our sojourn into the valley of the shadow of death continues to be denied by the descendants of the perpetrators. But, our faith in You remains unshaken for we know that You are the only one who can replace darkness with light, conquer deceit with truth, bring hope instead of despair, inspire love instead of hate, give courage instead of fear, and spread kindness instead of cruelty."

On April 25th, His Eminence attended Martyrs' Day ceremony at the New York City Council Chambers and offered the opening prayers, which said in part, "We honor the memory of our one-and-one-half million martyrs whose faith in You transcended their earthly life. We gain strength from the survivors whose numbers dwindle each year. Nevertheless, they continue to reinforce our resolve and determination. We live to carry on their dreams, to continue their labor, and perpetuate their spirit. And in doing so, we honor all survivors of tyranny everywhere."

On April 27th, at the Times Square commemoration organized by the Knights of Vartan, His Eminence said, "Bless this gathering and all those in attendance. May Your loving favor rest upon those who have assumed roles of leadership that they may walk in the paths of righteousness as they fulfill their service for the citizens of this great nation of the United States of America.

Make them instruments of Your love and teachings so that all of Your children may live in freedom and righteousness and enjoy Your blessings forever.”

Senator Bayh Meets with Armenian Community in New York City



New York's Governor Pataki issues a proclamation each year for April 24th. In his New York offices, left to right, Ambassador Moses Abelian, Armenia's representative to the United Nations, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church, Governor Pataki, Most Rev. Manuel Batakian, Exarch for Armenian Catholics in the US and Canada and Archbishop Oshagan.

Armenians from the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area participated in a luncheon/reception for Senator Evan Bayh on July 1, at the New York offices of Robert Setrakian, who opened the program by explaining the importance of the gathering, noting to the Senator that Armenian American had “organized this meeting to say thank you and to show our appreciation for all you have done for Armenian American issues to date, and



Attending the luncheon/reception honoring Senator Evan Bayh, from left to right, Archbishop Oshagan Chobolyan, Senator Bayh, Ambassador Armen Martirosian, and Aram Hamparian.

more importantly, to talk about ways in which we can strengthen our relationship.”

Mr. Setrakian introduced several prominent individuals and leaders of the Armenian American community in attendance, including the Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, Archbishop Oshagan Chobolyan; Armenia's newly appointed Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Armen Martirosian; Chairperson of the ANC of New Jersey Kim Arzoumanian; Chairperson of the ANC of New York Tony Vartanian; Executive Director of the ANCA Aram Hamparian; ANCA Government Affairs Director Abraham Niziblian; Senior Editor of the Armenian Reporter International Edward Boghosian; and Board Member of the Near East Foundation Antranig Sarkissian.

Senator Bayh is a first-term Democratic Senator from Indiana.

National Association of Ladies Guilds Presents Mid-Atlantic Regional Seminar



The NALG Regional Seminar featured Florence Avakian (left) and Sue Aramian.

The National Association of Ladies Guilds (NALG) presented its annual regional seminar on April 5 at the Prelacy. Featured speakers were Sue Aramian and Florence Avakian.

Ms. Aramian, a founder and Managing General Partner of Kelly and Partners, Ltd., spoke about her career as well as her philanthropy, along with her sisters, in establishing a Child Care Center and Senior Center in Armenia.

Ms. Avakian presented her experiences as a freelance journalist and an accredited United Nations correspondent for the last twenty years. She provided interesting insights about her interviews with world leaders.

The all-day seminar included morning and afternoon sessions with a lunch break hosted by the Prelacy Ladies Guild.

Paintings of Laura Avetisyan Shown at the Prelacy



Laura Avetisyan presents a gift to Archbishop Oshagan.

An exhibition of the works of artist Laura Avetisyan took place at the Prelacy under the sponsorship of the New York Hamazkayin. Proceeds of the event benefited the St. Illuminator's Day School in Woodside, New York. The opening reception on May 22 brought together a large and enthusiastic group of individuals from the metropolitan area.

Racine Community Welcomes New Pastor



The Racine community welcomed their new pastor on May 12. Front row, left to right, Chris Kalvonjian, Archbishop Oshagan, Rev. Fr. Arsen Kassabian. Standing, left to right, Sarkis Sarkisian, Sarkis Buchaklian, Levon Saryan, Paul Mahdasian, Julie DerGarabedian, John Buchaklian

Mother's Day weekend of 2003 will be remembered as the beginning of a new era for the St. Hagop Church community of Racine, Wisconsin. Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan introduced the parish's new pastor, Rev. Fr. Arsen Kassabian and his family, to the members of the parish.

On Sunday, May 12 Archbishop Oshagan celebrated the Divine Liturgy and was assisted at the altar by Rev. Fr. Arsen Kassabian and Rev. Fr. Arshag Daghljan who served the Racine community for many years as an outreach priest.

Following church services a luncheon, prepared by the church auxiliary, was served. The short program that followed was guided by the chairman of the Board of Trustees, Chris Kalvonjian who welcomed His Eminence and described the day as a new page in the history of the St. Hagop Church.

Representatives of various organizations welcomed Der Arsen and his family to the community. They also offered thanks to Der Arshag for serving as an outreach priest since 1983.

In his comments, the Prelate also thanked Der Arshag describing him as a "loyal soldier" of the church. His Eminence also paid tribute to all the mothers in attendance.

Der Arsen thanked everyone who graciously helped him and his family to become accustomed to their new surroundings.

On Saturday evening Archbishop Oshagan and Rev. Fr. Arsen attended the year-end program of the Marzbed Armenian School. His Eminence congratulated the students for a well-organized program and had special words of praise for the teachers, Lara Kazarian, Silva Mikaelian, Holly and Zohrab Khaligian.

Mrs. Valentine Pagoumian Receives Mother of the Year Honor



Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan presents the Mother of the Year Award to Mrs. Valentine Pagoumian during the annual Prelacy Ladies Guild's Mothers' Day luncheon. His Eminence introduced Mrs. Pagoumian as "an unsung heroine of the Armenian Genocide, an exemplary believer, and good mother." The Prelate paid tribute to the Pagoumian family, many of whom were in attendance to witness this tribute. The luncheon and fashion show took place at The Pierre in New York City.

V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian is Awarded Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Columbia

After many years of concentrated effort while serving as a full time priest to a large congregation, Vicar General of the Eastern Prelacy, and chairman of the Prelacy's Religious Council, V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian was conferred with the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degree from Columbia University in May.

His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate, attended the commencement exercises and offered his heartfelt congratulations and admiration.

"Others in his circumstances would have just given up," said the Prelate, "but Hayr Anoushavan persevered and in spite of a 'double time plus' schedule he succeeded in completing his studies and his dissertation and graduated with very high distinction."

Following His Calling

V. Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian was born in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1951. From an early age he showed interest in religion and church. He attended the Cilician Theological Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon, from 1963 to 1971. He was ordained to the rank of Deacon in 1968 by Bishop Karekin Sarkisian, to the rank of celibate priesthood by Archbishop Ardag Manougian in 1972. He was bestowed with the Fourth Degree of Vartabed in 1974 by His Holiness Catholicos Khoren I and the Fourteenth Degree of Vartabed in 1988 by Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian. In 1996 he was given the honor to wear the Episcopal Mitre on Feast Days by His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Hayr Anoushavan's service to the Armenian Church spans more than three decades. At the Catholicosate in Antelias he served as Librarian, Lecturer at the Seminary, Staffbearer to His Holiness Karekin II, and he represented the Catholicosate at various ecumenical meetings

throughout the world. His published articles include the translation of the works of Armenian Church Fathers from classical Armenian into modern Armenian and he was the editor of the "Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Catholicosate of Cilicia."

He has degrees from the Near East School of Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Columbia University. He defended his Ph.D dissertation, "Archbishop Nerses Lambronatzi's Commentary on the Wisdom of

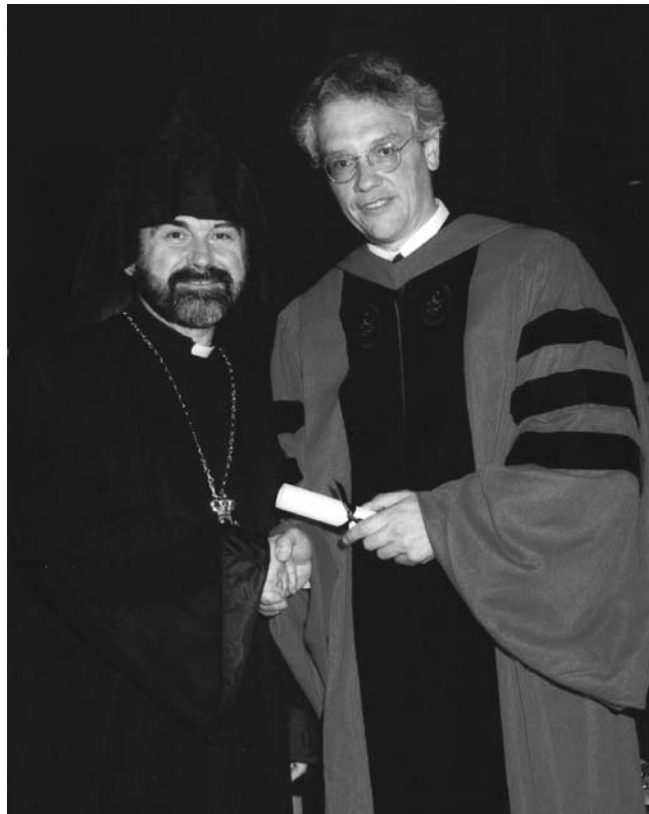
Solomon," on May 6 and shortly thereafter received notification of his success. Henry Pinkham, Dean of Columbia's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, wrote: "I note with special pleasure that your examining committee has unanimously designated your dissertation 'with distinction,' which places you among a highly select group of Columbia scholars."

Furthering Studies in U.S.

Arriving in the United States to pursue higher education at Princeton Theological Seminary, Hayr Anoushavan served as preacher at St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Philadelphia from 1984 to 1987, Sts. Vartanantz Church, New Jersey, 1987 to

1988, and St. Sarkis Church, Douglaston, from 1989 to 1991. He was Founder and Director of the St. Gregory of Datev Institute since 1987 and an instructor of religion at the Siamanto Academy and the Hovnanian Armenian School.

In September 1991, Hayr Anoushavan was assigned to serve as pastor of St. Sarkis Church in Douglaston, New York, a parish he continues to serve to this day. He was elected to serve as chairman of the Prelacy's Religious Council in 1994 and in 1995 was appointed Vicar



V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian receives his degree from Dr. Henry Pinkham, Dean of the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Columbia University.

General of the Eastern Prelacy.

As pastor of St. Sarkis Church, V. Rev. Tanielian has strengthened the parish and created activities beneficial to the parish's growth and advancement. His wisdom in these matters is best seen by the extra efforts he has made to two specific groups—seniors and the youth and young and old have responded with unbounded love and admiration. His leadership has made St. Sarkis one of the most active, most effective parishes within the Eastern Prelacy.

His goals for nearly three decades have always been to serve the Armenian people and its many spiritual, cultural, and intellectual needs. Today, Hayr Anoushavan continues to lead the St. Sarkis Church with stronger dedication and commitment to God and to the Armenian Church and nation. His spiritual nature, inspiring sermons and dedicated leadership in bringing about innovative programs have transformed St. Sarkis congregation into a committed and growing community.

Parish Honors Its Shepherd

True to form, Hayr Anoushavan shunned any celebration for his educational achievement, save one: If it would benefit the parish.

On Sunday, June 29, a capacity crowd filled the St. Sarkis church hall, including a busload of parishioners from St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Philadelphia, a parish that Hayr Sourp served years ago as preacher.

Archbishop Oshagan in very poignant language and demeanor spoke about his first meeting with Hayr Sourp when they were both students in the Cilician Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon. He remembered Hayr Sourp as the student who spent the most time reading and studying, the student who had already become dedicated to his church and people.

Professor Peter Cowe, now holder of the Narekatsi Armenian Studies Chair at the University of California (Los Angeles), who guided Hayr Anoushavan at Columbia University, was on hand to offer his words of congratulations. He told the audience that the title "Vartabed" (Archimandrite) is actually equivalent to the doctoral degree on the university level. Thus, said Professor Cowe, Hayr Sourp is now the holder of double degrees. Dr. Cowe also spoke about the great value of Father Tanielian's dissertation on Nerses of Lampron. "I hope to see it in print sometime soon," he said.

For his part, Hayr Anoushavan in his genuine humble manner gave abundant praise and recognition to the communities he served and especially St. Sarkis Church for helping him grow as a pastor.

For photographs of the luncheon tribute go to the Prelacy's web site, www.armenianprelacy.org ❖



*St. Nerses of Lambron
1153-1198*

V. Rev. Father Anoushavan Tanielian's doctoral dissertation is on St. Nerses of Lambron, specifically his "Commentary on the Wisdom of Solomon."

Nerses Lambronatzi was a twelfth century theologian and author (1153-1198) who lived in Cilicia, at the crossroads of the East-West trade route on the silk road and a meeting place for many cultures. St. Nerses had close contacts with Syriac, Greek and Latin traditions. Scholars around the world have studied his works, which had great impact on following generations.

Hayr Sourp says that he chose the Commentary on the Wisdom of Solomon, for two reasons: the personality of the author and the nature of his work. Nerses of Lambron was a unique individual. Like his namesake, Catholicos Nerses the Great, he was a man of intellect, compassion and was particularly adept at negotiations. Like the Holy Translators, he was open-minded in borrowing from the achievements of fellow Christians in order to enrich the Armenian heritage. Only 45 years old when he died, nevertheless he left behind valuable theological, exegetical and spiritual works. The nature of this commentary—wisdom, righteousness, and justice—also prompted Hayr Sourp to choose this work as the focus of his dissertation.

Prelacy Debuts Vartan Gregorian Memoir to Enthusiastic and Overflow Audience

by Florence Avakian

Wendell Phillips has said, “Our self-made men are the glory of our institutions.” This certainly defines Vartan Gregorian who rose from humble roots to become one of the most acclaimed and powerful figures in the American academic, literary, cultural and charitable worlds, a personality who truly symbolizes the American dream.

On June 2, the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church and its Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan sponsored an “Intimate Evening with Vartan Gregorian” at the Century Club in New York, to pay tribute to him, and introduce his new memoir, entitled, *The Road to Home: My Life and Times*, recently published by the prestigious company, Simon & Schuster.



Carnegie S. Calian, President of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, congratulates Vartan.

Guests of honor attending the special event included Armenia’s Ambassador to the United States Arman Kirakossian; Ambassador Movses Abelian; Near East Foundation officials President Emeritus Richard Robarts, President Dr. Ryan LaHurd, and Director of Development Simon O’Rourke; St. Vladimir, and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary Professor Thomas E. Bird, and members of Dr. Gregorian’s family-wife Clare (Russell) Gregorian, their three sons, Vahe, Raffi, Dareh-Ardashes, and niece Ani and Raffi Sahakian.



With sponsors and friends, left to right, Arshag Tarpinian, Hilde Hornanian, Shant Hornanian, Archbishop Oshagan, Vartan, Arman Kirakossian, Takoubi Tarpinian, and Professor Thomas Bird.

Following a sumptuous cocktail reception, Professor Hratch Zadoian, Vice President of Queens College of the City University of New York, welcomed the more than 200 attendees. He called *The Road to Home* a travel book through different worlds, from Vartan Gregorian’s family in Tabriz with his “extraordinary” grandmother Voski Mirzaian; to his education in Beirut, the United States and



Martin and Anig Nalbandian sharing a moment of merriment with Vartan.

Afghanistan; his encounters with the legendary leader Simon Vratzian, the Prime Minister of the Independent Armenian Republic of 1918, who regarded him like a son; and finally his distinguished career as President of three

eminent institutions—the New York Public Library, Brown University, and currently at the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

“A great storyteller, Vartan Gregorian brings all these worlds to life in a direct, unadorned style, but with the sense of wonder, the eye for the significant, and with the somewhat mischievous wit which seem to have characterized him all his life,” Professor Zadoian related. “He takes us on his journey of discovery, teaching history, sharing great books, analyzing great ideas, and introducing us to some extraordinary people.” He called the book “a morality tale which teaches us the values of hard work,



More than 200 guests attended the reception and presentation. Left to right, Hasmig Hovnanian, Dr. Moses Abelian, Ambassador Kirakossian, Archbishop Oshagan, and Vabak Hovnanian.

optimism, unqualified gratitude and dedication to others, and that success is the best revenge over deceit and adversity. It is the quintessential American story of offering opportunity to the immigrant who in turn enriches this nation.”

In summary, Professor Zadoian eloquently said, “It is Vartan Gregorian’s love song to America in the lilting tones of an Armenian melody.”

Most Influential Person

Vartan Gregorian, in his talk laced with poignancy, wit, and revealing details, pointed out that he had always protected the privacy of his family and friends, but felt “compelled” to write about them, “in order to preserve their memory.” Focusing most of his address on the “most influential person” in his life, his grandmother, he spoke with warmth of her “boundless love, dedication, care, dignity, comportment and stoicism. As a child, I was allergic to all kinds of authority except hers,” he related.

“Her hard life (the loss of her husband, six children,

a grandson, home and village), her admonitions, and moral instructions taught me a cardinal lesson: anybody can cope with success, but it is how one deals with adversity, failure, and tragedy that reveal one’s true character. And she practiced what she taught.” Through all these tragedies, she remained a “fervent Christian,” believing in the eternal life, weeping privately over the loss of her children. “Her plight broke my heart,” he confessed with obvious emotion.

Another invaluable lesson, he related was that “one has to forgive the transgressor while rejecting the transgression, otherwise, the transgressor would win. Of all her injunctions and advice, I found this one the hardest to practice,” he revealed. Coming from a well-known family, his grandmother, with no schooling, made sure that her remaining three children would be educated, achieving this by working at hard labor jobs, and even selling her valuables to feed them.

Through her, he was introduced to the world of mythology, fantasy, magic, as well as morality and ethics. He was instructed, “to never step on those who are down.” And she was a strict disciplinarian, subjecting the young Vartan to a mouthwash when he uttered Turkish obscenities, and a beating when he stole an egg. Afterwards, both had cried together, which he termed “the sign of ultimate affection”.

Kindness of Strangers

It was obvious from Mr. Gregorian’s eloquent and appreciative address that he owed a great debt of grati-



Takoosh and Arshag Tarpinian enjoy a moment with the guest of honor.

tude to the “kindness of strangers” throughout his life in Iran, France, Lebanon, Brazil and the United States, starting from the age of six in Tabriz when his mother died. Deciding first to be an elementary or high school teacher, he never thought that he would be “the first in

my family to attend a university. And I never imagined that one day I would be a professor and teach in six



Hratch Zadoian, the evening's master of ceremonies, begins his introductory remarks.

different American universities, head two Ivy League universities, and be the "first foreign President of the NY Public Library."

Voicing enthusiastic words of praise for his adopted country, he noted, "I came for knowledge, and instead of a faucet, I was given an hydrant. I've been very lucky because of my friends who protected me. My life has been a strenuous, yet joyous journey, marked by many rebirths and reinventions, and facilitated by opportunity and human generosity," he stated in conclusion as the audience rose to its feet in a standing ovation.

Expressing his appreciation to the honoree, Archbishop Choloyan remarked that *The Road to Home* emphasized three main points. "Besides being an autobiography, it is a history book about Tabriz, the Iranian people. Secondly, it stresses the importance of education, and the importance of pursuing dreams for a better life and future. And finally, it demonstrates the importance of family," he stated with emphasis.

"Vartan's wise grandmother Voski really lived up to her name," the Prelate stated. "She was pure gold, teaching him family values. Though she never read the Bible, she interpreted the Bible. And though she had no degree, she was also a teacher. She symbolizes all our grandmothers, pure, wise women. Through this book, we have learned of Vartan Gregorian's life in this country, and we have to always be aware of the richness of this country." In a closing symbolic gesture, the Prelate presented Mr. Gregorian with a pen, "to sign the books of all the people who are anxiously waiting to meet you."

Among the many celebrities who are well known to Vartan Gregorian, and have commented on this memoir,

probably the eminent writer and commentator Russell Baker has said it best. "The story of Vartan Gregorian's journey from the shabby suburbs of the Garden of Eden to the peak of America's intellectual world is personal memoir at its very best. Gregorian writes with such charm and modesty that it's a pleasure to make his acquaintance."

The elegant tribute to Vartan Gregorian was organized by a hardworking committee chaired by Antranig Sarkissian, with members Conni Alexandrian McDonnell, Alec V. Gevorkyan, Karen M. Jehanian, Sophie Khachatryan, Annita Nerses, Annie Pampanini, Iris Papazian, and Levon Tatevossian.

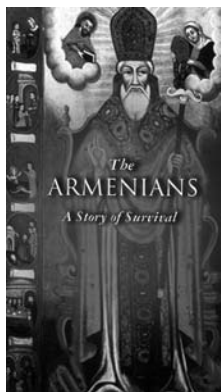
The scope and venue of the event was made possible by the sponsorship of: Mr. & Mrs. Shant and Hilde Hovnanian, Mr. & Mrs. Martin and Anig Nalbandian, and Mr. & Mrs. Arshag and Takouhi Tarpinian. Additional sponsors included: Drs. Seta & Diran Apelian, Ms. Sue Aramian, Dr. & Mrs. George and Tamara Dermksian, Dr. & Mrs. Varant and Ruth Hagopian, Dr. & Mrs. Zareh and Mariam Hovanessian, Ms. Lucy Ishkanian, Mrs. Sosie Kachikian, Mr. & Mrs. Vasken and Anahid Kassabian,



Committee members assist during the book signing. Left to right, Antranig Sarkissian, Vartan Gregorian, Sophie Khachatryan, Annie Pampanini.

Mrs. Anna Kayaloff, Mr. & Mrs. Edward and Shirlee Kerbeykian, Mr. & Mrs. Arto and Boyana Kirikian, Mr. & Mrs. Noubar and Anie Megerian, Dr. and Mrs. Michel and Sonia Nalbantian, Mr. & Mrs. Andrea and Annie Pampanini, Mr. & Mrs. Antranig and Varsenne Sarkissian, Mr. & Mrs. Matthew and Mona Schuster, Mr. & Mrs. Vasken and Sosy Setrakian, the Sudjian Family, Mr. & Mrs. Norik and Rita Tatevossian, Mr. & Mrs. K. Yervant and Helen Terzian, Dr. & Mrs. Asbed and Zabel Vassilian, and the Prudential Foundation. ❖

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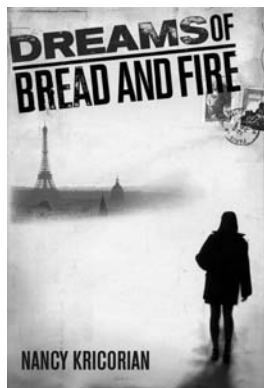
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By Vartan Gregorian

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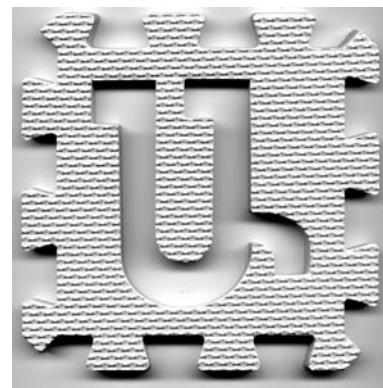
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continued from inside front cover

said to me recently, "You're my best customer."

Well, I do love books. And I love to buy books. Starting with the next issue of *Outreach* I am going to write a monthly column, "I've Been Reading..." and bring to your attention some of the books in the Bookstore. The first column will focus on various "memoirs."

* * *

Speaking of books and memoirs, starting on page 37 is the coverage of the "Intimate Evening with Vartan Gregorian," on the occasion of the publication of his new book, *The Road to Home: My Life and Times*. At that event which took place at the Century Club of New York, Professor Hratch Zadoian, Vice President of Queens College of the City of New York, introduced Vartan. I would like to turn over the rest of "my space" to some of his comments:

"A great story-teller, Vartan Gregorian brings all these worlds to life in a direct, unadorned style, but with the sense of wonder, the eye for the significant and with the somewhat mischievous wit which seem to have characterized him all his life. I would not presume retelling any of the stories, although I will confess to calling friends or family to read aloud passages from the book or to share my excitement at some of his observations.

"Reading about Vartan's childhood in Tabriz, we not only get to know his family, but we are steeped in the lore and the beliefs of that family, we are comforted and taught rules for life by his extraordinary grandmother Voski Mirzaian, we share the Tabriz version of Armenian legends and stories which some of us heard from our own parents and grandparents....

"This is great reading and a lot of fun, in part because of Gregorian's infectious enthusiasm and irrepressible energy. Clearly, this is a man who had a good time even in the most challenging or unpleasant situations. Dealing with some of the less appealing aspects of academic politics, he prevailed as much through his energy and imagination, as through his sense of humor and quick wit....

"In the end, how can I describe this book? It is an Armenian story of displacement, persistence and the importance of dreams; it is the quintessential American story of offering opportunity to the immigrant who in turn enriches this nation; it is a story about transforming adversity into strength, a story about love of books and learning, a story about love of family and people; a story about patriotism as service.... It is Vartan Gregorian's love song to America in the lilting tones of an Armenian melody...."

P.S. It is a good read, and it is available at the Prelacy bookstore. ❖

Prelacy Calendar of Events:

Bible Study at the Prelacy will resume in September. For information: arec@armenianprelacy.org.

Siamanto Academy will begin a new term in September. For information contact Gilda B. Kupelian, Director of the Armenian National Education Committee: anec@armenianprelacy.org.

International Symposium commemorating the life and work of St. Gregory of Narek. Sponsored by the Eastern Prelacy and Harvard University's Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies. Friday and Saturday, October 10-11, 2003, at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Please check the Prelacy website
www.armenianprelacy.org for:

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