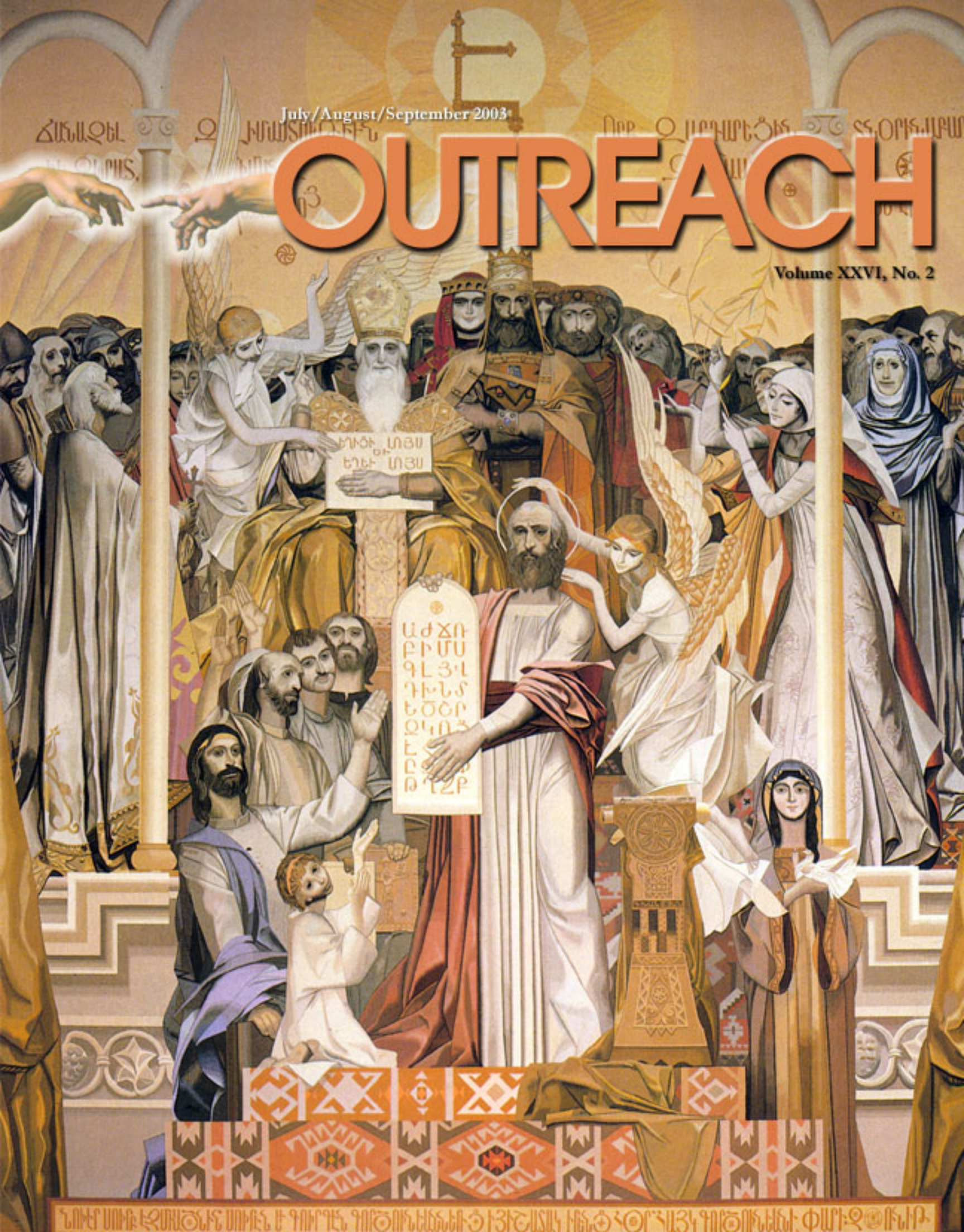


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OUTREACH

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From the Editor

This issue of Outreach is largely devoted to the priesthood. In keeping with this theme I am happy to give up “my space” for the following message by Rev. Fr. Vartan Kassabian, pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, North Andover, Massachusetts.

The Church Must be Faithful to its Mission!

by Rev. Fr. Vartan Kassabian

St. Paul, the Apostle of all nations, reminds the faithful throughout his many Epistles that the Church, although *in* the world can never be *of* the world. Although the Apostle himself lived and preached some two thousand years ago, it seems as if he was not only speaking of the time and place in which he lived. Clearly, the words of St. Paul are even more relevant today than they were some twenty centuries ago! Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ appointed Apostles and sent them to all corners of the earth to preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God. As they traveled from region to region they organized what came to be known as the Church or the Community of God’s Believers!

As we look back at the early Church we see that Our Lord, above all, stressed faithfulness to those who would follow Him. The question we need to ask ourselves today is: Are we as members of the Body of Christ faithful to what we have been called to do? How do we view the Church and what is our understanding of it?

We are not only living in a society which is very materialistic and secular, but also one in which there is no longer a definition of what is right or wrong. It seems that even truths that were once considered to be eternal are now open to debate and come into question. What was once thought to be unthinkable has now become acceptable all in the name of being politically correct!

The Church today in many instances has become somewhat complacent by accepting what goes on in our society rather than trying to influence it. In many cases the Church itself has fallen away from the Gospel mandate given by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest Fathers of the early Church, St. John Chrysostom (Hovhanness Vosgeperan), reminds us in one of his many homilies of just how far we have fallen from what our Lord has called us to be:

“Oh how many are the ways to salvation! He made us His own body, He has given us His own Body, and yet neither of these facts turns us away from evil. Oh the darkness, the abyss of apathy! Set your mind on the things above, where Christ is, enthroned at the right hand of God”.

The Church is eternal because it belongs to none other than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and although our Lord was merciful, forgiving, loving, and compassionate, He was anything but politically correct. He reminds us time and time again that the light can have no relation to the darkness, and that those who believe cannot have anything in common with those who do not!

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Front cover: Holy Translators by Krikor Khanjian.

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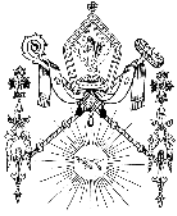
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Առաջնորդ Սրբազան Հօր Խօսքը

«Հունձք ստատ է, բայց մշակները՝ քիչ»:
(Մտ 9:37)

Այսպիսի խօսեցաւ Յիսուս իր աշակերտներուն, երբ տեսաւ յողնած ժողովուրդի բազմութիւնը, որոնք կը նմանէին հովիւ չունեցող ոչխարներու: Աստուծոյ խօսքին ծարաւը, ճշմարիտ եւ ուղիղ քարոզութեան կարիքը, ինչպէս նաեւ գիրենք ճիշդ հունի եւ ուղղութեան մէջ դնող առաջնորդի մը փնտրտուքը կը գսականակէր ժողովուրդը, որպէսզի յագեցում գտնէր այդ ծարաւին, լսէր Աստուծոյ փրկարար խօսքը, դառնար ճշմարտապէս մարդ՝ մարդուն մէջ Աստուծոյ պատկերը ըստ կարելոյն անաղարտ պահելու համար:

Այս հոսանքը եւ ակնկալութիւնը ամէն ատեն եւ ամէն տեղ կայ, ինչպէս կար Քրիստոսի ժամանակ: Ինչպէս այն ատեն, այսօր ալ հսկայական կարիքը կայ իրաւ եւ քաջ հովիւներու, որպէսզի հօտը ցիր ու ցան չլլայ, որպէսզի հօտը կանաչ արօտներու մէջ մակաղի, որպէսզի արդիւնաւորուին հովիւին աշխատանքն ու նուիրուածութիւնը:

Հայց. Եկեղեցին եղաւ եւ մնաց հարազատ մարմինը Քրիստոսի, որ 1700 տարիներէ աւելի ինքզինք նուիրեց իր ժողովուրդին, որ թէ՛ հաւատքով եւ թէ՛ հայու իր հոգիին ընական մղումով ինքզինք միշտ պահեց Քրիստոսի մօտ, հո՛ն, միայն հոն գտնելու պատմութեան խաժամուժին ու չարիքին դիմաց իր փրկութիւնը: Հոգին կռանելով է որ մեր ժողովուրդը իր գոյութիւնը ապահովեց հոգեւոր կեանքի ու խօսքի փրկարար լաստին վրայ:

Մեր ազգային ինքնութեան տապարի ճակատագրական հարուած տուող Ապրիլեան Եղեւնը անգամ մը եւս աննախընթաց տարտղնումի առաջնորդեց մեզ: Ժողովուրդը ջարդուեցաւ, ազգը տեղահան եղաւ իր ընտրանէն: Աղօթքով, խունկով ու մոմով օձուն մեր հողը գրկուեցաւ իր հարազատ տիրոջմէ, ինկանք զանազան ափերու վրայ: Չէր բաւեր այս ազգակոտոր աղէտը, մեր Մայր Հայաստանն այ հա-

մայնավարական բռնատիրութեան տակ ծարաւ մընաց Աստուծոյ: Լռեցին եկեղեցիներու կոչնակներուն դողանջները, աղօթքը դադրեցաւ մեր շուրթներուն վրայ: Յիսուս օտարացաւ:

Փառք Աստուծոյ. որ այսօր ազատ ենք մենք ամէն տեղ: Սակայն արդեօ՞ք ազատութեան մէջ հոգեւոր մեր հօտը կը վայելէ այն բոլոր բարիքներն ու առատութիւնը, որ հոգեւորապէս պէտք է որ բաւարարէ մեզ: Ազատութիւնը մեզ աւելի ցրուած է, անհոգութիւնը մեզ կը կրծէ քաղցիկի պէս, օտարամուտ եւ օտարացուցիչ բարքեր կ'աղարտեն մեր հայու ինքնութիւնը, բարոյական փտածութիւնը կը սպաննէ մեր էութիւնը, եւ կը մնանք յողնած ու ցրուած հօտ՝ այս անգամ ամբողջ աշխարհի տարածքին: Բոլոր ժամանակներէ աւելի պէտք ունինք հօտին գուրգուրանք ցուցաբերող քրիստոսատիպ հովիւներու:

Ամերիկայի Միացեալ Նահանգներուն մէջ ալ պատկերը նոյնն է: Հունձքը առատ է, հօտը ցրուած է երկրին ամբողջ տարածքին, յաճախ մնալով անտէր, փորձութեանը մէջ մոլորելու, կորսուելու: Բնակչական տեղաշարժի պատճառով եւ նորեկներու հաստատուելով շրջանները կը տկարանան կամ կը գարգանան: Բոյսը պարագաներուն այ, հովիւին կարիքը կը զգացուի, որուն փնտրտուքին նուիրուած է Ազգային Առաջնորդարանս, լեցնելու համար մեր հաւատացեալները իրենց հայրերու մաքուր հաւատքով, հարստացնելու համար գանոնք ազգային-եկեղեցական ժառանգութեամբ՝ վերստին ընծայելով ապահովութիւնը որպէս ազգ եւ եկեղեցի մարտնչելու, դիմանալու եւ յաղթելու:

Շատ լաւ կը գիտակցինք, որ նման պատասխանատու եւ ղժուարին աշխատանքի համար անհրաժեշտ են տիպար հովիւներ, որոնք գիտնան իրենց կեանքը գոհել ոչխարներուն համար (ՅՏ 10:15): Չորլան վարձկան հովիւներ, այլ քաջ եւ անձնագոհ

հովիւներ, որոնք նման մեր սրբազան Հայրապետներուն, նահատակներուն եւ սուրբերուն, զինուին Քրիստոսով, նմանին Քրիստոսի, գործեն Քրիստոսի պէս:

Նոր պատրաստուելիք հովիւները անհրաժեշտ է որ ունենան բազում առաւելութիւններ: Անոնցմէ կը նշենք ամենէն կարեւորները, որոնց իւրացումով, որոնց մղումով է որ անձը կը դառնայ հոգեւորական, մարդը կը փոխուի Աստուծոյ մարդու, Քրիստոսի եւ ժողովուրդի ծառայի:

1.- ՀԱՒԱՏՔ: Առանց հաւատքի հոգեւորական մը կը դառնայ մեքենայ մը՝ անշունչ, անհոգի: Առանց Աստուծոյ հանդէպ հաւատքին, Աստուծոյ կամքին եւ ծրագիրներուն կատարեալ վստահութեան՝ եկեղեցականը կը սրբապղծ է իր պաշտօնը եւ իր անձը, վստահ եւ նախատինք կը դառնայ իր հաւատացեալներուն: Կոյր մըն է, որ ինքզինք չի կրնար առաջնորդել, ո՛ւր մնաց հօտը: Քրիստոս ամենէն առաջ հաւատք փնտնեց բոլոր անոնց մօտ, որոնք իրեն դիմեցին: Քրիստոս այդ հաւատքին զօրութեամբ հրաշագործեց եւ մեր մէջ ուզեց տեսնել մանանեխի հատիկի մը չափ հաւատք՝ յեռներն իսկ տեղափոխելու ոյժով: Եւ շատ բնական է որ հաւատքով յեցուն հոգեւորականը պիտի կարենայ շարժել սիրտերն ու հոգիները իր հաւատացեալներուն, զանոնք մեղաւոր աշխարհէ ու կեանքէ տեղափոխելու համար Քրիստոսի այգեստանէն ներս, շահելու համար արքայութեան սեղանին վայելքը: Այս հաւատքը պէտք է լոյս կատարեայ, առանց շուքի կամ մշուշի, առանց կասկածի եւ տատամսումի, որպէսզի չըլլայ թէ դէպի Տէրը մեր երթին ընթացքին ընկղմինք, ինչպէս եղաւ պարագան Պետրոս Առաքեալի:

Հաւատքը եկեղեցականին կեանքը պէտք է լոյս, յեցուն, ազդեցիկ եւ վարակիչ՝ իր տոկուն եւ անմեղադրելի նկարագրին, խօսքին, վարքաբարքին եւ գործին մէջէն արտայայտուած: Հաւատքը եկեղեցականին հացն ու ջուրն է: Որովհետեւ «Ան որ ինծի կու գայ՝ ընաւ պիտի չանօթենայ եւ ան որ ինծի կը հաւատայ՝ երբեք պիտի չծարաւնայ» (ՅԷ Յ.35):

2.- ԿՈՉՈՒՄ: Յաճախ նկատի չենք առնել կոչումին զօրութիւնը, որ խորքին մէջ անձի մը դէպի հոգեւորականի կեանք անցնելու աստուածային հրաւերն է: Անիկա Աստուծոյ կանչն է, կոչը, որ կ'ուղղուի իր կեանքը հոգեւորապէս, աստուածավախ ու աստուածապաշտ ապրող անձին: Այդ ձայնը լսելը է՝ ական է, որպէսզի կարենայ հետեւիլ Քրիստոսի: Յի-

սուս ալ իր առաքեալները կանչեց: Այդ կանչին հետեւելով է որ պարզ ձկնորսները դարձան «մարդու որսորդներ», քարոզեցին Աւետարանը ամբողջ աշխարհին՝ փրկութեան առիթ տալով Քրիստոսի ձայնը լսողին:

Եկեղեցականը լսելէ ետք Աստուծոյ կանչը, ընդ առաջելէ ետք անոր, այլեւս կը դառնայ Տիրոջ ձեռքին մէջ այն բարեբար գործիքը, որ իր հաւատացեալներուն հոգիներուն մէջ հրաշք գործելու կարողութիւնը ունի:

3.- ՊԱՏՐԱՍՏՈՒԹԻՒՆ: Իր առաքելութիւնն ու պաշտօնը լաւապէս արժեքներու եւ արդիւնաւորելու համար կարեւոր է հոգեւորականին ուսումնական պատրաստութիւնը եւս: Կարելի է եկեղեցական ըլլալ միայն հաւատք եւ կոչում ունենալով՝ առանց մտաւոր պատրաստութեան: Բայց անկարելի է եկեղեցական ըլլալ միայն ուսումնական ամենաբարձր պատրաստութեամբ՝ առանց հաւատքին եւ կոչումին: Պատրաստութիւնը առիթ կու տայ եկեղեցականին իր պաշտօնը աւելի ազդեցիկ եւ արդիւնաւոր կերպով իրագործելու: Անհրաժեշտ է սորվիլ՝ սորվեցնելու համար: Պէտք է թէ՛ հոգեպէս եւ թէ՛ մտապէս յեցուն յեցնելու համար ուրիշներուն այ հոգին ու միտքը:

Եւ երբ հոգեւորականը կը լսէ Աստուծոյ կանչը, երբ հաւատքին զօրութեամբ ինքզինք կը զօտեպնդէ եւ երբ ասոնց վրայ կ'աւելցնէ սուրբ գրային, պատմական, աստուածաբանական, եկեղեցագիտական, ընկերային եւ հոգեբանական նիւթերու ուսումն ու պատրաստութիւնը, այն ատեն իր առջեւ ծառայութեան դաշտը կը ծաղկի, դէպի Աստուած տանող ճամբան կը լուսաւորուի, ուրկէ ինք եւ իրեն վստահուած հաւատացեալները կը քայեն դէպի Լոյսին աղբիւրը:

Թարգմանչաց վարդապետներու տօնին առիթով քահանայութեան կենսական դերակատարութեան նուիրուած «Outreach»-ի այս թիւը թող հրաւեր մը ըլլայ բոլորիս՝ լսելու Աստուծոյ ձայնը եւ հետեւելու Քրիստոսի: Մեր Տիրոջ հասկացողութեամբ բոլորս այ առաքեալ ենք, բոլորս այ կանչուած ենք Աստուծոյ փառքը յայտարարելու, Աստուծոյ խօսքը քարոզելու եւ Աստուծոյ արքայութեան հաստատումին համար աշխատելու:

Բայց մանաւանդ հրաւեր ըլլայ այն բոլոր երիտասարդներուն, որոնք քահանայութեամբ կ'ուզեն Աստուծոյ արտին մէջ հնձուր դառնալ:



Prelate's Message

*The harvest is plentiful, but the
Laborers are few.
(Matthew 9:37)*

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples when He saw the weary mass of people who appeared to be like sheep without a shepherd. They were thirsty for God's Word, they needed true and straightforward evangelization; they waited for a leader to guide them on the right path to quench their thirst, to hear God's salvational word, and become a true man in God's image, as inalterable as possible.

These currents and expectations are present at all times and all places, just as it was during the time of Christ. Just as then, today also there is an enormous need for true and brave shepherds, so that the flock does not scatter, and the flock feeds in green pastures, and the shepherd labors with fruitful dedication.

As the chief shepherd, Jesus prepared twelve disciples and they in turn made His mission their mission in life in order to prepare shepherds to evangelize God's flock. And in spite of all their efforts and constant labor placed on their shoulders to advance God's work and invite Humankind to take the road toward salvation, the "harvest remained plentiful and the laborers few."

The Armenian Church was and remains the true body of Christ, and for more than 1,700 years it faithfully dedicated itself to its people, and kept itself close to Christ. With the impetus of the natural Armenian spirit it kept itself close to Christ. It is there, and only there, that we can be saved from evil and the vulgarity of history. It was the strength of our people's soul that assured their existence and salvation.

The blow to our nation's existence—the Genocide—once again led us to unprecedented dispersion. The people were slaughtered; the nation was uprooted from its natural habitat. Our land that was consecrated with prayers, incense and candles was deprived of its true masters. We fell upon various shores. As if this nation-destroying calamity was not enough, our Mother Armenia, subjugated under the yoke of Communism, was parched for God's Word. Church bells were silenced. Prayers were forbidden on the lips of the people. Christ became foreign.

Praise God that today we are free everywhere. But, is it perhaps possible that the munificence and benefits of freedom enjoyed by our flock have dispersed us further? Indifference is consuming us like a malignancy. Foreign customs corrupt our morals and denigrate our Armenian identity. Moral decay destroys our existence, and we become a weary and scattered flock, dispersed this time in every corner of the world. More than at any other time, we need Christ-like shepherds to tend our flock.

In the United States, the picture is similar. The harvest is plentiful, the flock is scattered throughout the country and is often homeless and lost, left to wander in temptation.

Because of migration and the influx of newcomers, we are either weakened or strengthened. In any event, the need for clergy is keenly felt—a situation, which the Eastern Prelacy is working to solve in order to fill our faithful with their ancestors' pure faith, to enrich them with their national-ecclesiastical heritage, to again preserve the nation and church. To fight. To survive. To conquer.

We know well that due to the great responsibilities and difficult work it is indispensable to prepare exemplary clergy who know how to sacrifice for the flock. (John 10: 15). Not mercenary, but brave and self-sacrificing clergy, who like our church fathers, martyrs, and saints, become soldiers of Christ, become Christ-like, and serve like Christ.

It is necessary for new clergymen to have many qualities. The most important ones are those which when achieved, the individual becomes a true clergyman, becomes God's man—a servant of Christ and the people.

FAITH: Without faith a clergyman is a machine without a soul. Without faith in God, faith in God's will and plan, a clergyman abdicates his position and his being, and becomes dangerous and blasphemous to his faithful. He is a blind person incapable of governing himself, let alone his flock. First and foremost Christ always looked for faith in those who came to Him. Christ performed miracles on the strength of that faith and wanted to see in

us the faith of a mustard seed, the faith to move mountains. It is only natural that a clergyman filled with faith will be able to stir the hearts and souls of the faithful, to transport them from the sinful world to Christ's vineyard, to earn the joy of participating in God's table. Our faith must be complete without shadows or fog, without doubt or hesitation, so that as we journey toward the Lord we do not sink, like the Apostle Peter.

Faith must be the clergyman's whole life—full, effective and infectious. His enduring and sinless character must be seen through his word, behavior, and deeds. Faith is the clergyman's bread and water because "he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35).

VOCATION (CALLING): Quite often we do not make note of the strength of calling, which in fact is the divine invitation to a life of service. That is God's calling, a message which is directed to a specific person who lives his life with a fear of God and who worships God. Hearing that "calling" is necessary in order to be able to follow Christ. Christ called his disciples. It was by following that call that ordinary fishermen became "fishers of men," who preached the Gospel throughout the world providing the opportunity of salvation to those who heard Christ's message.

When the clergyman heeds God's calling, in the hands of the Lord he becomes that beneficent instrument with the ability to perform miracles in the souls of the faithful.

EDUCATION: In order to perform his mission and duties in a noble way, it is important that clergymen are given proper education. It is possible to be a clergyman with only faith and a calling, without educational preparation. But it is impossible to be a clergyman with even the very highest education without faith and calling. Education gives the clergy the opportunity to perform duties more effectively and productively. It is necessary to learn in order to teach. It is necessary to be "filled" spiritually and intellectually in order to "fill" the souls and minds of others.

When a clergyman heeds God's calling, when he armors himself with the strength of faith and adds knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, history, theology, ecclesiology, sociology, and psychology, then the field of service blossoms before him. The road toward God becomes illuminated and he and the faithful entrusted to his care, walk towards the fountain of light.

On the occasion of the Feast of the Holy Translators, may this issue of *Outreach* which is devoted to the priesthood, be an invitation to all of us to listen to God's call and follow Christ. In our Lord's understanding, we are all apostles; we are all called upon to spread the glory of God, to preach God's Word and to labor for the affirmation of God's heavenly kingdom.

But especially let this be an invitation to all those who wish to pursue the vocation of priesthood and want to become a harvester in our Lord's field. ✠

"But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him,
For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?
For we are not peddlers of God's word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in His presence."

Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians
Chapter 2, Verses 14 to 17

ՔԱՀԱՆԱՅՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՄԵԾՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ

Այս զրույթինը Գարեգին Բ. Աթոռակից Կոթողիկոս որպես կոչ ուղած է հայ երիտասարդներուն 13-17 Յունիս, 1978-ի Ազգային Ընդհանուր Ժողովին անմիջապէս ետք:

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Հայ ազգային վարժարաններու ուսուցման ընթացքին մէջ կրօնական դաստիարակութեան յուրջ ներառման, Կիրակնօրեայ դպրոցներու, կրօնական ուսման դաստիարակութեան յատուկ դասագիրքերու եւ այլ, ժողովրդական, հրատարակութիւններու անհրաժեշտութեան հետ միասին մասնաւոր շեշտ դրուեցաւ հոգեւորականներու պատրաստութեան, եւ յատկապէս քահանայից դասի (ամուսնացեալ հոգեւորականութեան) ուժեղացման անյետաձգելի գործին վրայ:

Այս անցնող մէկ տարուան ընթացքին տասնեակ ղիմումներ հասան մեզի արտասահմանի այլազան շրջաններէն: Թեմակայ առաջնորդներ, ազգային-եկեղեցական վարչութիւններ ջերմօրէն կը խնդրեն ուսեայ եւ նուիրեայ քահանաներ ունենայ, որովհետեւ իրենց զաղութներուն մէջ քահանայական ծառայութիւնը այլեւս ստացած է բացառիկ կարեւորութիւն: Հայ հաւատացեալները կարօտն ունին Աստուծոյ խօսքին, հայ աղօթքին, Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ խունկին ու մոմին, խաչին ու Աւետարանին, քարոզին ու շարականին, մէկ խօսքով՝ հոգին սնուցանող այն բոլոր արժէքներուն, որոնց սպասարկուն, հոգեւոր արուեստագէտը քահանան է,

- Նորածին հայր եկեղեցւոյ սուրբ աւագանին մէջ սրբալոյս Միւռնոսի մկրտողն ու կնքողը,
- Հիւանդին հոգեկան ոյժ ներշնչողը,
- Երիտասարդ գոյգերուն գլխիները սուրբ պատակով իրար կապողը,
- Հայուն տունը հայկական աւանդական աղօթքով օրհնողը,
- Հայուն ննջեցեային վրայ վերջին աղօթքը կատարողն ու ողջ մնացողները մխիթարողը,
- Հայ մարդուն ուրախութիւնն ու տխրութիւնը հայրարար բաժնողը՝ յանուն Աստուծոյ եւ ազգին,
- Հայկական դպրոցներուն մէջ մեր քրիստոնէական սուրբ կրօնքի սկզբունքներն ու Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ հարագատ աւանդութիւնները ուսուցանողը,

- Եւ տակաւին այլ առօրեայ հագար ու մի պարտաւորութիւններ կատարողը իրեն ղիմող կարօտեային ու տառապողին:

Ի՛նչ բարձրմաստ ծառայութիւններ, հոգեկրթական ի՛նչ ազնուական առաքելութիւն...: Քահանայութիւնը իր այս յայնածիր առաքելութեան յուրջ եւ ամբողջական հասկացողութեամբ ամենէն արդիւնալից եւ օգտաւէտ ծառայութեան դաշտերէն մէկն է Հայ ժողովուրդի կեանքին մէջ, մանաւանդ Սփիւռքի ցանուցիր մեր ժողովուրդի կացութեան մէջ: Եւ սակայն ինչ-ինչ թիւր հասկացողութիւններու եւ պատմական պայմաններու բերումով, երբեմն տեղ-տեղ, քահանայական պաշտօնը ներկայիս չէ ըմբռնուած իր այս բարձրութեամբ եւ կենսունակութեամբ: Ոմանք կան, մանաւանդ գիտութեան մէջ որոշ յառաջդիմութիւն արձանագրած կամ ընկերութեան մէջ քիչ թէ շատ տնտեսական, նիւթական յաւ կացութեան անձեր, որոնք քահանայութիւնը առհասարակ կը նկատեն ոչ գրաւիչ ասպարէզ մը:

Բայց սա հիմնովին սխալ մտածում եւ անարդար վերաբերում է քահանայութեան նկատմամբ: Նախ ամէն բանէ վեր՝ քահանայութիւնը կոչում մըն է եւ ոչ ասպարէզ, բառին սովորական իմացումով: Երբ ուշադրութեամբ կարդանք Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ հայրապետներու հաստատած կանոնները կամ ազգային-եկեղեցական ժողովներով կանոնադրուած օրէնքները, պիտի տեսնենք որ բազմաթիւ զեղծումներ կատարուած են անցեալին: Բայց շուքը տեսնելով պէտք չէ մոռնայ յոյսը...: Թերին հաստատելով միայն՝ չէ՛ կարելի բաւականանալ: Պէտք է մրտածել դարմանումի մասին: Եթէ որոշ անչքացում յառաջ եկած է քահանայական կոչումի եւ պաշտօնի կայունութիւն մէջ, պէտք է ամէն ճիշդ թափել, որպէսզի իր լիազոյն պատուին եւ արդիւնաւորագոյն ծառայութեան ընթացքին մէջ դրուի ան:

Փառք Աստուծոյ, Հայ ժողովուրդի տնտեսական կեանքի բարելաւման պայմաններուն հետ միասին բարելաւուած են նաեւ նիւթական վարձատրութեան ձեւերն ու չափերը քահանային համար: Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ գրեթէ բոլոր թեմերուն մէջ այլեւս գործնապէս ընդունուած են հաստատ ամսական կամ շաբաթական վարձատրութեան եղանակներ, իւրաքանչիւր երկրի իւրայատուկ սովորութիւններ:

րու համաձայն: Այլևս չէ կարելի ըսել, որ հայ քահանան տնտեսական անապահով կամ վատ դրութեան մէջ կը գտնուի կամ իր վարձատրութիւնը թողուած է պարագայական եւ կամաւոր նուէրներու հին ավանդութեան: Եթէ ոմանք ցարդ կը տատամսէին քահանայական պաշտօն ստանձնել առաւելարար խրրուչելով նիւթական վարձատրութեան ոչ-քաջալերական եւ երբեմն նոյնիսկ նուաստացուցիչ նկատուած ձեւերէն, այլևս այդ վարանումը պէտք չէ ունենան եթէ կը գգան կոչումը, ունին անոր սէրը, կ'ըմբռնեն պաշտօնին վեհութիւնը ու պարտականութեանց պարտականութիւնը եւ կ'անդրադառնան ներկայիս անոր ստացած այնքան ստիպողական նկարագրին եւ տարողութեան: Աստուծոյ եւ ազգին ծառայելու պարտագոյն եւ բազմաձիւղ ճամբաներէն մէկն է ան: Լաւ պատրաստուած, նուիրումի անսակարկ ոգիի տէր, համբերատար ու հոգածու քահանայ մը պաշտութիւն մը ազգային-եկեղեցական կեանքին կրնայ ընել անզնահատելի ծառայութիւնները: Մենք վստահ ենք որ մեր ժողովուրդը ջերմօրէն եւ բարձրօրէն կը գնահատէ իր եկեղեցական հովիւը, ծխատէր քահանան, երբ անոր մէջ կը տեսնէ իսկական կոչումին եւ ծառայութեան գործնական, շօշափելի տուեալները: Ծա'տ շա'տ են օրինակները այն քահանայ հայրերուն, որոնք մեր ժողովուրդին զուրգուրտ վերաբերումին են արժանացած եւ միշտ գործով բարձր պահած են քահանայութեան կոչումն ու պատիւը:

Քահանային գործը մեծ կարեւորութիւն ունի մեր եկեղեցւոյ դրութեան եւ կեանքին մէջ, որովհետեւ քահանան անմիջական, ուղղակի, առօրեայ կապ ունի ժողովուրդին հետ: Կուսակրօն եկեղեցականները, վարդապետ կամ եպիսկոպոս, կրթական, քարոզչական, վարչական-կազմակերպչական իրենց պատասխանատուութիւններով այնքան ուղղակի կապ չունին ժողովուրդին հետ որքան ծխատէր քահանան կամ հոգեւոր հովիւը: Ժողովրդական ծառայութեան տեսակէտէն ամենէն օգտաշատ սպասարութիւնն է ան եկեղեցական նուիրապետական կարգերու առաքելութեանց մարգերուն մէջ:

Ահա այս նկատումներէն առաջնորդուած, Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոսութեան Ազգային Ընդհանուր Ժողովէն անմիջապէս ետք գումարուած նորընտիր Ազգային Կեդրոնական Վարչութեան Կրօնական Ժողովի առաջին իսկ նիստին, ժողովի անդամներուն ուղարկութեան առարկայ դարձնելով սոյն կարեւոր հարցը, ժողովը որոշում կայացուց իր

երկամեայ գործունէութեան ընթացքին մասնաւոր ուղարկութեան առարկայ դարձնել քահանայից պատրաստութեան գործը, եւ Կաթողիկոսութեանս Գարեթանքի դասնիստութեան ուժեղացման գուրահեռ ոյժ տայ նաեւ Քահանայից Մասնաւոր Գարեթանքի գորացման աշխատանքին:

Այսու մեր հայրապետական զրով կոչ կ'ուղղենք Հայ երիտասարդներուն, որոնք կրօնական, եկեղեցական եւ ազգային ծառայութեան հակումներ ունին եւ կը գգան Աստուծոյ եւ ազգին քահանայութեան պնդական պաշտօնով ծառայելու կոչումը, որ իրենց փափաքը յայտնեն եւ դիմում կատարեն անձամբ ներկայանալով կամ զրաւոր ձեւով, Կաթողիկոսարան, Գարեթանքի Տեսչութեան եւ ստանան հարկ եղած գործնական ցուցմունքները՝ իրենց փափաքը իրագործելու համար:

Մենք հայրաբար կը յորդորենք մեր սիրելի եկեղեցասէր երիտասարդները, որ մէկ կողմ թողուն ռեւէ երկրորդական կարգի մտածումներ եւ վերապահութիւններ եւ հոգեկան քաջութեամբ զինուած, աստուածահաճոյ եւ ազգաշէն առաքելութեան գիտակցութեամբ եւ պատրաստակամութեամբ գօտեպնդուած՝ սիրալոյսով կամքով ընդառաջեն մեր այս կոչին, եւ Աստուծոյ ու Հայ ազգին ծառայելու վսեմ իտէպիւն ընդառաջելը նկատեն պատիւ եւ արժանիք:

Աստուած ձեզի կը կանչէ, սիրելի՛ երիտասարդներ, իր ժողովուրդին զրկելու համար: Ազգը ձեզ կը հրաւիրէ իր գաւազներու հոգեւոր խնամքին: Լսեցէ՛ք ձեր ազգին ձայնը: Լսեցէ՛ք Աստուծոյ կոչը, որ ինչպէս խօսեցաւ Յսայի մարգարէին, կը խօսի նաեւ այսօր ձեզի, եթէ ունիք սէրն ու պատրաստակամութիւնը քահանայութեան:-

- «Լսեցի Աստուծոյ խօսքը որ կ'ըսէր.
- Ո՛վ զրկեմ, ո՛վ կերթայ ժողովուրդին:
- Եւ քի.
- Ահաւասիկ է՛ս. զրկէ՛ գիս»: (Ես Ե.8)

Ո՛վ ձեզմէ այսօր պիտի կրկնէ մարգարէին պատասխանը եւ արիարար պիտի ըսէ.

- «Ահաւասիկ է՛ս. զրկէ՛ գիս»:

ԳԱՐԵԳԻՆ Բ.
Աթոռակից Կաթողիկոս
30 Յունիս 1978

ԹԱՐԳՄԱՆՉԱՑ

Նայ ժողովուրդի ստեղծագործական ոգին պանծացնող, Հայ ժողովուրդի իմացական հանճարը յիշեցնող մեծագույն տոնակատարութիւններէն մէկն է Թարգմանչացը, որ կր կատարուի ամէն տարուան Հոկտեմբեր ամսուն եւ որուն համար Հոկտեմբերն ալ ընդունուած է որպէս «մշակոյթի ամիս»:

Թէեւ փոքր ածու եղած ենք, բայց այդ փոքրութենէն ծնած է հզօր ստեղծագործական ոգի մը, որուն տուած ենք «մշակոյթ» անունը: Իր լուսաշող բոյր երեսներով՝ պատմաբանութիւն, դիւցազներգութիւն, տոմարակալութիւն, բանաստեղծութիւն, երաժշտութիւն, մանրանկարչութիւն ու տակաւին արուեստի շատ մը ճիւղեր կրնանք ակեցնել ցանկին վրայ, մշակոյթը՝ Հայ ժողովուրդի մեծագույն հարստութիւնը կը սեպուի: Մշակոյթի ճամբով էր որ ծաղկի սկսաւ Հայու հանճարը հինգերորդ դարէն սկսեալ, երբ Քրիստոսի յոյսին հետ մեզի տրուեցան նաեւ Հայոց լեզուի երկնապարգեւ տառերը: Կայսրութիւններ ջանացին ցրուել զմեզ, բայց չյաջողեցան, որովհետեւ չկրցան մեզ զիրար կապող հրաշագործ գաղտնիքին հասնել, որ Հայ մշակոյթն էր:

Ակամայ թոյլ տուինք, որ տուններ քանդուին, նիւթական հարստութիւններ թախանուին, բայց Հայր թոյլ չտուաւ որ իմացական իր գանձատուներ՝ հանճարի վկայարանը եղող իր մշակոյթը կողոպտուի: Ինչպէ՞ս կարելի է կողոպտել ժողովուրդի մը հոգեկան եւ իմացական հանճարը:

Դարեր անցած են Հայոց պատմութեան փրայէն, բայց տակաւին կր քայլ Հայր իր հոգիին ու սրտին մէջ մշակոյթը՝ իր ինքնուրոյն փայլով եւ գեղեցկութեամբ: Քաղաքական պայմանները շատ անգամ կապանք դրին Հայուն Քիզիբական զոյւլթեան վրայ, բայց երբեք չկրցան ձեռք տալ Հայու հոգիին ու մտքին, որոնք ճիւնհայէ ետք յայտնուող ծաղիկներու նման, նոր թարգմանութեամբ եւ գեղեցկութեամբ բացուեցան երկնքին ու երկրին: Գուցէ եւ վստահարար կարելի ըլլայ սպաննել մարմինը, բայց հոգի՞ն, կը մնայ յաւէտ անմահ:

Նայեցէք չորս կողմ: Աչքէ անցուցէք Սփիւռքի գաղթօճախները, Սուրիան եւ Լիբանանը, Եգիպտոսն ու Պարսկաստանը, Փրանսան եւ Յունաստանը, նայեցէք գոյգ Ամերիկաներուն եւ տեսէք, թէ ինչպէ՞ս



կարճ ժամանակի մէջ պանդուխտ հայը կրցած է կայք հաստատել, օճախ հիմնել, եկեղեցի շինել եւ եկեղեցւոյ կողքին ալ՝ դպրատուն բանալ:

Ճիշդ է որ գաղթական հայր չկրցաւ նիւթական իր հարստութիւնը իր հետ վերցնել, բայց բերաւ իր հետ ստեղծագործ իր ոգին, որ չվարանցաւ Տէր Զօրի այրող աւազներուն վրայ հայ մայրերու մատներով հայոց տառերը գրել եւ հայ մանուկներուն այբբենգիր սորվեցնել:

Մաղկեցաւ մշակոյթը յիշեայ համայնքներուն մէջ: Վկայ՝ մեր ունեցած հարիւրաւոր վարժարանները, թերթն ու պարբերաթերթը: Վկայ՝ արտասահմանեան զրոյններու գեղեցիկ հայերէնը, որ գաղթական զրոյններու գրչին տակ յղկուեցաւ ու դարձաւ արժանաւոր գաւակր Ռսկեդարու մեր լեզուին: Եւ այս բոլորը տեղի ունեցան անձնական ու հաւաքական ճիգերով, առանց հիմնադրամի եւ առանց պետական հովանաւորութեան ու աջակցութեան: Մշակութային հրաշքներ էին թատերախումբերու, երգչախումբերու եւ պարախումբերու յայտնութիւնները օտար հողերու վրայ: Եթէ այս բոլորը եղան, եղան անոր համար, որ բոլորս զիրար միացնող միակ ու անքակտելի կապ միեւնոյն մայրն էր՝ այսինքն հայ մշակոյթը:

Նայեցէ՛ք հայրենի հողին վրայ զոյւլթիւն ունցող մեր կրթարաններուն, հայրենի զրոյններուն, երգահաններուն եւ դասախօսներուն, որոնք իրենց կարգին, փայլ տուին արեւելահայերէնին եւ գայն դարձուցին հարազատ երկուորեակը գեղեցիկ արեւմտահայերէնին:

Հպարտ ենք Հայաստանի հրատարակչական տուններով: Հպարտ ենք հայագիտութեամբ զբաղող Մեսրոպաշունչ աշակերտներով: Հպարտ ենք, որ հայրենի գրողներ, իրենք ալ դարձան նախանձախնդիր գրիչներ, որոնց վիճակուած էր առաւել եւս կենդանի պահել հայոց լեզուն:

Ազգային յատուկ տօն մըն է Թարգմանչացր, որովհետեւ ո՛չ միայն հայ գրերու հրաշապատում գիւտը կը յիշուի, ո՛չ միայն հինգերորդ դարու գրական նուաճումները կը յիշուին, ո՛չ միայն Աստուածաշունչ մատեանի «Թաղուհի Թարգմանուիթիւնն» եւ այլ Թարգմանուիթիւններ կը յիշուին, այլ այդ բոլորին մէջէն կը դիտուի հայ ժողովուրդի Ֆիզիքական ու հոգեկան գոյութեանց ազգային ու կրօնական ամրոցներուն կառուցումը:

Հայ մշակոյթն է, որ հայուն տուած է իւրա-յատուկ նկարագիր, զայն բարձրացնելով քաղաքա-կրթութեան վերին աստիճաններուն՝ դէմ յանդիման միջազգային մշակոյթներու: Թարգմանչաց տօնով հպարտութեամբ կը տօնուի իմացական ծնունդը հայ ժողովուրդին, որովհետեւ գիրերու գիւտին կը յաջորդէ իմաստասէր Թարգմանիչներու հոյզը, երբ անոնք ամենէն առաջ կը Թարգմանեն Առակաց իրքի առաջին զլխուն երկրորդ համար. «Ճանաչել զիմաս-տութիւն եւ գիրատ, իմանալ գրանս հանճարոյ...» (Ճանչնայ իմաստութիւնն ու խրատը եւ հասկնայ հանճարին խօսքերը): Մերոպ Մաշտոցն ու իմաս-տուն Սահակ կաթողիկոսը, յիշեալ տողերով նոր սերունդներու կը պատգամէին, որ միայն ՅՅ ջահե-րով է, որ պիտի կարենան իմաստութեամբ լուսա-ւորուած քայել դէպի վսեմն ու գեղեցիկը՝ որպէս հանճարի սպասաւորներ:

Թարգմանչացր ունի ամիս եւ ամսաթիւ, բայց միթէ կարելի՞ է Թարգմանչաց խորհուրդը պարփա-կել թուականի մը նեղ սահմաններուն մէջ: Թարգ-մանչացը ամենօրեայ ազգային «կրօնական տօն է, գոր կը տօնուի ամէն օր», երբ նորածին մանկան մը հետ հայ մայրը մայրենի լեզուով կը բարբառի, երբ դպրոցէ մը ներս հայ մանուկներ այբբենգիմը կը սորվին: Ամենօրեայ տօն է, երբ հայ մը ուրիշ հայու մը հանդիպի, «Բարեւ քեզ» կ'ըսէ: Տօն է, երբ մտաւորականներ իրենց ստեղծագործութեանց մէջ կը յիշեն երանաշնորհ Սահակն ու Մերոպը եւ իրենց եզակի աշակերտները՝ Խորենացին, Եղիշէն, Կորիւ-նը, Փարպեցին, Փաւստոս Բիւզանդը եւ ուրիշներ, որոնց հաւաքական թուիչքներով էր, որ հայ դպրու-թիւն եւ Ոսկեղար ստեղծուեցան եւ հայուն անուճ-ազգանուն տրուեցաւ:

Թարգմանիչներ: Պէտք է ըսել սուրբ Թարգմա-նիչներ, որոնք երկրէ երկիր անցան, յուսաւորու-թեան կեդրոններ հասան գիտութեան յոյսը լմպելու ուսման ակերէն եւ ապա՝ հայ ժողովուրդի հոգիին

մէջ վառելու գիտութեան ջահը: Նոյն այդ շաւիղին հետեւած եւ նոյն այդ հաւատքով գործած են Նարե-կացիներն ու Ծնորհայինները, Դաւիթ Անյաղթներն ու Տաթեւացիները, Որոտնեցիներն ու Մանդակու-նիները, Պլուզներն ու Լամբրոնացիները, որոնք Արծաթէ դար ստեղծեցին եւ որոնց դէմքերը, աստղերու նման կը փայլին հայոց պատմութեան համաստեղութեան մէջ:

Հաւատա՛, հայ ժողովուրդ, որ Թարգմանիչներն էին, որ քու առջեւ բացին յաւիտենականութեան դուռը եւ Աստուծոյ խօսքերուն արեւը: Խոցի՛ր, որ աղօթելու եւ Աստուծոյ հետ խօսելու լաւագոյն լեզուն, Մերոպի լեզուն է իր երկնասրայ թռիչք-ներով եւ քնարական քաղցրութեամբ: Վստա՛՛հ եղիր, որ մեր լեզուն էր, որ մեզ առաջնորդեց Աստուծոյ խորանին եւ հայ ժողովուրդը դարձաւ անոր հաւա-տարիմ սպասարկուն եւ զինուորը: Աւարայրով փաստեցինք հաւատքի հանդէպ մեր ունեցած զօրու-թիւնը, Նուարասկով՝ այդ հաւատքը պահելու մեռա-կամութիւնը: Հայ լեզուն էր, որ մեզ առաջնորդեց դէպի ազգային արժէքներու հանքերը, ուրկէ դուրս բերուեցան հայ մտածողութեան անկորնչելի գոհար-ները: Ոսկեղարէն սկսեալ մինչեւ այսօր, հայ լեզուն է, որ խորհրդաւոր մագնիսական ուժով իրեն քաշած է հայ ժողովուրդի գաւակները եւ թոյլ չէ՛ տուած, որ հեռանան ու ձուլուին օտարու-թեան օվկիանին մէջ:

Դարեր վերջ, հո՛ն է ան տակաւին իր հրաշագեղ զիծերով հանրապետութեան պետական կառուցնե-րու վրայ, մատենադարաններու եւ արուեստի տու-ներու ճակտին բազմած, իր կենսատու սնունդին հրաւիրելով բազմահագար հայորդիներ: Հո՛ն է ան, Սփիւռքի ազգային եւ կրօնական հաստատութեանց ու կրթարաններու մէջ, որպէս յաւիտ ծածանող նուիրական դրօշ: Հո՛ն է ան, կաթնտու հայ մայ-րերու կաթին մէջ որպէս մշտահոս քաղցրահամ աւիշ եւ թոթովախօս մանուկներու շրթներուն վրայ ծաղկող անպիսխման երգ:

Հաւատա՛, հայ ժողովուրդ Թարգմանիչներուն բերած յոյսին, անոնց ձգած կտակին եւ յաջորդող ժառանգորդներուն Ֆիզիքական, իմացական ու հոգեկան կորովին: Հաւատա՛, որ մահը քեզ չի կրնար զգեստել, որովհետեւ, դուն անմահ ես:

ՄԵՍՐՈՊ Ա. ՔՀՆՅ. ԹԱՇՃԵԱՆ

The New Challenge: The American-Born Armenian Priest

by Khachig Tololyan

[Editor's Note: This article appeared in the February 1981 issue of *Outreach*. Professor Tololyan's observations are as relevant today as they were 22 years ago. It is a sad reminder of the little progress that the Church has made in attracting qualified candidates for the priesthood for service in the United States. What Professor Tololyan described as our "most pressing need, more urgent than ever," is today even more pressing and urgent.]

Throughout Armenian history, whenever our Church has been functioning well, it has performed a triple function. First, it has mediated between the mighty and humble, bringing together in the communion of the Church those whom conflicts separated, and in the course of this act the responsible cleric functioned as a shepherd, making sure that those who were better-off understood the needs of the less fortunate and made provision for their care. A few decades after Christianity became the official religion of Armenia, the Church showed its dedication to this function in its not-always successful attempts to reconcile the Arshagouni kings and their nobles, and in its remarkably successful attempts to equip Armenia with a network of hospitals.

Second, the Church has mediated between man and God, whatever the changing conception of God has been. It is more difficult to fulfill this function in a secular age like ours, but it remains necessary that the Church do so, because in the very excesses of secularity people begin to turn to religion once again. As this begins to happen, it is essential that the Armenian Church be there, ready to accommodate those who might otherwise drift to the far-out sects that offer simplistic religions, from the Reverend Sun Young Moon to the Hare Krishna.

Finally, the Church has been the repository and interpreter of our traditions. Even though this function is now that of the scholar as well as the cleric, one can never fully replace the other, especially since so much of our history and tradition is inseparable from church history and religious tradition.

It requires a very special kind of person to fulfill these duties. Of course the Armenian Church is a fairly large institution, at least on the scale of Armenian institutions, and so it can afford a certain specialization. Thus,

not every cleric needs to obtain the learning that is presupposed by the title of *Vartabed*, nor does every priest need to be a theologian and linguist of *Krapar* [Classical Armenian]. In fact, the first and the second of functions I have described loom larger than the third in considering the qualifications and abilities of the men who must fulfill them, but I am one of those who would insist that a priest, a *kahana*, must possess at least some ability even in the third. And given that insistence, it is not surprising that I think of the priesthood in the Diaspora as a demanding calling, one that demands a complex of personal qualities and skills that only very special people can possess fully.

I realize, of course, that I am speaking of ideal standards, and that we all know individual priests who have failed in one or another of these responsibilities. We have all known priests who garbled the *krapar* of their prayers, who rushed with unseemly haste through the rituals of the Church, who got into too many arguments with too many of their parishioners, etcetera. But knowing that people inevitably fall short of the ideal is no reason for not pointing out how demanding and rewarding the ideal is, especially since by doing so one can clarify our own particular needs here in America, at the present time.

The ability to understand the needs of a diverse group of people, some born in America, some recently arrived from the Middle East, is a rare one. It takes a special person to do it, but since it has to be done in an American context, the need of American-born Armenian priests is all the more pressing. The need is large, and our sense of urgency justified. Since the mid-1960's there has been an ethnic revival which has given many fruits, and which has brought a new vigor to many aspects of Armenian-American life. Yet this revival has not sufficiently fulfilled the above-mentioned need for American-born priests, to be trained overseas and to return to this country to parishes which need them desperately and the challenges which, if met, cannot help but contribute to the growth of the individuals who heed the call.

I think it is clear that there is nothing easy about being a good Armenian priest, given the diversity and complexity of abilities and tasks that doing a good job requires;

the task is made even more demanding when one takes the American birth of the new priest into account. The major reward cannot be, I think, money, or security, or the respect of one's parishioners—all of which the priest deserves as a matter of course, since his working hours are in many ways among the most demanding around. In the end the reward is a kind of growth that few other callings or professions require or provide. From youth to old age, the social, psychological and intellectual challenges of the priesthood impose a flexibility and a willingness to grow that are unique. It is no wonder, then, that when a priest

is consecrated, he is given a new name, symbolic of the new person he must become. The odd thing is that the new name may not even be enough, for a good priest is one who is changed over and over again, in a process of rebirth which is modeled on that of Christian religion. In our time, when the Armenian communities of Lebanon and the Middle East are being reborn here in the United States, and when the conflict between brethren requires special skills and dedication, the reborn Armenian American priest is our most pressing need, more urgent than ever. ❖

What are you doing the rest of your life?

by Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan

Who?

Who is going to fill the ranks of our clergy, when our growing flock is being left unattended because of the lack of trained, devout and competent priests?

Who is going to fill the ranks of our church school teachers, when our children are being starved of the knowledge and inspiration of our Faith?

Who is going to fill the ranks of workers with and for young people in the community, when they are drifting away from the fold into the confused, aimless, and sinful world of self-defeating pleasure hunters, bigoted hate-mongers, and ignorant soul-wreckers?

Who is going to come forward and speak and write words of wisdom, charity, integrity, honesty, decency, hope and courage inspired by the Word of God and imbued with His saving grace?

Who is going to make our Armenian Christian cultural heritage of past achievements live and flourish in this age, so that it can enrich the impoverished life of our church and community?

Who is going to enlist in the bright future for our people and for our country and for mankind?

You, the youth of the Church. So wake up from your slumber and get going forward and upward.

And the Lord Christ be with you.

Preparing Laborers for the Harvest: The Imperative of Clergy Recruitment and Training

by Archpriest Fr. Antranig Baljian

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

Luke 10:2

Introduction

For many years, the topic of clergy recruitment has been discussed within the context of our Prelacy's need to increase the number of clergy serving in the United States and Canada. The goal has always been to recruit and train a native clergy born and bred in North America, exposed to the same upbringing, education and experience of those they would pastor. This has, however, become an elusive dream. At the present time there are only two ordained native-born clergy serving within the three Prelacies of North America. This situation demonstrates rather graphically the failure on the part of the North American Church to recruit, ordain and prepare a significant number of young, native clergy to continue the work of those who established the Church in the new world and those who later strove to make it a relevant and vital spiritual and moral force in the life of our people.

The need for native clergy is based upon a very simple fact. The psychosocial 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. Native clergy have the advantage of an innate understanding of the needs of their peers. There is no need to learn a whole new way of life, of formulating a totally new philosophy of life. This

does not mean that those clergymen who came here from other countries to serve the Armenian Church in North America were unable to do so effectively. On the contrary, it is thanks to their faith and noble spirit that the Church in America was able not only to survive, but also to grow. Nevertheless, I am sure that many of these priests, uprooted from their familiar surroundings and placed in a totally different cultural milieu, had to expend a great deal of effort to overcome problems generated by this culture gap and slowly adjust to the reality of their new life situation. It was a daunting task. Aside from adjusting to the cultural differences, these men had to become fluent in the English language, by all accounts one of the most difficult to learn. Some even went on to receive graduate and post-graduate university degrees while serving in their parishes. Native born clergy, on the other hand, or at the very least, clergy who came to America very early in life would not need to expend much of their energy learning the language and customs of their flock. This is not to say that they won't face other problems in their preparation for the priesthood, but at least they will have the great advantage of being able to function effectively in the same environment and cultural context as their flock, without undergoing a long and agonizing period of adjustment.

Part I: Preparing the Ground

Every young Armenian man is a potential candidate for the priesthood. Whether or not he actually becomes a priest depends upon a large number of circumstances. The first is the Christian education the child receives in his home. It's not always the case, but often times a man who has been called to the priesthood and has been brought up in a spiritual household, learned Christian values from his parents, and has grown up in the church, is more apt to actually realize his vocation.

The second is the reluctance of parents to encourage their sons to become priests. How many times have you heard: "Yes, we need priests...BUT NOT MY SON!" Parents just don't want their sons to be priests. Why? It is true that traditionally priests have been looked down upon. I don't necessarily want to go into the reasons for that. We have all heard the stories of *Der Hayrs* in the old country fighting in the cemetery as to whose parishioner the person in the grave is and who was going to bless it and receive the stipend for doing so. Maybe criticism of these kinds of priests is justified. This Prelacy certainly has had its share of unsavory incidents involving priests. Yet this is by no means the case for everyone. Often times the priest can become the object of unjust criticism. We know, for example that

being in the public eye is a difficult situation. In any given circumstance, no matter what the priest does, nor decision he makes nor what position he takes on an issue, someone is bound to disagree and be offended.

My point in bringing this up is twofold. First our faithful must learn how to interact positively with their priest. They must be shown how to truly respect the honor and dignity of the cloth. At the same time, priests need to become better pastors. This is a long process, which takes many years of practice. When I was first ordained in March of 1976, I knew everything there was to know about being a priest and a pastor. At least that's what I thought. It took many years for me to learn and understand that I knew nothing and that I was able to do what I did only through the grace and love of God.

Preparing the ground to receive those who would one day labor in God's vineyard must begin with the education and instruction of our faithful as well as the continued spiritual growth and education of our clergy.

Part II: Sowing the Seed

When speaking of recruitment, it must be made clear that we are not using the word in its typical secular, corporate sense, where companies try to lure the best and brightest to work for them with promises of high wages, prestigious sounding titles and great fringe benefits (I think they are called "perks"). But priesthood is a vocation. In the simplest of terms, it means that God calls or invites certain men to be priests. Within the context of the Church, "recruitment" means being able to recognize this calling in young men and help to develop and nurture it. Thus, while God sows the seed, it is up to us to

recognize what he has sown and take care of and nourish it.

Recruitment of priests is a process, which begins with the recognition of a potential vocation through the training and education of candidates for ordination. It is not unlike the growing of crops, which Our Lord so eloquently used as an example to show how precious is the work of those who labor in God's vineyard. This is why I have likened clergy recruitment to the various steps of planting and harvesting an important crop.

The need for native clergy is based upon a very simple fact. The psychosocial development within a particular type of society can be best understood—and therefore utilized—by those who have been born and bred within that society.

I guarantee that in our parishes right now there are many young men who have received a calling into the ministry. It may be the boy who loves to serve on the altar, or the one who at home likes to put a sheet around him and walk around imitating the chanting of the *sbaragans* while swinging something that is reminiscent of a censer. Or it can be the older boy who often seeks out the Der Hayr to ask questions and who shows interest in religious and church customs and practices. It could be the college student who is taking courses in theology and who has joined a Christian fellowship at school. Anyone could have a calling to the priesthood. It is our role as a Prelacy to recognize, nurture, develop and strengthen it.

In this, the parish priest is the

first "line of defense" so to speak, and plays a dual role in the development of a young man's calling to the priesthood. First, he is the one who must recognize that calling within the young man and take that person under his wing by helping him become more aware of God's calling to the spiritual life and just what that means in terms of life decisions. It is also the parish priest who has the first crack at helping to develop that calling by being that person's spiritual mentor and teacher. The priest can also bring persons whom he feels to have a calling into the liturgical life of the church by inviting them to participate in the Divine Liturgy as acolytes.

While the priest's role as a mentor and teacher is a difficult one, the second role is even more so. The priest must provide a positive role model for all the young people in his parish. He must be able to speak with the youth on their own terms and answer their questions. Again the priest is at the forefront as the first inkling of the divine, the very first representative of the Godly that the children of the parish see. In fact, oftentimes, toddlers, in their innocence, even believe that the priest is God!

In my experience, I can attest to the fact that role modeling by the clergy is an important factor in the development of a calling. When I was a youngster I remember the love and adulation I felt for my first parish priest. He was old, he spoke only Armenian, was always very serious, drove badly and even used to yell at us when we were creating mischief in Armenian School. Yet this man was like an uncle or grandfather; loving, comforting, supportive. He became a part of my family. The love and Godliness he radiated were like beacons shining out in the dark-

ness to light the way for us children. Maybe he had shortcomings. Maybe he had problems. But as children, we were impressed by his open and obvious love and concern for us and for our families.

Another role model in my life was just the opposite. He was young. In fact, he was the first Armenian priest I had ever seen with dark hair and beard. He was vibrant and fun and showed interest in us children in other ways. I remember one day we were at an Armenian School picnic. A few of us kids started playing baseball. The *Der Hayr* came over, took off his shirt, took the bat and began to play with us in his undershirt! He took the time to attend my high school graduation, and always encouraged me in church and introduced me to service on the Holy Altar. This was forty years ago, and these wonderful occasions still hold a prominent place in my memory as unforgettable events, which endeared that *Der Hayr* to all of us children, for by doing what he did, he showed that he (and by extension, God and the Church) was truly interested in us.

While the parish priest can encourage, he can also become a great impediment to the development of a boy's vocation. More times than I care to tell, priests came up to me when I had decided to answer God's call, and actually tried to discourage me from becoming a *Der Hayr*. These priests let their personal issues taint their love for God and, evidently the quality of their own service. The parish priest not only needs to recognize and help develop potential candidates and become a worthy role model to them, he needs to encourage them with uplifting words, worthy service, joyous demeanor and loving actions which are the qualities

that will inspire young men to strive to fulfill the calling God has placed in their hearts.

Part III: Nourishing the Seedlings

Over the course of several years, the Prelacy has had a number of candidates for the priesthood. Most of these were never ordained. I don't know what the reasons were that they were never ordained, but I would venture to guess that there was some kind of problem that caused them to change their minds. Candidates for priesthood must be treated as a valuable natural resource. No expense should be spared to nurture their minds and give them the training they need to become better equipped as pastors. They should not be looked upon as cheap labor, and should not be used as such. Utilizing their existing skills and helping them to develop new skills useful for their future vocation is fine. Assigning them to work at the Prelacy or in various parishes while they are preparing for the priesthood is also fine as long as what they are doing is helping them to become better equipped for the priesthood. Whatever situation they are in, they should be treated with dignity and respect.

Not everyone has the same scholastic aptitude or academic ability. Those who excel academically should be encouraged to continue their schooling, even after ordination. Those who do not, should be allowed to attain a lesser academic degree. At the same time the Prelacy should see to it that the candidates receive a comfortable stipend or wage whatever they are doing. Not having to worry about finances allows candidates to focus on their assigned tasks or studies and enhances their status in the eyes of others who

may be thinking about the priesthood as a vocation.

Even though our work and concentration is spiritual, nevertheless, finances play a great role in the life of the priest. Over the years, many problems have arisen within parishes because of finances. No priest should expect to become financially wealthy, but even priests should be able to live comfortably and be compensated as the trained professionals they are. You may ask how this is connected to recruitment of priests. I would like to share an unforgettable personal experience that happened to me when I was still a new priest. I was invited by the Armenian Youth Federation to lecture at the National Junior Seminar in Rock Creek, Ohio for a few years. My task was to lecture about the Armenian Church. After one lecture, a group of boys gathered around asking questions about being a priest. It was obvious that they were truly interested, and I got the distinct impression that they could, given the right conditions, consider the priesthood as a viable career choice. Their enthusiasm was contagious, and I began to enjoy the exchange of questions and answers. Then one of the boys asked how much I make a year. I told him very enthusiastically my salary at the time (which I have since forgotten) and eagerly awaited the next question. Instead, as soon as I answered the question, it was as if someone had thrown a bucket of ice water over us. I tried to explain how spiritually rewarding it is to be a priest, but that's not what they wanted to hear. I'm afraid that whatever curiosity they may have shown toward the priesthood, no longer interested them. This was an interesting learning experience for me, and one that I think about often. My interpretation of

these events was confirmed by one of those who participated in that discussion, and is now one of my active parishioners.

We, as a church – Prelacy, parish, individual – must treat our priests as valuable resources, to be cherished and nurtured and taken care of. I know that all priests do not have the same educational background or the same level of experience and skills. Nevertheless, we must teach our people the value of the sacerdotal and pastoral mission and function of the priest. A priest, no matter what parish he is in should not be in financial difficulty. There is a very good guideline that our parishes are supposed to follow regarding their clergyman's salary and benefits. Some parishes cannot afford this. If this is the case, then the Prelacy should subsidize their priest. By the same token, the minimalist mentality that is prevalent in many of our communities must change. Priests deserve more than the minimum. No one knows or understands the work of a priest except another priest. Certainly no one knows the toll that is taken on the priest and his family. Lay people must be made to understand what the priest's spiritual leadership role in the community is, and be invited to join with him in ministry to the parish. Boards of Trustees must become partners with the priest encouraging him, complementing him and sustaining him in such a way that he does not have to worry about financial considerations, but can turn his attention full time and without distraction to his ministry.

By the same token, respect must be earned. No one should expect to be respected because of his or her position or standing within the community. In American society respect

is earned by trust. In this case, trust comes from a parish that sees their pastor acting like a man of God. Candidates for the priesthood need to be not only prepared academically, but spiritually and emotionally as well. Considering the recent scandals taking place in the Roman Catholic Church, we cannot take chances when it comes to the complete training of our priests. Thus, not only should potential priests be examined on matters of faith, knowledge and theology, but should also undergo emotional, psychological and personality evaluations as well. This would at the very least help forestall any potential problems such as those

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experienced within the Boston Archdiocese, which lost the people's trust (and respect and support) by covering up significant transgressions perpetrated by abusive priests. A recent Massachusetts poll showed that Cardinal Law is still extremely disliked by a majority of area Catholics and a significant number felt he should be prosecuted in a court of law (no pun intended). What makes this even sadder is that a few years ago Cardinal Law was loved and respected by his flock. When he lost the trust of his people, he lost their respect and love as well.

Speaking of trust and respect, we must first respect our own, be-

fore we expect others to do so. We need to examine our own church's treatment of clergy in general and married priests in particular. One of my pet peeves has always been the artificially contrived one-seventh/six-sevenths ratio of clergy to lay members of our church's ruling bodies. Yes, I know it is historical, I know it has great significance for the Armenian Church and Nation. That's all well and good. But what this rule is saying is that we just don't trust our priests. God forbid we have less than a six-to-one outnumbering of our clergy within national and international councils! God knows what the priests would do then! You ask so what? What can it hurt? And I respond look at the number of active clergy serving in our Prelacy (17) and the number of clergy delegates (13) and tell me those four who are not delegates, who can't vote or make motions don't feel left out, unrespected.

Priests are rarely recognized for their accomplishments. Making a big deal about a priest once in a while is not only good for the clergy in general but will do wonders for the one who is honored. It will also allow people to see how special priests are to the church and how much the Prelacy respects them. It should also be recognized that all priests should not be pastors. God gives to the church people with a variety of gifts. Some are great preachers but lousy administrators. Others are just the opposite. Still others have different gifts, or their personality is such that they should be doing other things. Young men with a vocation do not necessarily want to become pastors, and need to see that being a priest does not necessarily lock one into 30 or 40 years of serving in a parish, but there is room for them to excel

in other areas as well.

Part IV: Preparing for the Harvest

Time is running out. The day of the harvest is upon us. In some ways, we are already too late. Two generations have passed from the founding of the Prelacy until today – 46 years! In all that time, only three native born priests have been ordained, and another three who had lived here the majority of their lives. The third generation is now growing up. Many come from mixed marriages. Many speak only English. Slowly, they are being lost through assimilation to other churches. If we wish to have a third and fourth generation church in this country, we need to act now. Here is what I feel must be done:

A. A committee should be appointed immediately to identify areas of immediate concern vis à vis the clergy recruitment process, and prioritize them in order of importance and feasibility. This committee should include clergy as well as lay people and also our young seminarians or church servers.

B. A special fund must be established for clergy recruitment and training. As you will see, some of the things I am proposing can be done at no cost. Others will take a lot of money to accomplish. This fund must take priority over other programs and projects the Prelacy may be planning.

C. A list of activities must be prepared that will enhance our clergy recruitment activities. This should be a topic of discussion today and during the NRA. Some of the ideas I have are as follows:

- a. Set up special lectures at the St. Gregory of Datev Institute.
- b. Organize lectures or other youth

activities in parishes, whose focus is the priesthood and at other Prelacy-sponsored activities (like the St. Gregory of Datev Institute).

c. Publish thought provoking articles about the spiritual life and priestly vocations in the newspapers or send them as correspondence to the general public.

d. Encourage more youth-oriented activities in parishes or on a regional level whose themes will reflect some of the thoughts and ideas expressed above. The AYF and the Homenetmen are wonderful youth organizations, but they are meant to feed secular organizations. They are not the place to find future clergy.

e. Develop a special unit in Sunday School about vocations and spiritual life.

D. An attempt must be made to free up priests in large parishes to work with youth. At the same time, the Prelacy should think seriously about encouraging lay ministry within our parishes, in order to help accomplish this.

E. We need to develop spirituality within our youth; do Bible Study with them; incorporate them in parish internship programs. We also need to establish youth ministries, which are structured and yet flexible enough to allow the participants to also become involved in leadership roles. They could be modeled after existing groups such as Intervarsity Christian Fellowship or the Navigators International.

F. The Prelacy needs to develop a website for youth that will also have a section on vocations and the spiritual life.

G. A good seminary program must be devised which will allow our candidates to get the best quality of education while spending the least

amount of time abroad. A joint program with St. Nersess Seminary should be examined and pursued if feasible.

H. Young priests and candidates to the priesthood should also be involved in the recruitment process.

I. Applicants for the priesthood should be examined periodically by a standing board made up of clergy and laymen including medical doctors and psychologists

Conclusion

As I said, the time for the harvest is hard upon us. If you look at the list of clergy, you will see that an unprecedented number of them (9) are retired, with another 3 who by age, will be retiring over the next few years. We already have a shortage of priests as it is, and the burden to service all of our existing parishes, let alone trying to establish new ones, will be well nigh impossible to bear. We need to look hard and long at the problem and seriously consider what actions we, as a Prelacy, are going to take to solve it. We must be decisive and resolute in taking IMMEDIATE action to set up the machinery and infrastructure to begin our mission of recruitment and development of new, young and vibrant clergy for our Prelacy!

Lastly, as the time draws near when hopefully our ideas and our actions will bear fruit, we must remember the most important thing: prayer. Let us heed the words of Jesus, who said: “pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Luke 10:2 ❖

Archpriest. Fr. Antranig Baljian is pastor of St. Stephen's Church, Watertown, MA. He delivered this paper to the clergy conference during the National Representative Assembly in May 2003.

Badarak: Elevated Life

by Rev. Fr. Nerses Manoogian

Where is the place of “Badarak” in our life? Does “Badarak” have any relevance to my life?

These are questions I have heard often in my priestly life. I have always thought and preached that Badarak is not celebrated in a vacuum or disconnected from our everyday life. As St. John Chrysostom said, “Eucharist (or Badarak) is not a reality to be discussed, but to be lived.”

If I would use a single word which characterizes best the Badarak, it would be “Elevation.” Badarak points to the elevation of the life of the church to a new height or realm. From the very beginning we experience an elevation, because it is in our presence only that a healing mystery takes place. Therefore, our gathering itself is sacramental. If we do not assemble as a church the mystery does not happen. This reality in itself starts our elevation. We stop being men and women buried under mundane duties, and become a sacred assembly who witnesses and concelebrates the mystery of sacrifice of our Lord. (Badarak in Armenian means sacrifice.)

Interestingly enough, the Badarak in itself is a series of elevations.

1. Elevation of the celebrant onto the altar. The celebrant vested in Jesus’ priestly glory, enters into the sanctuary, purifies himself and ascends on the altar (meaning heaven) and takes all of us up with him. The altar becomes Mount Tabor where the faithful will experience their transfiguration.

We are there, behind the closed curtain when Jesus is incarnate in the chalice through the blessing of the wafer (Nushkhar) and wine and placing them in the chalice by the celebrant. The wafer and the wine are our gifts, coming from this world. The celebrant baked the wafer with our very own needs in mind. It is loaded with our own supplications. It is without yeast, unpolluted like the body of our Lord and as pure as our intentions. The wine, like the blood of our Lord, is pure, without mixture of water. Yes these are our gifts, which will be transformed later in the liturgy to the Body and the Blood of Jesus. In our presence our gifts will be sanctified and will sanctify us, and will elevate us.

2. Elevation of the Gospel. At the lesser entrance the Gospel is physically elevated above us. The intention

beyond the elevation is that the Gospels as the spoken words of Jesus may always have authority over our lives, and instruct us how to stay elevated and bring about elevation to this world.

3. The elevation of the chalice (The Great Entrance.) There comes the supreme elevation. Through the procession of the chalice, the one who had said, “I am the way and the truth” (Jn. 14:6), comes in the chalice and sits on the holy table “like a lamb that is led to the slaughter” as prophet Isaiah would say. (Is 53:7). It is there that, our Lord, engulfed with our love wills to shed his blood for our sake, determined to draw us to Him, which is an elevated life.

In His presence we behave like elevated assembly. Darkness, ambiguity and enmity are dispelled from our hearts. We demonstrate that we are unified as He intended, we greet each other with love and forgiveness during the Kiss of Peace.

Then comes the moment of unity with Seraphim and Cherubim, the highest category of angels who operate in the immediate vicinity of God. Joining our voices with them and singing “Soorp, Soorp” we revisit the upper room and witness the last supper.

“Take, eat, this is my body.”

“Drink, this is my blood.”

In the upper room we experience a delightful feast. We are invited to eat a special kind of bread, which “never perishes,” and a special vintage of wine, which will run in our veins as the blood of Jesus, enhancing our circulation and boosting our elevation.

We are all there, perched on the chalice which the celebrant elevates saying; “And we offer to you yours of your own from all and for all.”

4. The Calvary. The celebrant invokes the Holy Spirit to come and transform the wafer and the wine into the real Body and Blood of Jesus. At this point the sacrifice of Jesus is accomplished. In our assembly He is on the cross dripping blood and begging us to stick with Him for our sake. No, we are not cowards any more. We stay in Him. We cannot afford running away from “The bread of Life,” or “The good shepherd.”

When our broken Lord is ready to be distributed,

continued inside back cover

The Cilician Seminary at Antelias: From Orphanage to Seminary

73 Years of Service to the Church and Community

This article is based on booklets written by Iris Papazian and Susan Blair Kelekian, published by the Prelacy in 1982 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Seminary at Antelias.

The Holy See at Cilicia, which had served the Armenian people from the 12th to the early part of the 20th century in Cilicia, was forced to leave its ancient Seat in Sis, the capital city of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, following the forced emigration of the Armenians in Cilicia during the years 1920 to 1921.

Many of the Armenians leaving Cilicia were relocated in Syria and Lebanon, therefore the Catholicate followed its people. After nine years of wandering in Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus, the Holy See was reestablished in Antelias, Lebanon, in 1930.

The Antelias site had been an orphanage where thousands of Armenian orphans were cared for by the American Near East Relief from 1920 to 1928. It now seemed the logical location for the Cilician See and its Seminary, which would become a center for the training of a new generation of clergy and lay leaders.

Thus, the former orphanage became an ecclesiastical and educational center. The Armenian people having lost hundreds of priests as victims of the genocide, and having now been dispersed all over the world, desperately needed leaders in their religious, national and cultural life.

Visionary Leadership of Catholicos Sahak

Catholicos Sahak II (Khabayan) proposed to the Near East Relief that the Antelias orphanage be turned into a theological seminary and training school. The Catholicos wrote, "During the last World War the Church of Armenia lost hundreds of its parochial schools and suffered the great loss of the Religious Academy of Etchmiadzin, the Seminary of Armash, and the Clerical College of Sis, where Armenian clergy used to be trained for the Church of Armenia.... The need for a school of this type is so indispensable for the reorganization and rejuvenation of our Christian and ecclesiastic life that we are ready to make the utmost sacrifice for its realization."

The Catholicos's proposal received endorsement from the Committee on Cooperation in the Near East

and the World Sunday School Association. A delegation from the latter organization toured the Near East, then reported on the other valuable uses to which the former orphanage could be put by the Armenian Church.

The delegation's report noted, "Not only would this Antelias compound make a valuable place for such an educational institution, but it would also provide a residence for the Catholicos of Cilicia for the Armenian Church, and a headquarters for the religious education work of the Church."

After careful deliberation, it was decided that a finer purpose for the empty orphanage could not be found. Near East Relief would grant use of the Antelias property to the Armenian Church for five years in order to carry out the seminary project at a nominal rental of \$1 per year. In addition, due to the limited resources of the still struggling Armenian people, the Near East Relief Board voted to allocate \$10,000 per year for the five-year trial period toward the school's annual budget of \$15,000, with the understanding that the Armenian Church would assume all costs at the end of that time. Armenians in America agreed to raise the remaining \$5,000 per year.

The importance of an Armenian leadership to perform this great task was acknowledged by the Near East Relief Board members. Although many of them had worked on behalf of the Armenians for close to fifteen years, they recognized their own limitation. They upheld that "no solution could be found under a purely foreign leadership, but that it must be accomplished, if it is accomplished at all, by an educated Armenian leadership."

By 1930, when the Seminary at Antelias opened, Near East Relief had spent close to \$100 million in relief, most of which went to aid Armenians. This, combined with the organization's foster parenthood for orphans, was considered a direct stake in the future of the Armenian nation.

Staffing the Seminary

Immediate action was taken by Sahak Catholicos and the Near East Relief Board to open the Seminary. The Catholicos himself was to serve as the spiritual head of the Seminary. He had brought Bishop Papken Gulesserian, a graduate of the famed Armash Seminary, to assist in

the formation of the school at Antelias. Deeply affected by age, the Catholicos sought a coadjutor to share the duties of his office, a post soon filled by His Holiness Papken Gulesserian, who also became professor of ancient Armenian language and literature.

Bishop Shahe Kasparian, an alumnus of the Ardashir Seminary and the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Boston, and who was a graduate student at Harvard Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, went to Lebanon to assume the post of Dean and professor of Armenian ecclesiastical and secular history. Associate Dean and professor of education and sociology was the Rev. Theodore Elmer, a graduate of Princeton University and Theological School. Rev. Elmer's association with Armenians dated back to his experience as a teacher in mission schools and as a vocational training specialist for ten years for the Near East Relief in the Caucasus. Completing the faculty were Puzant Yeghiayan, monitor and professor of Biblical literature; N. Partamian, French and mathematics instructor; Rev. Paren Melkonian, Armenian language instructor; Dr. H. Dakassian, physician and science teacher; E. Khouri, professor of Arabic; and K. Kartenian, professor of music.

The orphanage buildings in the Antelias complex, although the Near East Relief had remodeled them some years before to provide living and classroom space for the orphans, now required additional renovations. His Holiness Sahak II, according to a Near East Relief report, "transformed the interiors of these buildings and made them suitable as residence quarters for himself and the students of the school, for classrooms, a chapel, an official reception room, a library and an auditorium."

When the Seminary was scheduled to open, the Antelias Committee of the Near East Relief wrote a letter of congratulation to the Catholicos which said in part, "The Near East Relief, Armenian friends in America and representatives of the churches of America, have given us the high privilege of communicating to your Holiness our faith in the success of this undertaking at Antelias, and the assurance of our loyal and sympathetic support."

The Catholicos, in turn, expressed his gratitude to Near East Relief and the Armenians of America in a letter saying in part, "The sincere expression of your joy on the occasion of the establishment of a Catholicate and the training school for priests and teachers at Antelias, combined with our rejoicing doubled our grateful thanks toward the Near East Relief, representatives of the Christian churches of America and our own beloved sons of the Church of Armenia, who reside in America.... Thank

God that through the Antelias project our faith and hopes are about to be realized."

The Seminary in Recent Years

That the work of the Antelias Seminary has had a worldwide impact through the services rendered by its students to the Church in the Middle East, Europe, North and South America cannot be disputed. During the past seventy-three years thousands of young Armenians have passed through the Seminary. Among its students have been catholicoses, archbishops, bishops, celibate priests, married priests, teachers, headmasters, and choir directors, as well as writers and intellectuals. Many of the students who have studied at the Seminary have gone on to serve the community in various ways as volunteer workers.

In 1978 the Seminary was relocated from Antelias to the mountain town of Bikfaya, where the Catholicate's summer residence is located, just a short drive from Antelias. Antelias, once a quiet suburban town near Beirut, had become a bustling part of the metropolitan area and the move to Bikfaya was deemed essential to provide the serene atmosphere necessary for spiritual and intellectual discipline. Extensive restoration and renovation is currently underway to the seminary's two buildings.

The course of study pursued includes: Systematic and Pastoral Theology; Church History; Philosophy; Psychology; Logic; Church Music; Armenian Church History; Liturgy, Canon Law and Hymnology; Old and New Testaments and Exegesis; Armenian History, Geography and Culture; Ethics; Liturgy and Hymns; Modern Armenian and Classical Armenian; Armenian and European Literature; Classical Armenian Literature; Pedagogy; Mathematics and Science; Languages (Arabic, French, English); Music.

The history of this institution has been a tribute to the dedication and intelligence of the Armenian people. Since its founding seventy-three years ago, the Antelias Seminary has produced four Catholicoses—Zareh I, (first graduate of the Seminary); Khoren I, Karekin II, and Aram I, along with the many bishops, vartabeds, and parish priests serving around the world.

If ever an institution has justified the privations necessary to bring it into being, it is the Armenian Theological Seminary at Antelias. The institution is a credit to all who had a hand in its birth. It lives on as a monument to the creative power of the ecumenical spirit and humanitarian impulse that prompt humankind to work for the benefit of posterity, in the image of the Creator. ✠

A Conversation with a Seminarian...

Deacon Joseph Garabedian Talks About the Seminary

Deacon Joseph Garabedian just completed his first year of study at the Cilician See's Theological Seminary in Bikfaya, Lebanon. During a visit to the Prelacy in July we had an opportunity to ask him a few questions about his experiences. Deacon Joseph was born in Beirut on December 10, 1979. He came to the United States with his family in 1988 when he was nine years old. He is the son of Garabed and Lucy Garabedian. He has a younger brother, Serge. They live in River Edge, New Jersey. Deacon Joseph is now back in Lebanon starting his second year of study.—Editor

When did you first experience your “closeness” to the Armenian Church?

In the beginning when we first moved to New Jersey we did not know the area well so we used to attend the Protestant church. But I always felt that something was missing. It just felt foreign somehow, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

Had you attended church in Beirut?

We did go to Badaraks, not all the time, but it must have been enough that the Liturgy was ingrained in me. We must have gone enough times for me to be instilled with that spirit. From 3rd to 5th grade I was in the Protestant Church and in the 5th grade we switched Sunday schools and I fell in love with the Vartanantz staff [Sts. Vartanantz Church, Ridgefield, New Jersey]. I just felt at home. I felt I had a thirst for wisdom, knowledge. I had a thirst to know what I believed in. I attended Sunday School in Sts. Vartanantz from 5th to 10th grades and then completed two years of internship and taught at the Sunday School. During that time I felt that my place was at the altar. I just felt I belonged there. It was an innate thing, a calling.

I was ordained an Acolyte in 1999 and Deacon in 2000. I didn't feel that ready for it, but I was honored, and it gave me a chance to rely on God, rather than my own power, which is what God wants us to do.

When did you decide you wanted to pursue your calling?

Shortly before I became a deacon, I had already decided I wanted to go to Antelias to the Seminary. During this



Dn. Garabedian conducts the choir at St. Gregory of Datev institute

time I was in college, at Rutgers, where I majored in Middle East Studies, and graduated in 2002. Shortly thereafter I went to Antelias.

I had a few meetings with Srpazan. The meetings were encouraging. I was encouraged to get ready to get the experience I needed and would not get anywhere else. Learn as much as you can was the main advice.

Even though you were born in Beirut, you really grew up here in the States. Was Lebanon a culture shock for you?

It was. The shock did not hit until about four weeks into the program. I was able to deal with it, by talking to my peers, talking to the supervisor, and the dean. The dean, Hayr Barthev Gulumian, was very welcoming and very gracious. I felt welcome. But once in a while not being used to the environment, I would feel “foreign.”

What was the most difficult aspect for you?

It was the community life, I was not used to a communal life. I was used to making decisions on my own. Making individual choices. Things are decided at the top and everyone has to follow. It was a little difficult to adjust. Sometimes I complained, but I was patient. I tried to get along with all of the students. But even though I grew up in an Armenian home, I realized we had taken on an American mentality.

Describe a typical day at the Seminary.

It is a pretty structured day. It starts at 6:30 a.m. with the tolling of the bells of St. Asdvatzadzin Chapel—a beautiful sound! At 7 a.m. we have the Morning Prayer service. The prayer hours are my favorite times of the day. At 7:30 a.m. we have breakfast. The students all take turns setting the tables. And at 8:30 a.m. everyone gathers in the auditorium where we recite the Hayr Mer (Lord's Prayer); as well as *Imasdoutyuin* and *Uskortzes Tzeratz*, and sing the anthem of the Seminary.

Then classes begin with four consecutive sessions of 50 minutes each. At 12:30 we break for lunch and between 1 and 2 p.m. we have a free hour. At 2 p.m. classes start again and continue until 4 p.m. At 5 p.m. the evening Vespers Service take place. At 6 p.m. a mandatory study hall. Dinner is at 7, and from 8 to 9 another mandatory study hall.

Describe your course of study and the teachers.

There are about 20 subjects including: Introduction to New and Old Testaments; Interpreting the New and Old Testaments; Method of Interpretation; Armenian History; Armenian Literature and World Literature; Armenian, Arabic, French, English; Philosophy; Ethics; History of Universal Church; History of Armenian Church; Liturgy; Sharagans; Church Music. I'm sure I have left out some subjects.

The religious classes are taught by the Vartabeds. The Bible class is taught by Father Mashdots Tchobanian. Ethics is taught by Father Keghart Kussbekian; Liturgy and Sharagans are taught by the Dean of the Seminary, Fr. Barthev Gulumian. His Eminence Archbishop Ardavazt Terterian teaches Philosophy, Psychology and Logic. Rev. Krikor Tchifdjian teaches Armenian Church History. There are many other teachers as well. The Catholicos, His Holiness Aram I, teaches the upper class students.

Tell me a little about the grade structure of the Seminary.

The Seminary is actually made up of two schools: First and Second levels. The first level is 7 to 10th grades (high school) and the second is 11th and 12th which is like 1st and 2nd year of college.

Where do you fit in?

When I first got to the Seminary I had an official meeting with the Dean. We talked about my education and direction. He said that Oshagan Srpazan told him I had not yet made my final decision about going into celibate or

married priesthood. At any rate they decided to start me at level two. I told the Dean I wanted to keep my options open. The course of study for celibate priesthood is three years; for married priesthood two years.

I assume all of the classes are in Armenian. Did you have any problems?

At first it was a little difficult. It took some time, about two to three months. I became quite proficient. You are forced to work harder.

Now that you have completed one year do you see anything that can be done differently?

They have the right spirit. The new dean is taking steps to improve the atmosphere and level of education. He organized a prayer group, which helped a lot. Many positive steps are being taken. I believe Zareh Srpazan will start teaching again next term. And, as I said, the Catholicos teaches the higher grade students.

When are you going back?

I will return to Lebanon in September to begin my second year. Classes begin in October. I will continue my course of study. I haven't made my final decision yet, but I am very close to making a decision toward celibacy.

How do you see your future?

When I complete my studies at the Seminary, I will continue higher theological education in the States. I hope to be ordained after I have completed all my education, although the trend these days is to ordain once the Seminary education is complete. I imagine I will most likely serve as a parish priest to a small parish in the United States. I also hope I will be able to work on translations from Classical Armenian into Modern Armenian and English in order to make our treasures more widely accessible.

How do your parents feel about your decision?

At first during the first few years they did not give it much credence. When they saw that I was serious they respected my decision and were very supportive and understanding.

Are most of the Seminarians from Lebanon?

No. Actually most are from Syria. Many are from Lebanon. A few from Iran and Nishan (Baljian) and I are from the United States. And next term we are going to have two students from Istanbul.

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Relationships: Wife...Mother...Child of God **My Testimony**

by Yeretzkien Joanna Baghsarian

Yeretzkien Joanna Baghsarian delivered this moving personal testimony at the National Association of Ladies Guilds' annual conference, which took place during the National Representative Assembly in North Andover, Massachusetts, in May. Yeretzkien's story begins with her upbringing in a Greek family with close ties to the Greek Orthodox Church. She relates her life in New York after college, her chance meeting with Armenians who became life-long friends, and finally her marriage to Jack Baghsarian, a successful jeweler and musician. Her story is her journey toward God, as a child, as a young woman, wife, mother and now a Yeretzkien. What follows are some brief excerpts after her marriage. The entire speech is on the Prelacy's web site, [www.armenianprelacy.org]. Der Hayr Gomidas Baghsarian and Yeretzkien now serve the Sts. Vartanantz Church community in Providence, Rhode Island.—Editor

Things may change around us in our relationships as we develop from infancy to teenage adolescence to mature adulthood. And if God should grant us the endurance to enjoy length of years with good health, we graciously yield to the final stage in life better known as the "golden years." No matter what age, no matter what position we hold in life...no matter what positive or negative influences that affect our circumstances throughout our odyssey on this earth, one thing will always remain the same. We are and always will be children of God created to bring Him glory with the gifts He has placed in us and sealed at the moment of Chrismation. How many of us are doing what we have been created to do for His glory? How many of us even recognize what our God-given talents are?

When I was given this assignment, I pondered for a few weeks. What could I possibly say to encourage and inspire the women of the Armenian Church? How was God going to work through this hour I have been given, to present to all of you His secret on how to live life more abundantly empowered by His Holy Spirit to do what you have been created to do and to be all that you were meant to be as a child of God.

As I prayed for His leading, I began to recall milestones in my journey when God made Himself known. I always knew in my mind that He is "God the Father." I always knew in my mind that I am "a child of God." But

when was that decisive moment when I internalized that truth that I was truly His child? How did God weave His divine plan through others to bring me to where I am today? My entire life flashed before me and within five minutes I knew that I was to share with you, for the first time in public, my personal testimony.

...

It was April 27, 1968. Our wedding day. We were married in St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church in Irvington, New Jersey, by the Rev. Mampre Kouzouian. Officiating with him on the altar was Father James Aloupis, my parish priest from Reading, Pennsylvania, who knew me since my childhood and saw me grow up in the Greek Orthodox Church.

We settled in Bergen County, New Jersey. A year later, our best friends, Bobbie and John were married. They, too, settled in Bergen County. We lived only ten minutes apart. We were typical suburbanites of the late 60's and early 70's. We raised two children, Athena and Armen, and like most households we had pet crabs, a turtle and a dog named Voski. I was a stay-at-home mom. Jack had his business in the Diamond District of New York by day and on weekends he played his music and sang folk songs. On Friday nights he played at the Dardanelles in New York with Johnny Berberian. Practically every Saturday he was booked either in New England, New York or New Jersey for Armenian dances or weddings. ... Our lives were busy. ... We had it all. Or did we?

On many occasions I would accompany Jack to his music jobs as most musicians' wives did in those days.

Athena was now nine and Armen was six. The ritual was always the same. I would read them a story and tuck them in bed. Mrs. Vitty, our next door neighbor, would arrive. I would give her instructions for the evening and we would be on our way to an Armenian dance either in New Jersey or New York City. Dances didn't end until 1 a.m., and after that we would finish the night with breakfast at the Million Dollar Diner in Paramus, New Jersey. We were usually home by 3 a.m.

For a period of several months, something new was added to this tucking in ritual. It seems that those particular Saturday nights when I would accompany Jack to his

band jobs, Athena would always ask me, “Mom, can we go to Sunday School tomorrow?”

“Of course, Athena,” was always my answer. “Just wake Dad and me, and we’ll go.”

Sunday morning and she would try to awaken us. And my answer? “Oh honey, Mom and Dad are so tired. Maybe next week....”

And every Saturday she would ask again. Please, Mama, can we go to Sunday School? My answer was always the same. And again, Athena would attempt to wake us, and again I would say, we’re so tired, maybe next week.

This went on for months. Finally, one Saturday night, as I began the ritual of reading and tucking in, I noticed that my daughter was crying. “What’s wrong, honey?” I said.

“Mom, I don’t want to go to Sunday School anymore because you break your promises. Besides, God is not in this house.”

I reassured her that Dad and I were going to work something out. I forfeited the story book, and instead, I kissed them goodnight and hastily left the room.

I sat down at our dining room table. Suddenly, I felt empty inside. I felt a void I never knew was there. If God was not in our house, then certainly he was not in my empty heart. My husband had just come in from packing the trunk with amplifiers when he saw my face. “What’s wrong?” he said.

I told him about my conversation with Athena. I thought our children had everything. Parents who loved them. A secure and stable home. Where have we gone wrong, Jack. I began to question our parental skills.

Reluctantly, I went to the dance that evening, but I could not enjoy myself. I had to find God and bring Him home. I shared with [my friend] Bobbie the events of that evening. She, too, confessed that she was on a search. I was amazed how our lives always ran parallel to one another.

We bought a Bible for every member of our family in a modern version we could understand. We began to attend the Armenian church and went faithfully to weekly Bible studies. Because of our deep thirst to know God better, we absorbed spiritual truths in a very short time. I was 37 when my relationship with God deepened. I always knew in my mind that God existed. After all, He knew my name when He called me at age four. ... And when it came time to make a decision for my future, I exercised my free will and chose to continue on the road to the cross.... Again and again, God the Father made Him-

self known to me during those crucial crossroads when I had to make intelligent decision that would determine my future.... My life would have been so different had I chosen to go another way.

Yes, I never doubted the existence of God. After all, He was always there when I called upon Him...from time to time...on those rare occasions when I had to make important decisions. But prior to age 37, God was not part of my daily life. My daughter, Athena, was correct when she said those words that pierced my heart like a bullet: “God is not in this house!”

...

My story does not end here. It is only the beginning. Our children faithfully attended Sts. Vartanantz Sunday School in Ridgefield, New Jersey. They went to Christian schools and they grew in stature and in wisdom and had favor among the people.

In the early 80’s, Jack’s calling to the priesthood was confirmed in a most dramatic way. We were getting ready for church one Sunday morning. I held a secret from Jack for a year that disturbed my peace. Finally, I could no longer hold it back and I revealed something God had showed me a year earlier.

“Jack, I think you have a calling to become a priest. I don’t know what you want to do with that information. All I know is that I had to tell you what has been on my mind for a long time.”

“How long have you known this?” he asked.

“About a year,” I answered.

“Well, I’ve known for about a year that I have a calling but I hesitated to tell you.”

This revelation flooded my heart with so much joy, I couldn’t contain it. This was the first confirmation that God was truly speaking to us. Little did we know that the events of the next few hours were going to confirm it again and again.

...

At this point, we were in awe of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and we remained silent and waited for the appointed time when God would reveal how this miracle was going to take place. We had no idea it would take twelve years until we were ready for this courageous step.

In the meantime, Jack slowly brought his music career to a close so that he could be home more on weekends. He became more involved in our children’s sports activities on weekends. And when they weren’t playing ball, they were fishing. He grew stronger spiritually as he

listened to Old and New Testament tapes while he set his diamonds at his office at home. He devoted his time to writing and playing Armenian spiritual songs. He became a Deacon and then Archdeacon at Sts. Vartanantz Church in New Jersey.

In January of 1987, I applied for the position of Director of Christian Education at the Armenian Prelacy. His Eminence Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian hired me because of my educational background in the Greek Orthodox Church. I learned more about the character of the Armenian people through the Prelacy with programs that involved our youth, our Sunday School teachers, and our pastoral leaders. God was sharpening my people skills and deepening my love for Armenians.

In 1988, Jack met with Mesrob Srpazan to tell him of his desire to become a priest. His Eminence recognized God's calling on Jack's life. Arrangements were made to have Jack study under Hayr Anoushavan Tanielian for two years at the Prelacy.

On September 9, 1990, Jack was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Ashjian in the church he was to serve for the next nine years—St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church in North Andover, Massachusetts. His Eminence anointed his forehead and announced for the first time, in the presence of witnesses, his new name—Gomidas.

On October 1, 1999, our new Prelate, His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, appointed Der Gomidas to begin a new assignment at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church in Providence, Rhode Island, where he is currently serving.

God has been patient with me. In my walk as a growing Christian woman, I have gone one step forward, two steps back. I rise and I fall. I have gotten many bruises along the way, but I'm learning.

...

Thank you for inviting me to be here today. All of you are tangible, visible examples of what it means to be faithful wives, mothers and children of God. You are powerful examples of what it means to be women of God. Thank you for all that you do and especially for Who you reflect. Women are the backbone of the Armenian Church. Many go unnoticed and unrecognized. Yet, they continue to work quietly, faithfully, selflessly, effortlessly and lovingly in the life of the church. Love performs many duties that go unnoticed. Many acts of kindness receive no recognition or earthly reward. Only eternity will fully reveal the good that you have done here. And one day, when you stand on the threshold of eter-

nity—the New Jerusalem, Eevereen Jerusalem—you will know Someone was watching, Someone did notice. Then, you will hear the Lord say: "Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate." (Proverbs 31:31). ❖

A Mini Lesson

The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians offers a fascinating window onto the struggles of one community of the movement that developed into Christianity. Paul's attempt to persuade them to see and do things his way reveals just how difficult it was for people rooted in the Hellenistic culture of a large metropolis such as Corinth to assimilate Paul's gospel of Christ and its implications for personal and community life and for their relations with the larger Roman imperial society. Paul's arguments in First Corinthians were not immediately effective, as is evident from the continuing conflicts he had with the Corinthians in the various sections of Second Corinthians. His arguments in First Corinthians contain some of the earliest traditions of believers in Christ.

Deacon Joseph Garabedian

(Continued from page 20)

Any advice for future candidates for the **priesthood?**

Make sure you talk to people who have been there in order to minimize the culture shock. You have to be flexible and have an open mind.

What did you miss most?

Besides my family, it was just little things that I missed. Generally I was very content.

How are the facilities?

The Seminary buildings are currently being renovated. They are quite adequate and comfortable. I began the year in a room of my own, but later had a roommate. I believe that next year the rooms will be larger with 4 to 6 to a room. The meals are good. Wednesday and Friday are fasting days. Also the first week of Lent and Holy Week are mandatory fasting periods. Fasting during the rest of Lent is optional. My favorite part of the Seminary is the atmosphere of prayer. I love the services and the prayer groups. And our hymns are so beautiful. Some of our hymns are no longer sung in our churches in the United States, except possibly in one or two parishes. It is a shame for them to be lost. We need to revive them and show the faithful how they fit into the church calendar. ❖

The Prelacy's St. Gregory of Datev Institute concludes 17th Annual Armenian Christian Studies Program

"The best year I can remember at Datev... best class curriculum by far and excellent teachers," wrote one student on the Datev Institute evaluation form. When asked the one thing that will stand out in their minds when they think back to the Datev program, the students give you a whole gamut of candid responses, including: "Dancing," "how much fun I had with my friends," "the environment of love and Armenians that I can not find anywhere else," "friendship in a context of Armenians and religious education," "The Bible studies," "classes," "the panel discussion," "to love God with all my heart and to continue reading the Bible," "getting closer to God," "new prayers," "the joy of being here," "we are like a big family."

Christian instruction and education, friendship and fellowship, worship and prayer – these three elements governed and shaped the communal life of the 72 students from 12 parishes, who had gathered at the St. Mary of Providence center in Elverson, Pennsylvania, along

with 11 clergymen for the annual weeklong St. Gregory of Datev Institute Armenian Christian Studies program, from June 29 – July 6, 2003, under the leadership of Very Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, the Vicar General and Chairman of the Religious Council of the Prelacy.

Through worship, lectures, interactive presentations, Bible studies, and panel discussions, the curriculum exposed the students to a range of important foundations of Armenian Christianity, from Bible and creeds, sacraments and sacred chants, personal and corporate prayer, language and history, to contemporary moral and ethical issues.

Every morning the students would file out for chapel for the Arevakal service from 7:20-7:50, followed by breakfast at 8am. Classes were held from 8:30am to 12:30pm, which resumed in the evening from 7:00 to 9:30. Each day came to a close with the Husgoom service from 9:30-10:00pm. The intensive program was tempered with afternoon recreational activities, such as volleyball, soccer, and swimming. There were also special excursions to the movies, to dine out, and to the French Creek Park for canoeing. And there was the convivial 4th of July picnic.

Run by the Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC) of the Prelacy, the St. Gregory of Datev Institute

is a four-year (one week each year) faith-based, youth program. Those who complete the 4-year program may return for postgraduate classes. The classes for the five levels of study take place concurrently. This year there were 17 first-year students, 18 second-year students, 11 third-year students, 6 fourth-year students (graduates), and 20 post-graduates.



The 2003 Datevatzies with their teachers.

The participants were graced with the presence of the Prelate, His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan, who took time out of his busy schedule to be with the Datevatzies at the 4th of July picnic, sponsored by Asdghig Kazanjian.

At the end of the week during the collective evaluation, it was encouraging for the Institute staff hear that young people want the Church to provide more opportunities for fellowship and spiritual formation.

At the conclusion of the evaluation, Deacon Shant Kazanjian, Executive Director of AREC, exhorted the youth to be ambassadors for the Datev program

in their communities and to bear witness to what they have learned and experienced at Datev. "Invite one or two friends next year," he said. "It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that if we enlist one or two new students a year from each parish, we will have the greatest youth movement that the Armenian Church has ever seen," Deacon Shant concluded.

The weeklong program came to a close with the celebration of the Soorp Badarak on Sunday, July 6, followed by luncheon, graciously provided and served by Mr. and Mrs. Hrant and Arlene Jilozian.

During his sermon, in the presence of datevatzies and their parents, Hayr Anoushavan enumerated the goals and objectives of the Institute, and said that "if 'datevatzies' take with them only a small percentage of what they were offered here during the past week, that in itself will be a major contribution towards their spiritual formation."

The educators

The instructors of the Institute were: Very Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Rev. Fr. Mesrob Tashjian, Rev. Fr. Khoren Habeshian, Rev. Fr. Antranig Baljian, Rev. Fr. Nerses Manoogian, Rev. Fr. Gomidas Baghsarian, Rev. Fr. Khatchadour Boghossian, Rev. Fr. Sarkis Aktavoukian, Dn. Dr. Hovanes Hovanessian, and Dn. Shant Kazanjian. In addition, the following postgraduate "datevatzies" taught several classes: Dn. Haig Baklayan, Dn. Nishan Baljian, Dn. Joe Garabedian, Nayiri Baljian, Dr. Arsen Mekaelian, Jeanette Nazarian. This year the Institute was privileged with the presence of three guest lecturers: Prof. Peter Cowe of UCLA, Rev. Fr. Paul Tarazi of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (NY), and ethnomusicologist Krikor Pidedjian.

A word of thanks

A program of this scope is made possible through the collaborative efforts between AREC and parishes, parents, volunteer workers, and a number of organizations and individuals. It is meet and right to acknowledge and thank them for their support and contributions to the Institute. In the first place, the Institute wishes to thank the instructors for their labor of love and the parents for entrusting their children to the Institute for a week of spiritual formation. The Institute would like to express its gratitude to the following datevatzies for their invaluable services as supervisors and counselors: Dn. Haig Baklayan, Dn. Nishan Baljian, Dn. Joseph Garabedian, Ms. Barbara Baljian, Ms. Nayiri Baljian, Mr. Arek Hamalian, Dr. Arsen Mekaelian, Mrs. Martha Mekaelian, Ms. Jeanette Nazarian, and Mrs. Marie-Jean Zaat. Many thanks to those parishes that subsidized a portion of the expenses



*The 2003
graduating
class*

by providing scholarships. The Institute extends its appreciation to the Pashalian Family Education Fund for the donation of \$2,400.00. A special word of thanks to Mrs. Asdghig Kazanjian (the owner of Armenian Delight in Philadelphia) for sponsoring the 4th of July picnic, and to Mr. and Mrs. Hrant and Arlene Jilozian for providing the farewell luncheon on Sunday, July 6.

The Institute thanks the following generous supporters: The Prelacy Ladies Guild (PLG), the National Association of Ladies' Guild (NALG), Dr. and Mrs. Gerard M. Goshgarian, Mr. and Mrs. John Karnikyan, Mr and Mrs. Martin P. Luthy III, Mr. and Mrs. Noubar Megerian, Dr. and Mrs. Michael Nalbantian.

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Participants

The 72 participants at the 2003 St. Gregory of Datev Institute came from the following communities:

14 from St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; 14 from Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Ridgefield, New Jersey; 7 from St. Stephen's Armenian Church, Watertown, Massachusetts; 6 from Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Providence, Rhode Island; 6 from Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Worcester, Massachusetts; 5 from St. Sarkis Armenian Church, Douglaston, New York; 5 from St. Paul Armenian Church, Waukegan, Illinois; 4 from St. Asdvadzadzin Armenian Church, Toronto; 3 from St. Gregory Armenian Church, North Andover, Massachusetts; 2 from St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Cathedral, New York, New York; 1 from Armenian Presbyterian Church, New Jersey; 5 from France.

Impressions from Datevatzies

“Every year we have a nationwide countdown for the time when everyone is at Datev once again.”

Taleen Kupelian, 4th year student

“Words cannot express the feelings evoked by tonight’s solemn interaction with God [during the evening service]... I will forever remember this service for tonight I truly was connected with God.”

A 3rd year student

“When I look back at my schedule and see four straight hours of classes, I think that I am in a correctional institute and not at Datev Institute. But the teachers make the subjects so interesting that the students complain about-class time being too short. Although we do get into trouble for hosting arm wrestling and water drinking contests, Datev is worth every moment of it. It helps us all become better individuals in a healthy environment.”

Jacques Minoyan, 2nd Year Student

We might leave Datev, but we have had so many experiences, learned new things, and shared many laughs. These memories are with our friends and us forever. No matter where we go we are always Datevatzis.

Natalia Sadaniantz, 2nd Year Student

My first year at St. Gregory of Datev Camp was a great experience! I cannot wait to go back. We learned, we prayed, and we played. We had classes and had our free time during the day. We went to church in the morning and at night. We learned about the Bible. Now I feel so much more comfortable talking about the Bible. I think kids who like learning and having fun should go to Datev.

Sara Selverian, 1st year student

“The past week at Datev was one of the best ever. We had priests, deacons, and professors teach us; and night angels guide us. We had a tight schedule, including a lot of free time and activities. We had fun canoeing, but that didn’t compare to the friends we all made at St. Gregory of Datev.”

Jane Zaatar, 1st year student

“In one day, I learned about the Bible, Armenian Badarak Hymns, and I learned about songs we need to sing at the daily services. No wonder I am so tired.”

Nicole Slotnick, 1st year student

“In addition to experiencing enlightenment through lectures, we as Datevatzies gain spirituality, friendship, and Armenian pride.”

Annie Jilozian, post grad

Armenian Identity and Challenges in Education Discussed at ANEC Educators’ Seminar

by Gilda B. Kupelian

“...It is impossible to find ‘Armenianness’ meaningful or functional if ‘we’ are not taught to appreciate it” contended Dr. Anny Bakalian in her lecture at the ANEC Educators’ National Seminar held at the Armenian Prelacy, on Saturday, August 23, 2003, which dealt with Armenian identity, its ingredients and the challenges it faces in education.

The seminar was attended by thirty five educators representing the following schools: St. Illuminator’s Armenian School, Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School, St. Sarkis Saturday School, Siamanto Academy, New York; Nareg School, New Jersey; Mourad School, Rhode Island, Hamasdegh School, Washington DC.

Noteworthy among the attendees were ANEC members and the ARS Regional Board of Directors’ Chairlady, Georgeann Oshagan, Esq., who was accompanied by members of the ARS board. Mrs. Oshagan and Vice-Chair Shake Basmajian represented the Detroit Zavarian School. The ARS board members in attendance came from Michigan, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York.

The ANEC seminar was held under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate. Following prayer, His Eminence welcomed the attendees in a heartfelt message which was imbued with esteem towards those who wage the “upstream rowing” of inculcating a new generation. He expressed appreciation for the mutual encouragement that a gathering such as the Educators’ seminar would promulgate among teachers. “Language is the philosophy of a given nation,” said the Prelate, “an individual may have an Armenian psyche but something would be amiss if he did not have his language”.

Addressing the educators, His Eminence continued, “Your work is a mission. An achievement attained by hardship is much more gratifying and its merit all the more valuable.” His Eminence commended the organizers of the seminar and concluded, “What teachers do is for God and country. It is a mission to perpetuate an integral Armenianism especially for our eternal motherland Armenia.”

In a professional, statistically and anecdotally punc-

tuated presentation, keynote speaker sociologist Dr. Anny Bakalian spoke about the transition from being to feeling Armenian, which is the same title as her groundbreaking book. A graduate of Columbia University, Bakalian was professor of sociology at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland for twelve years. She is currently the Associate Director of the Middle East and Middle Eastern Center of the City University of New York.

ANEC Chairlady and seasoned educator, Mrs. Nayiri Balanian, presented functional methodology conducive to learning language and history. Mrs. Balanian started her presentation by the famous Aesop fable where the tongue comes across as both good and bad. The lecturer underscored the role of the teacher to use it positively to teach. She likened students to rough carbon crystals who chiseled by parents and teachers become brilliant diamonds. Mrs. Balanian's ingenious methodology of teaching was transposed to the seminar where the attendees became first-graders.

ANEC Executive Director, Gilda B. Kupelian, gave a detailed summary of ANEC activities. The presentation included the international educators' symposium held at the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias in February; the ANEC students festival in March; NRA recommendations emanating from the ANEC workshop held in May; Project Harmony and how to integrate technology in education; the ANEC Newsletter; Siamanto Academy. Ms Kupelian also spoke about the upcoming ANEC projects such as the national Armenian Jeopardy tournament.

The ANEC Teacher of the Year award was bestowed upon two deserving teachers, Mrs. Arsine Malkhasian from the Hamasdegh School in Washington DC., and Mr. Sarkis Karakozian, from the St. Stephen's Saturday School, Watertown, MA.

Mrs. Malkhasian has served the school for 17 years

teaching Kindergarten children and adolescents the Armenian language, history and religion, continuing the mission of "hayabahbanoum" and "hayagerdoun." Mrs. Malkhasian has always been forthcoming in participating in the school's various activities, be they theatrical endeavors, PTA committees, cultural and community events. For 32 years, Mrs. Malkhasian has also served the Washington community as the local ARS Secretary and as a member of the Ani-Knar chorus.

Mr. Karakozian has been serving the Watertown, Massachusetts St. Stephen's Saturday school for close to 20 years. He feels great satisfaction in helping the weak student. He bestows special care to teach that student and elevate his standard. He motivates students to excel in their individual work and collective work.

The Watertown teacher was honored in absentia. He sent the following message:

"As a humble Armenian language educator I would like to express my gratitude to the ANEC for the 'Teacher of the Year' award. The credit goes to all hard working Armenian teachers, principals, leaders, trustees, parents, and advocates everywhere, who dedicate the best times of their lives for the prosperity and advancement of the

Armenian culture and proud heritage. I owe a lot to my community, and teaching is one way for me to pay them back. I have always followed this philosophy in my teaching career: Focus hard on teaching students who needed more help to learn Armenian, but do not hesitate to cultivate them to be next generation teachers, leaders, editors and good patriots of our community in the Diaspora and Armenia."

The seminar was organized by the Armenian National Education Committee, which is a co-sponsorship of the Armenian Prelacy and Armenian Relief Society.



Archbishop Oshagan surrounded by Armenian educators who gathered at the Prelacy for the Seminar.



News from the Catholicosate

Catholicos Aram I Says Interfaith Cooperation is Crucial in Report to World Council of Churches

His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, emphasized the importance of interfaith collaboration saying that it must be a central priority of Christian churches. His Holiness is the Moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and his statements were delivered in his annual report to the WCC on August 26, in Geneva, Switzerland. The Council, which has 342 member churches, was founded in 1948 to promote unity and common action by churches. The following are some excerpts from His Holiness's address.

In the 20th century, Marxism in the Soviet Union and secularism in the west pushed religion to the periphery of public life. Religion has now emerged as a major public player. Many thinkers predict that the 21st century will become “the age of religion.” Already, religion is strongly affecting world affairs. It has become integral to our daily life, impacting our private lives, our communities and the public spheres of our societies, even in those countries that have traditionally and constitutionally established clear separation between state and religion.

The relationship between religion and politics is volatile. For some, the political role of religion is integral to its nature and vocation. For others, there are no clear demarcation lines separating religion from politics. There are also those for whom religion is a private affair. These approaches and trends have created confusion more or less in all religions. Hence, in some countries religion is exploited for political ends, and in others it is used to advocate false ideologies and perpetuate unjust structures.

In many regions, the growing role of religion in public life is accompanied by considerable changes in the religious landscape. Religiously homogenous societies are being replaced by multi-religious societies. Now that religions are living in permanent and close interaction with each other, religious plurality is no longer a conceptual issue; it affects the very texture of societal life and creates new paradigms, new ways of life, and a new self-under-

standing. It also shapes multiple-relationships and multiple belonging within our institutions, our families and even within ourselves.

Our ecumenical vision embraces the whole humanity, including other religions. In our “Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC” we clearly expressed our commitment “to foster dialogue and cooperation with people of other faiths in order to build viable human communities.” In “Our Ecumenical Vision” we said, “We open ourselves for a culture of dialogue and solidarity, sharing life with strangers and seeking encounters with those of other faiths.” In fact, the “dialogical co-existence” with other religions is affecting our theological perceptions, our relationships and the way we articulate and live out the Christian faith.

It must be noted that in view of the current situation in the world, Christian-Muslim relations, which have always been a concern within the ecumenical movement, are receiving priority attention. The common Abrahamic roots and the long history of coexistence of Christians and Muslims are an asset to this dialogue. At the same time, global realities are producing new tensions that need to be addressed with urgency and determination.

A close look at the major developments in inter-religious dialogue of the last half century leads us inevitably to the following conclusions: First, the ecumenical movement has always been conscious of the need to develop an appropriate approach to the reality of religious traditions. There were, however, differences of approach and emphasis among the churches. Second, while developing guidelines and ecumenical considerations, the Council has repeatedly stated that it can neither provide a theology of dialogue nor set a comprehensive policy for dialogue since the churches live in different contexts and have gained different experiences of dialogue with people of different faiths. Third, dialogue has caused controversy in and among the churches. Some have expressed fear about the objectives of dialogue and others have raised questions about the validity of other faiths. Dialogue remains the most complex and controversial dimension of the ecumenical movement.

When looking at the present inter-religious predicament, it is important to consider the following points: First, dialogue is no longer an academic activity involving only historians, scholars and theologians. People from all walks of life are engaged in a living dialogue. We are experiencing a “dialogue of life,” which embraces all aspects and spheres of human life. Therefore, dialogue is no longer a matter of simply exchanging views; it is the experience of living together, reflecting together and

working together. Second, dialogue must be contextualized. Churches and communities living in different environments are faced with different issues and concerns emerging from living with people of other faiths.

In the last few years, ethnic conflicts, religious fundamentalism and their attendant violence have increased alarmingly. In response, inter-religious initiatives have proliferated. Most of these inter-religious activities are geared towards conflict resolution and peace making. Some of them are aimed at developing a common ethical framework on the basis of shared values and perspectives. Others, organized in conjunction with global or regional events and processes, are attempting to encourage the participation of religions. Religious leaders are sometimes invited to provide support to major social, economic, scientific and even political gatherings. Nearly all these initiatives are one-time events, lack focus and have only a short-term impact. There is a clear need to provide context and substance to inter-religious activities, and to seek inter-connection and harmony between bilateral, trilateral and multilateral dialogues.

Globalization is drawing people together irrespective of religion, race or culture. In the “global village” we must live together. Dialogue is no longer merely a theological question; it is essentially an existential challenge of living together. For centuries religions have built their own communities, their own spiritual ethos, their own theological, ethical and legalistic walls to protect themselves. Today a new culture of co-existence is taking shape, as people belonging to different religions are increasingly becoming aware of their common brokenness and common destiny before God. In fact, this sense of commonality and mutuality is developing what I call a “spirituality of living together,” which is expressed in diverse forms and ways. Parallel to this growing trend, we are also experiencing a deepening tension between identity and plurality, which is leading many societies to confrontation and disintegration. Indeed, new “walls of separation” are being built in a world that is in the process of destroying the old walls. A disintegrated plurality, coupled with religious conservatism, may eventually become a source of mistrust and new divisions if it is not transformed into a sharing and integrated community.

The necessity to live together does not only arise from globalization. Life together is a gift of God. We all belong to the one household of God. Living as com-

munity is integral to all religions. It must be noted that from the very inception of dialogue with other religions, the WCC has emphasized community both as the context and the aim of dialogue. I believe that this approach needs to be further explored and strengthened in a world in which communities are constantly and directly exposed to the dangers of losing their identity and integrity. The question is: What kind of community shall we seek with our neighbors? Living together as community raises complex problems and critical issues that need to be properly addressed by all religions.

In a world in which hopelessness is growing and moral and spiritual values are decaying, religions are urged to engage in a critical process of self-assessment and self-purification in order to transform the ambivalent role of religion. Religions are called to re-articulate their common values and renew their common affirmations and commitments by providing a moral foundation to global order and governance, and a clear vision for a just and sustainable world. Any religion that aims for power loses its *raison d'être*. God is the owner, protector, sustainer and reconciler of the whole humanity and creation. Religion is the servant and agent of God's universal plan. Living, reflecting and working with people of other faiths is a risky yet hopeful process. The Christian fear of syncretism and betrayal of the Gospel will always remain with us, and ambiguities and uncertainties will continue to surround us. Furthermore, we may not reach a common perspective on many issues; yet dialogue is an irreversible process. We must, therefore, take the challenge of living our faith and proclaiming Christ in pluralistic communities responsibly and faithfully. We must also take the opportunity to dialogue and witness with other faiths seriously and courageously. As “Our Ecumenical Vision” reminds us, “our task is to embody, here and now, the vision of what God's people are willed to be.” We have different faith-claims and convictions. Yet, our common origin, our common humanity and our common goal impel us to be together “on the way” to god's future. Let us, as Christians, engage ourselves with people of living faiths in this journey of discovery and rediscovery of our common roots, common truths and common calling. Let us engage with other religions in a creative process of renewal and transformation towards the eschatological fulfillment and reconciliation of the whole of humanity and creation. ❖

C R S S R O A D S

A Review of Prelacy and Parish Activities

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

St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School Students Ranked in Top 15% Nationwide

Every academic year, students in grades two and four from St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown take the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) in reading, language arts, math, science and social studies.

This year, students in the fourth grade scored in the top 15% in reading, language arts, spelling and math, while students in the second grade scored in the top 20% in these same subjects. The statistics of previous years' test results reveal that students improve their test scores as they pass from one grade to the next.

Since 1926, CTB has been the leaders in providing high quality products and services. CTB assessments reflect instructional content and align with national and state standards, curriculum goals and instructional practice. CTB has mastered the processing of more than 11 million student documents a year.

The test results provide information that helps improve instruction, enhance programs and provide reliable measures of accountability, said Mrs. Houry Boyamian, principal of the school. "We compared our students' scores in all the major subjects to the national averages and we found high achievement across the board," stated Mrs. Boyamian. "In fact, we are very proud that our Grade 2 students scored in the top 10% nationwide in Social Studies."

"These are the kinds of results that our students, their parents, and the general community can be extremely proud of," said Heather Krafian, chair of the Education Committee.

This year's test results come as the school enters academic year with a new accreditation. The Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE), the accrediting body for independent elementary schools, recently accredited St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School. In doing so, St. Stephen's became the first Armenian School in New England to be accredited by AISNE, and joins the academic ranks of elite private schools in the area.

The AISNE visiting team commended St. Stephen's for its well-defined statement of mission and values, as well as for the congruence between the school's expressed mission and its actual practices. The accreditation process includes AISNE doing extensive research into the school's mission and philosophy, academic programs (preschool to fifth grade), professional staff, governance, administration and school community.

Founded in 1984, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School is a child-centered Armenian American institution committed to academic excellence, creating a climate of learning that encourages risk and exploration. St. Stephen's strives to maintain high academic standards for its curriculum and endeavors to educate the whole child in a nurturing and friendly environment where learning is an enjoyable experience.

Near East Foundation Exhibition Continues Until December in New York

"The Near East Foundation and American Philanthropy," an exhibition of never-before-displayed photographs and artifacts from the archives of the Near East Foundation (formerly known as Near East Relief), chronicling America's response to saving survivors of the Armenian Genocide is currently being exhibited in the Museum of the City of New York (Manhattan Museum), 1220 Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street, New York City. The exhibit opened October 7, 2003 and will continue through December 7, 2003. For information contact the Near East Foundation, 212-867-0064.

Khatchkar Consecration at Worcester's Holy Trinity Armenian Church

With great joy the Worcester community witnessed the consecration of a Khatchkar (cross-stone) donated to the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Worcester by Mr. and Mrs. Garabed and Aghavni Tovmassian. His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the



Archbishop Oshagan officiates during the consecration service of the new khatchkar.

Eastern Prelacy, officiated at the consecration ceremony which was dedicated to the one and one half million Armenians who perished during the Genocide and to the memory of the parents of the donors. Also participating in the service was Aghavni Tovmassian's brother, Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian, pastor of St. Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church of White Plains, New York; Rev. Fr. Aved Terzian, pastor of the Armenian Church of Our Savior of Worcester; Rev. Fr. Sarkis Aktavoukian, pastor of the host church; Rev. Fr. Krikoris Keshishian, pastor of St. Stephen's Armenian Church of New Britain, Connecticut; Rev. Fr. Aram Stepanian, pastor of St. Adsvadzadzin Church, Whitinsville, Massachusetts. Also attending the ceremony were Rev. Fr. Dr. Gary Shahinian, pastor of Park Congregational Church of Worcester and the Honorable Timothy Murray, Mayor of the city of Worcester.

Following the Vigil Service in the Sanctuary, Archbishop Oshagan led the procession outdoors to the Khatchkar. Choir members followed singing the hymns for the repose of the souls of the martyrs. His Eminence blessed the khatchkar with Holy Oil. At the conclusion of the ceremony both donors spoke about their decision some eighteen months ago to make this donation.

Rev. Fr. Sarkis acknowledged the presence of Mr. John Kasparian, a survivor of the Genocide. In his closing comments, the Prelate said that the Armenian people do not need documents to prove that the Genocide took place. It is a fact and today the Armenian nation lives and bears witness.

On the celebration of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and the 69th anniversary of the consecration of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, the Divine

Liturgy was celebrated by Archbishop Oshagan. During the Liturgy, His Eminence blessed soil brought from Armenia, which was subsequently mixed with the soil at the base of the Khatchkar.

25th Anniversary of Archpriest Krikoris Keshishian Is Celebrated in New Britain

The congregation and friends of St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church of Hartford-New Britain, Connecticut recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of Archpriest Krikoris Keshishian ordination into the priesthood.

His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan celebrated the Divine Liturgy on this occasion and attended a celebratory banquet that took place following the Liturgy.

The invited clergy from various sister parishes who attended included, Rev. Fr. Untzag Nalbandian, pastor of the Church of the Holy Ascension in Trumbull, Connecticut. Rev. Fr. Sarkis Aktavoukian, pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Worcester; and Rev. Fr. Moushegh Der Kaloustian, Prelacy Outreach pastor.

Rev. Fr. Nalbandian told the audience about the good times he and Der Hayr spent as classmates in Holy Etchmiadzin. He said it was a wonderful coincidence that after so many years they each would have their own parish in Connecticut.



Archpriest Krikoris cuts his anniversary cake as Yeretgeen looks on.

Archpriest Der Kaloustian, offered some anecdotal and humorous comments and also spoke seriously about the difficult work faced by the pastors and their Yeretkins.

Rev. Fr. Aktavoukian offered his words of congratu-

lations as well as those of his parish.

Serge Keshishian, Der Krikoris' son and a deacon in the church, provided a summary of his youth and praised his father for guiding him. He related how his father had to be both father and mother to him and his sister, Djemma, when their mother was tragically killed in an automobile accident. "He provided us with our religious upbringing and taught us our Armenian heritage," he said. He also related how in 1991 his father married Yeretzkin Arshaloos, who he and his sister respect and love very much.

The closing words were offered by Archbishop Oshagan who told Der Hayr that his love and devotion to the Church came when he received his calling from God into the priesthood. "Gratitude will come from God and not from the people," he said.

Class of 2003 Graduate from St. Stephen's Saturday School



Members of the 2003 graduating class of St. Stephen's Saturday School, Watertown, MA, proudly display their diplomas.



The Prelacy's Executive Council met recently in Whitinsville, Massachusetts, with representatives of area Churches. The Executive Council has embarked on a plan to have its meetings in various different areas and invite representatives of our parishes to share ideas and concerns.

Ordinations at St. Gregory Church in Florida

St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church, Boynton Beach, Florida, recently welcomed the Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan, to its community. During the weekend visit His Eminence met with the leaders of the community and on Sunday celebrated the Divine Liturgy, which was marked by an impressive ordination ceremony of altar servers.



Ordination of acolytes, left to right, Shant Tokatlian, Hovig Lakhoyan, Sevag Tokatlian, and Khachig Alboyadjian



Archbishop Oshagan with Ren. Fr. Sarkis Aktavoukian (left) and Archpriest Fr. Vasken Bekarian, pastor of St. Gregory Church of Florida, standing behind the model of the new church which will be built.



His Eminence presides over the ordination of Deacons Sarkis Boghosian and Dikran Beuklian.

The Church Must be Faithful...

(continued from inside front cover)

We should always be mindful above all things that we are first and foremost the Church of Jesus Christ called to bring the Good News of our Lord to a world in tribulation. We should not concern ourselves with being politically correct but rather with preaching the Gospel. Christ said, "As they persecuted me, so they shall persecute you." This is the calling of the Church, this is why the Church can never be a part of the world but only exist within it. The Church must have the courage to speak out against what is wrong, and not become a victim of the whims of a pagan, secular, and materialistic society. Attempting to be politically correct does not define something as being morally acceptable!

St. Paul in His Epistle to the Romans, chapter three, clearly defines what has happened to society as a whole:

"All have turned away from God; they have all gone wrong; no one does what is right, not even one! They have not known the path of peace, nor have they learned reverence for God!"

Clearly as we look around our world, the words of the Apostle ring loudly to each and every one of us. We have definitely lost our way on the path to the truth, the only immortal truth that is Jesus Christ!

St. Chrysostom proclaims: "Nothing is more abiding than the Church. She is your salvation, she is your refuge. She is loftier than the Heavens; she is more far reaching than the earth. She never grows old."

Yes, the Church is indeed our refuge in an otherwise uncertain and unpredictable world. Many societies, rulers, Kings, and powerful leaders have all come and gone and yet through it all the Church remains after some 2000 years because of her foundation in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Please check the Prelacy website
www.armenianprelacy.org for:
Prelacy News, Daily Bible Readings,
Up-to-the-minute information on Events,
Outreach On Line, Prelacy Bookstore On Line
Shopping, Parish Directory, Daily Bible Readings,
History and more...

Our e-mail addresses are:

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AREC: arec@armenianprelacy.org
ANEC: anec@armenianprelacy.org
Bookstore: books@armenianprelacy.org

Prelacy Calendar of Events:

Bible Study at the Prelacy, 138 E. 39th Street, New York, every 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, from 7:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m., led by Dn. Shant Kazanjian, Director of the Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC). Topic: Great Themes from the Gospel of St. Matthew. For information: arec@armenianprelacy.org

Siamanto Academy meets every Saturday at the Armenian Center, 69-23 47th Avenue, Woodside, New York, 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The college-accredited Academy offers Armenian language, history and Christian studies classes for high school students. For information contact Gilda B. Kupelian, Director of the Armenian National Education Committee (ANEC): anec@armenianprelacy.org

Badarak: Elevated Life

(continued from page 16)

we invite into our presence the prophets, Apostles, St. Gregory, Church Fathers and all those who are asleep in Christ. Our assembly is enlarged. The Church is filled with members of both victorious church and the combatant church. We are all there at the banquet of the kingdom and receive the Body and the Blood of the Lord while the angels are singing the communion hymn. "Eat and see that our Lord is sweet, alleluia..."

The feast is over. It's time again to go out to the world.

As we leave the Church we need to realize that, as much as our corporate elevation was meant to solidify our unity with Christ, but it also has a cosmic dimension. As elevated faithful we are being commissioned to elevate our world. We need to pick up the shallow and transient values of this world and raise them high in and through our sanctified bodies to our Lord asking Him to purge them, season them and transfigure them.

This is the purpose of Badarak. We are being elevated to be able to elevate the world; being transfigured to be able to effect transfiguration. As St. Augustine said about communion; "You have received that what you are; become that what you have received." ❖

Rev. Fr. Nerses Manoogian is the pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



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