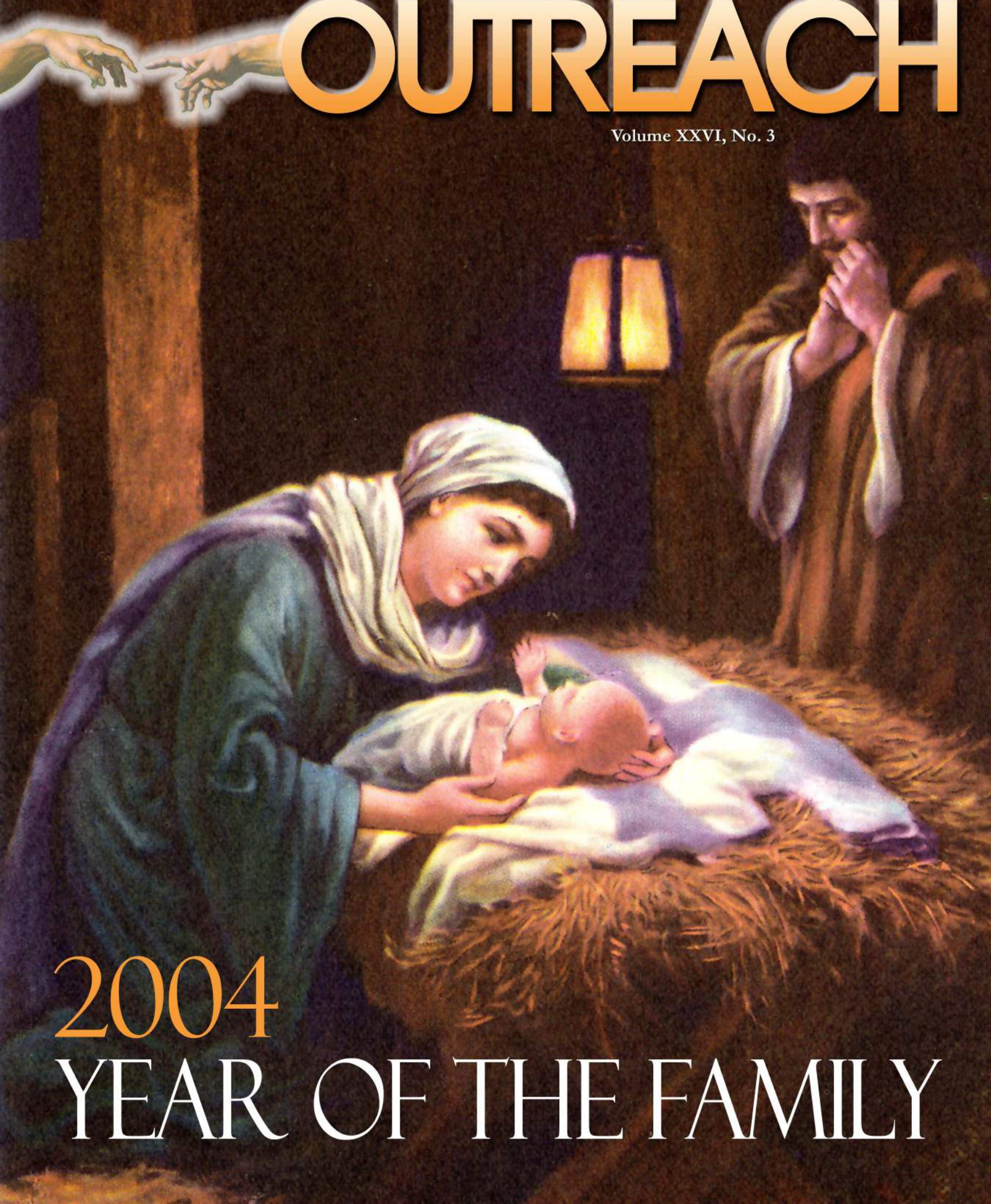


January / February 2004

OUTREACH

Volume XXVI, No. 3



2004

YEAR OF THE FAMILY

From the Editor

The passing of Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian filled the hearts and souls of many people with great sorrow, including everyone at the Prelacy, who had seen him only a few days earlier during one of his regular visits when he was in New York City.

The news of his sudden death stunned me. When I received the phone call literally an hour after he died, I felt for sure that this was a mistake, a cruel joke; I had spoken to him the day before and he seemed to be in high spirits, looking forward to the presentation of his new book, *The Etchmiadzin Chronicles*, in a few days at the Prelacy. Instead, on that appointed day, we attended his Wake.

This issue includes news and photographs of his funeral, extreme unction, and interment. The next issue will be devoted exclusively to his life and service.

I will have much more to say about him in the next issue, but I do want to remember here that he was the one who inaugurated *Outreach* in 1978 and it has continued to be published without interruption since then. Prior to 1978 the Prelacy had a newsletter type of publication, called “Prelacy News” that was issued sporadically. When Mesrob Srpazan took office as the Prelate in January 1978, one of his first initiatives was to start a regular monthly publication. We had been discussing some ideas for the publication’s name and format. I suggested a tabloid format because at that time no other Armenian organization had a publication that size (except the newspapers, of course). Ours would be printed on better quality paper and would be more of a magazine than a newspaper. He embraced that idea immediately. The name was another matter. We went back and forth with at least a dozen possibilities, none of which was quite right. Thinking out loud he said, “I want it to be a kind of an outreach to our community and....” I interrupted him in mid-sentence and said, “Srpazan, I think you just named the publication—Outreach!” He loved it and the rest, as they say, is history.

I believe the one quality that was unique with Mesrob Srpazan was his ability to relate to every kind of person. Young or old, male or female, professor or laborer, he was able to find common ground and endear himself as he did with his centurion uncle, Souren *Keri*, with whom he could discuss everything or anything or with the very youngest amongst us so that five-year-old Jacob Aram would loudly announce with awe and joy in a crowded room, “Everyone, *Srpazian* is here!”

“Srpazian” is no longer with us. But, the legacy he left will surely live on.

The Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian Publications Fund

Everyone knows of Mesrob Srpazan’s devotion to books. During his twenty-year tenure as the Prelate, the Prelacy published as many books per year as some of our largest and best-known publishing houses. In accordance with his specific wish, the “Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian Publications Fund” has been established at the Eastern Prelacy in his memory and in honor of his life-long devotion to the written word. Donations to this fund can be made payable to “Armenian Apostolic Church of America,” and sent to the Prelacy, 138 E. 39th Street, New York, NY 10016. Please indicate “Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian Fund” on your check.

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Front cover: The Holy Family. A lithograph by Providence Lithograph Company, from a 1922 Bible Story Book.

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Առաջնորդ Սրբազան Հօր Խօսքը

ՍՈՒՐԲ ԸՆՏԱՆԻՔԸ

Քրիստոնէական բառամթերքին մէջ այս գոյգ բառերը կը յատկանշեն այն երեք անձերը, որոնք ընտանեկան միութիւն մը կազմեցին Յիսուսի ծնունդով: Յիսուս ըլլալով Աստուծոյ Որդին՝ յաւիտեաններէն առաջ եւ յաւիտեանս, այդ օր եղաւ որդին Յովսէփի եւ Մարիամի՝ անբացատրելի եւ հրաշալի միջամտութեամբը աստուածային զօրութեան: Յիսուսի քարոզութեան սկսելէն առաջ եւ յետոյ, մեր առջեւ փրկութեան ճամբան բացուելէն առաջ եւ յետոյ, Յովսէփի եւ Մարիամ ճանչցուեցան որպէս Յիսուսի ծնողքը, Նազարէթի մէջ թէ ալլուր (Ղկ 2:22, 2:41, Մրկ. 6:3):

Յովսէփի անձը իր նկարագրային յատկանիշներով եւ որպէս մարդ կը բնորոշուի յատկապէս իր հնազանդութեամբ: Հակառակ տարօրինակ եւ մարդկային չափանիշով անընդունելի կացութեան, անիկա իր հնազանդութեամբ ընդունողը եղաւ Աստուծոյ կամքին եւ ծրագրին: Իր բարութեամբ, գթասրտութեամբ եւ Մարիամի հանդէպ ունեցած սիրով եւ նուիրումով ընդունեց աստուածային ամէն միջամտութիւն, եւ հնազանդութեամբ կատարեց արձակուած ամէն հրահանգ: Մարիամի յղութեան մասին հրեշտակին իրեն տրուած բացատրութենէն, Բեթղէհէմի մէջ Յիսուսի ծնունդէն մինչեւ Եգիպտոս փախուստը անիկա ընդունեց Աստուծոյ բոլոր հրահանգները, մնաց հնազանդ Աստուծոյ խօսքին եւ կատարեց զանոնք: Գուրգուրաց, խնամեց եւ սիրեց իր զաւակը, տեսաւ անոր հասակ առնելն ու աճումը եւ մնաց իր զաւակին հետ երեսուն տարիներ՝ հայրական բոլոր տեսակի պարտաւորութիւնները կատարելով:

Աւելի դժուար կացութեան մէջ էր, որ Մարիամ եղաւ մայրը Աստուածորդիին: Իր յղութիւնը ոչ ոք կրնար հասկնալ բացի իրմէ, որովհետեւ հրաշքը պատահած էր միայն իրեն, Աստուած իջած էր իր մէջ՝

հոն մարդկայնօրէն մարմին առնելու: Միայն իր ազգականը՝ Յովհաննէս Մկրտիչի մայրը Եղիսաբէթ, զգաց Մարիամի յղութեան հրաշալի պատահարը, անոր որովայնին մէջ աճող փոքրիկին Տէրութիւնը (Ղկ 1:41-45): Աստուած զինք ընտրեց որովհետեւ կը ճանչնար անոր բարութիւնը, մաքրութիւնը եւ հնազանդութիւնը: Սուրբ ընտանիքը կազմուեցաւ, որովհետեւ Մարիամ հնազանդեցաւ Աստուծոյ կամքին, անոր որոշումին: Եւ այս հնազանդութիւնը հրաշքի վերածուեցաւ Յիսուսի ծնունդով:

Սուրբ ընտանիքի երրորդ անդամը Յիսուս ինք էր, որ ծնելով Մարիամէն շաղախը հանդիսացաւ այդ ընտանիքին: Եթէ Յովսէփի եւ Մարիամ հնազանդ գտնուեցան Աստուծոյ կամքին, Քրիստոս ի սկզբբանէ այդ հնազանդութիւնը ունեցաւ, որովհետեւ որպէս Աստուծոյ Որդի յաւիտեաններէն առաջ պատրաստ էր մարդկութեան փրկութեան համար մարդկութեան գալու, հնազանդ էր Աստուծոյ կամքին մինչեւ իր մահը (Փլ 2:8):

Եւ հնազանդութենէն, Յովսէփի, Մարիամի եւ Յիսուսի հնազանդութենէն, անոնց ենթարկուելովը Աստուծոյ օրէնքին եւ կանոնին, ծնաւ սուրբ ընտանիքը, որ օրինակ պիտի դառնար բոլոր աստուածապաշտ ընտանիքներուն, Աստուծոյ սիրոյն եւ հնազանդութեան մէջ տեսնելով մարդկութեան եւ քաղաքակրթութեան զարգացումը, ժողովուրդներու աստուածավախ դաստիարակութիւնը եւ հնազանդութիւնը Աստուծոյ օրէնքին, որպէս գերագոյն, անբեկանելի եւ անվիճելի օրէնք, որուն հպատակութեամբ եւ հնազանդութեամբ կը պայմանաւորուի կազմութիւնը, այսօր ալ, սուրբ եւ աստուածահաճոյ ընտանիքին:

Աշխարհի վրայ այսօր Աստուծոյ օրէնքը, այդ օրէնքին հասկացողութիւնը դժբախտաբար կ'աղաւաղուի: Թերահաւատութեամբ կը մօտենանք անոր, որովհետեւ մեր մարդկային դատողութեամբ յաճախ

բարոյական սայթաքումներ ընդունելի կը գտնենք եւ օրինականութեան մակարդակի վրայ կը պաշտպանենք ինչ որ դատապարտելի էր եւ է Աստուծոյ օրէնքին առջեւ, Աստուածաշունչին մէջ: Ընտանեկան միութիւնը, զայն բաղկացնող անդամներու յարաբերութիւնները շատ յաճախ սկսած են խոտոր համեմատիլ Աստուածաշունչի սկզբունքներուն: Այր ու կնոջ, ծնողք եւ զաւակի յարաբերութիւնները տկարացած են, քրիստոսական սէրը չարափոխուած է, յարգանքէն ու սէրէն ծնած հնազանդութիւնը ցնդած՝ զայն սեփականութիւնը կարծելով միայն տկարին: Ամուսնական սրբութիւնը սկսած է աղօտիլ, ընտանիքի անդամներուն միջեւ ողջմիտ եւ սիրալիլ յարաբերութիւնը եսասիրութեան եւ հպարտութեան կործանիչ հոգեբանութեամբ սկսած է քանդուիլ, մինչդեռ պէտք է աշխատիլ կառուցելու ընտանիքը, անոր գորութիւնը, որ նախապայման է հաւաքաբար, որպէս քրիստոնեաներ եւ Աստուծոյ զաւակներ Աստուծոյ ընտանիքը հաստատելու համար երկրի վրայ:

Ընտանիքը ազգի մը գորութեան եւ գոյութեան հիմնաքարն է: Մեր ժողովուրդը ամէն բանէ առաջ իր գոյատեւումը կը պարտի այն ընտանեկան զօրաւոր կապին, որ մեր ցեղային նկարագրին որպէս յատկանիչ գունազարդուեցաւ, գեղեցկացաւ եւ ամրապնդուեցաւ քրիստոնէական սկզբունքներով: Ընտանիքի անդամներու փոխադարձ եւ խորունկ սէրը իր ակունքը ունի Տասնաբանեայ պատուիրանին մէջ՝ «Պատուէ հայրդ ու մայրդ» պատգամով, որուն գործադրութեան բնական արդիւնքը կը վայելենք այն ինչ որ պատուիրանը կ'ըսէ իր շարունակութեան մէջ.- «Որպէսզի միշտ բարիք գտնես եւ երկրի վրայ կեանքդ երկար ըլլայ» (Ելք 20.12): Այդ բարիքը այն

երջանկութիւնն է, որ դարերով վայելեցինք որպէս ընտանեկան երջանկութիւն, մեր ազգին կեանքը եղաւ երկար, եւ հակառակ ամէն տեսակ փորձութեանց ու աղէտի, գոյատեւեցինք: Որովհետեւ մեր հիմերը, ընտանեկան զօրաւոր շաղախով ամրապնդուած, հաստատուած էին ընտանիքի եւ բարոյական ազնիւ սկզբունքներու վրայ: Այս եղած էր մեր ազգին տրուած մեծագոյն նուէրը, նախախնամութեամբ եւ դաստիարակութեամբ ուրախացնելու համար մեր ընտանիքներն ու ազգը:

Սուրբ Ծննդեան տօնին առիթով, երբ մեր աչքերը դարձեալ կ'ողողենք սուրբ ընտանիքին եւ մեր մարդացեալ Աստուծոյ՝ Յիսուս Քրիստոսի, անոր մտերին, փոխանակ ոսկիի եւ կնդրուկի եկէք մեր հնազանդութիւնը իրեն, իր օրէնքին եւ պատուիրաններուն որպէս նուէր իրեն ընծայենք, որովհետեւ մի միայն այդ օրէնքին ընդունումով եւ գործադրութեամբ է որ կրնանք մեր իսկական սէրը յայտնել իրեն, փոխադարձելով իր մեծ սէրը, որ իր մարդացումով մարդկութեան ցոյց տուաւ՝ մեր հոգիներու փրկութիւնը ապահովելով: Այդ հնազանդութիւնը պէտք է դառնայ մեր ապրելու եղանակը, Աստուծոյ եւ մարդոց հետ յարաբերելու չափանիշը, որով մեր տուններուն մէջ կը ստեղծենք սուրբ ընտանիքը՝ բարախուն Աստուծոյ սիրով, հնազանդութեամբ եւ բարոյական առողջ սկզբունքներու իրագործումով:

Շնորհաւոր Նոր Տարի եւ Սուրբ Ծնունդ:
Քրիստոս ծնաւ եւ յայտնեցաւ:

ՕՇԱԿԱՆ ԱՐՔԵՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍ
Առաջնորդ Ամերիկայի Արեւելեան Թեմին
Սուրբ Ծնունդ, 2004

Հետեւաբար այլեւս Աստուծոյ համար օտար եւ խորթ չէք, այլ՝ Աստուծոյ ժողովուրդին հետ համաքաղաքացի էք եւ Աստուծոյ ընտանիքին հարազատ անդամները: Մասերն էք այն մեծ կառոյցին, որուն հիմը առաքեալներն ու մարքարէներն են, եւ որուն անկիւնաքարը ինք՝ Քրիստոս Յիսուսն է: Իրմով է որ ամբողջ կառոյցը ներդաշնակ միասնութեամբ մը կ'աճի եւ Տիրոջ սեփական սուրբ տաճարը կը դառնայ: Անոր միացած՝ դուք ալ բոլորին հետ միասին Աստուծոյ բնակարան կը դառնաք Սուրբ Հոգիին միջոցաւ:

Եփեսացիս 2:19-22



Prelate's Message

The Holy Family

Holy Family. In the lexicon of Christianity these two words signify three individuals, who with the birth of Christ formed a family union. Jesus, being the Son of God before eternity and for eternity, on that day became the child of Joseph and Mary through the inexplicable and miraculous intervention of the divine power of God. Before Jesus' ministry, before and after the opening of the road to salvation, Joseph and Mary were recognized as Jesus' parents in Nazareth and other places. (Luke 2: 22, 2:41; Mark 6:3)

Joseph's image and characteristics as a man is seen primarily through his obedience. Contrary to unusual circumstances according to human criteria, his obedience led to his acceptance of God's will and plan. Because of his heartfelt goodness, and his love for Mary, he accepted all of God's intercessions and obediently performed all of the instructions given to him. From the explanation given by the angel regarding Mary's pregnancy, to the birth in Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt, he accepted and followed all of God's instructions. He remained obedient and followed God's word. In fulfilling his obligation as the earthly father, he cherished, served and

loved his child. He witnessed his growth and maturity and remained with his son for thirty years, while performing all of the duties and obligations of a father.

Mary, the mother of the Son of God, was in more difficult circumstances. She alone could understand her pregnancy, because the miracle happened only to her. God had descended in her to become human. Only her relative, Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, understood the miraculous event, and the dominion of the conceived child in Mary's womb (Luke 1:41-45). God chose her because He recognized her goodness, her purity, and her obedience. The Holy Family was formed because Mary acquiesced to God's will and decision. And this obedience became miraculous with the birth of Christ.

The third member of the Holy Family was Jesus, who was born from Mary, and became the mortar of that family. If Joseph and Mary were obedient to God, Christ from the very beginning also showed that obedience, because as the Son of God he was ready to come to manhood for the sake



of the salvation of Mankind. He was obedient to God's will to his death (Philippians 2:8).

The obedience of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus to God's laws and canons created the Holy Family, which would become a model for all God-worshiping families who understood the need to love and obey God, who learned the fear of God, and recognized that obedience of God's commandments, which are supreme, unbreakable, and indisputable, is also necessary today for the formation of holy and God-pleasing families.

In the world today, God's law—or the understanding of that law—unfortunately has been corrupted. We are skeptical because in our human judgment we accept moral missteps and we defend that which was and is condemned by God's law in the Bible. The unity of the family and the relationships of the family components, are increasingly deviating from the principles in the Bible. The relationships between husband and wife, between parents and children, have weakened. Christian love has wickedly changed. Obedience with honor and love is out of fashion, considered to be only for the weak. The sanctity of marriage has begun to tarnish. Rational and loving relationships have been destroyed by self-love, pride and destructive principles among family members. It is necessary to work to build-up the family because it is the strength of the family that is the primary necessity for us, as Christians and God's children, to establish God's family on earth.

The family is the foundation of a nation's strength and endurance. More than anything else, our nation owes its survival to our strong family ties, which have been a unique mark and character of our nation, which was colorfully decorated, beautified, and strengthened with Christianity. The deep mutual love of a family had its

genesis in the Ten Commandments: "Honor Your Father and Mother." The natural outcome of this is what follows, "so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you." That favor is the family happiness that we enjoyed for centuries. Our nation's life endured, and in spite of all types of vicissitudes and calamities, we survived. The mortar of our strong families, which were established on ethical principles, reinforced our foundation. This was the great gift given to our nation by Providence in order to bring happiness to our families and nation through proper education.

On the occasion of the Holy Birth when our eyes are once again focused on the Holy Family and on our incarnated Lord, Jesus Christ, and his manger, rather than on gold and frankincense. Let our gift to Him be our obedience to His laws and commandments because it is only by our acceptance and obedience of His laws that we can show our true love in return for the great love He showed us by his Incarnation to assure the salvation of our souls. Obedience to Him must become the theme of our lives, the parameters of our relationship with God and Mankind, because we create a holy family in our homes palpitating with God's love, ethical principles and our obedience.

I wish to all a Joyous New Year and a Holy Christmas.

Christ is born and revealed.

ARCHBISHOP OSHAGAN

Prelate

Armenian Apostolic Church of America

(Eastern United States)

Christmas 2004

"And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord."

Luke 2:22

"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom."

Luke 2:41

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?"

Mark 6:3

"And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled

with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.'"

Luke 1:41-45

"And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."

Philippians 2:8

ՊԱՏԳԱՄ

Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. ԱՐԱՄ Ա. ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍԻ

ՄԵԾԻ ՏԱՆՆ ԿԻԼԻԿԻՈՅ

Հայրապետական օրհնութեամբ եւ քրիստոնէական ջերմ սիրով կ'ողջունենք ձեզ՝ Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոսութեան Անթիլիասի Մայրավանքէն:

Ինչպէս ծանօթ է ձեզի, 2003 տարին հռչակած էինք «Աստուածաշունչի տարի»: Խոր գոհունակութեամբ կ'ուզենք հաստատել թէ՛ ամբողջ տարուան ընթացքին, Անթիլիասի Մայրավանքէն եւ մեր Ս. Աթոռի թեմերէն ներս, բարձրագոյն աստիճանի նախանձախնդրութեամբ արժեւորուեցաւ Աստուածաշունչին եզակի տեղը ու առանցքային դերը մեր քրիստոնէական կեանքին մէջ՝ որպէս հաւատքի անըսպառ աղբիւր ու կեանքի ճշմարիտ ճանապարհ:

Մեծապէս քաջախրուած մեր ժողովուրդի ցուցաբերած հոգեկան ընդառաջումէն, եւ խորհրդակցելէ յետոյ Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոսութեան Ազգային Կեդրոնական Վարչութեան Կրօնական Ժողովին հետ, 2004 տարին կը հռչակենք՝

ՀԱՅ ԸՆՏԱՆԻՔԻ ՏԱՐԻ

Արդարեւ, Աստուածաշունչէն յետոյ բնական է որ մեր ուշադրութիւնը կեդրոնացնենք ընտանիքին՝ մեր քրիստոնէական կեանքին, մեր եկեղեցւոյ ու ազգին այս նուիրական կառուցին վրայ:

Որպէս խորհրդածութեան ու քննարկումի, ինչպէս նաեւ 2004 տարուան ընթացքին տեղի ունենալիք նախաձեռնութիւններու որպէս ընդհանուր ուղեգիծ, Հայրապետական սոյն Պատգամով կ'ուզենք հետեւեալ մտածումները ու մտահոգութիւնները բաժնել մեր ժողովուրդի սիրելի զաւակներուն հետ.

Հայ ընտանիքը որպէս եկեղեցի

Թերեւս առաջին հերթին զարմանալի թուի այս եզակի բնորոշումը: Արդարեւ, աստուածակեդրոն կառույց մըն է ընտանիքը՝ իր ծնունդով, իր բնոյթով ու նպատակով: Աստուած ո՛չ միայն Ադամն ու Եւան ստեղծեց, այլ անոնց թելադրեց միասին ապրիլ ու բազմանալ, միշտ իրենց Արարիչին հաւատարմութեանը մէջ: Չմոռնանք մեր Տիրոջ Յիսուս Քրիստոսի խօսքը թէ՛ «Ուր որ երկու կամ երեք հոգի հաւաքուած ըլլան իմ անունովս, հո՛ն եմ ես, անոնց մէջ» (Մտ 18.20): Երբ Քրիստոս ընտանիքի մը կեանքին մէջ ներկայ է, այդ ընտանիքը կը վերածուի կենդանի եկեղեցւոյ: Աստուածաշունչը յատուկ կերպով շեշտած է ընտանիքի կարեւորութիւնը՝ սէրը, միութիւնը, հնազանդութիւնը ու հաւատարմութիւնը, այլ

խօսքով՝ ընտանիքը վաւերական ընտանիքի վերածող այս կենսական արժէքները նկատելով ընտանիքին կարեւոր սիւները: Եկեղեցւոյ հայրերը նախանձախնդիր ու խստապահանջ եղած են ընտանիքին նկատմամբ՝ զայն համարելով ամուր հիմքը եկեղեցւոյ կեանքին ու վկայութեան: Եկեղեցւոյ կանոններուն եւ տիեզերական ժողովներու ուսուցումներուն մէջ յատուկ տեղ է վերապահուած ընտանիքին:

Պատմութեան պայմաններու հետեւանքով, շարք մը եկեղեցիներ, յատկապէս արեւմտեան ընկերութեան պատկանող, կորսնցուցին ընտանիքին իւրաքանչիւր տեղը քրիստոնէական կեանքին մէջ: Պատիւ մեր ժողովուրդին, որ կրցաւ, հակառակ իր կեանքի դժնդակ պայմաններուն, անադարտ պահել հայ ընտանիքին սրբութիւնը ու անվթար՝ անոր նուիրական դերը: Ընտանիք-եկեղեցի յարաբերութիւնը եղաւ անմիջական ու կենդանի: Ընտանիք եւ եկեղեցի դարձան զիրար ամբողջացնող ու զօրացնող կառույցներ: Մկրտութեան ու պսակի խորհուրդներու ճամբով եկեղեցին կեդրոնական ներկայութիւն եղաւ հայ ընտանիքի կեանքէն ներս: Հոգեւորականներու այցելութիւնները եւ տնօրհնէքները առաւել ամրացուցին եկեղեցի-ընտանիք սերտ կապերը: Եւ ի՛նչ հոգեպարար երեւոյթ. հայ տան մէկ ջերմ անկիւնը փոքր խորան մը կամ սրբանկար մը ունենալու մեր պատմութենէն եկող սրբազան աւանդութիւնը տակաւին

որոշ չափով կը շարունակուի հայ կեանքէն ներս: Արդ, իր կրօնաբոյր միջնորդրտով հայ ընտանիքը մեզի համար միշտ կը մնայ ու պէ՛տք է մնայ փոքր եկեղեցի:

Հայ ընտանիքը որպէս դպրոց

Մեր ժողովուրդին համար հայ ընտանիքը նաեւ դարձաւ փոքր դպրոց: Հայ մշակոյթի ու դպրութեան եւ հայ հոգեմտաւոր արժէքներու գանձարանը ու պահպանը եղաւ հայ ընտանիքը մեր ողջ պատմութեան ընթացքին: Արդարեւ, երբ ներկայ օրերու հասկացողութեամբ հայ դպրոց գոյութիւն չունէր, հայ ընտանիքը դարձաւ հայ մարդուն, փոքրին ու մեծին, հայեցի կազմաւորում տուող ու հայակերտում կատարող հոգեմտաւոր դարբնոց: Երբ մեր հայրենիքը կորսնցուց իր անկախութիւնը, երբ մեր ժողովուրդը դարձաւ գաղթական ու հալածական, երբ մեր ժողովուրդը ջարդ ու աքսոր տեսաւ, հայ ընտանիքն էր որ հայ մանուկի շրթներուն վրայ Ա.Բ.Գ.-ը վառ պահեց: Հայ ընտանիքն էր որ հայ մանուկը դաստիարակեց ազգային արժէքներով ու աւանդութիւններով: Հայ ընտանիքն էր որ հայուն ինքնութիւնը անաղարտ պահեց կեանքի այլասերիչ վտանգներուն դիմաց: Արդ, վճռական եղաւ հայ ընտանիքին դերը ազգակերտումի ու ազգապահպանման առաքելութեան մէջ:

Այսօր եւս, հայ ընտանիքը, կեանքի բոլոր պայմաններուն մէջ, մեզի համար կը մնայ հայ դպրոց: Հայ դպրոց երթալէ առաջ հայ մանուկը հայութեան կը բացուի ընտանիքին մէջ. հայ լեզուն ու հայ երգը կը լսէ ընտանիքին մէջ. հայ արժէքներով ու աւանդութիւններով կը թրծուի ընտանիքէն ներս: Այսօր եւս, հակառակ հայ դպրոցներու լայն ցանցին գոյութեան, հակառակ հայ դպրոցին պարզած կազմակերպ վիճակին, հայ ընտանիքին դաստիարակչական դերը կը մնայ անփոխարինելի:

Հայ ընտանիքը որպէս հայրենիք

Կրօնական ու հայեցի դաստիարակութեան առընթեր, հայ ընտանիքը նաեւ ստանձնեց ազգային պարտաւորութիւն՝ դառնալով փոքր հայրենիք: Ճիշդ է, ամէն բանէ առաջ հայրենիքը հող է, կառոյց է, ժողովուրդ է. միաժամանակ, սակայն, հայրենիքը արժէքներու, սրբութիւններու ու ձգտումներու ամբողջութիւն է, ոգեղէն իրականութիւն է ու ազգային ինքնութիւն: Այս բոլորը եղաւ հայ ընտանիքը

պատմութեան ընթացքին:

Արդարեւ, մեր պատմութեան մտքի ու հոգիի հսկաները, մեր ժողովուրդի կեանքը հոգեւոր արժէքներով, ազգային ապրումներով ու հերոսական իրագործումներով հունաւորած մեր անմահները հայ ընտանիքէն առին հայրենիքի սէրը, հայրենիքին համար կռուելու ու արիւն թափելու սրբազան նախանձախնդրութիւնը: Անոնք հայրենիքը նախ ապրեցան ընտանիքի նուիրական յարկին տակ, եւ հայրենիքի սիրով ու հաւատարմութեամբ հոն կազմաւորուեցան: Մեր կեանքի տխուր ու անորոշ ժամանակներուն, երբ հայրենիքին ամբողջականութիւնը ու անկախութիւնը կորսնցուցինք, միթէ հայ ընտանիքը մեզի համար չդարձա՞ւ հայրենիք: Պատմութեան ընթացքին ու յատկապէս Սփիւռքի մէջ, երբ մեր ոտքերուն տակ հայրենի հող եւ մեր աչքերուն դիմաց Արարատ չունէինք, միթէ հայ ընտանիքը մեզի չհերարկե՞ց հայրենիքի սէրն ու երազը: Մենք մեծ Հայաստանը ապրեցանք «փոքր Հայաստանին», ընտանիքին մէջ: Այսօր եւս, թէ՛ Հայաստանի եւ թէ՛ Սփիւռքի մէջ, հայ ընտանիքը «փոքր Հայաստան» մըն է ու պէ՛տք է այդպէ՛ս մնայ: Ու երբ փոքր Հայաստանը զօրեղ է, մեծ Հայաստանը կը դառնայ աւելի՛ զօրեղ:

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Ահա, սիրելի՛ հայորդիներ, հայ ընտանիքը իր կեանքի ու առաքելութեան երեք կարեւոր տարածքներով՝ եկեղեցի, դպրոց, հայրենիք: Արդարեւ, մեր հաւաքական կեանքի այս երեք կենսատու տարածքները ամբօրէն շաղախուած են իրարու հետ՝ իրենց սրբազան արժէքներով, ոգեղէն միջնորդրտով ու վեհ նպատակներով: Մեր ժողովուրդը եկեղեցին, դպրոցն ու հայրենիքը իր դարաւոր կեանքի փորձառութեան ընդմէջէն ըմբռնած է մէկ ամբողջութեան ծիրէն ներս, համայնական մէկ կեանքի դրուածքէն ներս՝ գանոնք դարձնելով իր գոյութեան ամուր հիմերը, իր կեանքին թանկագին գանձերը, իր պատմութեան ճանապարհին լուսեղէն փարոսները, իր յաւերժութեան զօրեղ կռուանները:

Այս սրբազան կառոյցներուն եւ անոնցմէ ճառագայթող արժէքներուն յաւերժացման յանձնառու առաքեալը դարձած է միշտ հայ ընտանիքը: Այսօր եւս, թերեւս աւելի՛ով, հայ ընտանիքը կոչուած է նո՛յն առաքելութեան ճամբուն վրայ ինքզինք իրա-

գործելու՝ դառնալով պահապանը ու դրոշակիրը մեր հոգեւոր ու բարոյական արժէքներուն ու սրբութիւններուն, ջահակիրը հայեցի դաստիարակութեան եւ կենսայորդ աղբիւրը մեր ազգային հարազատ սպրումներուն ու ձգտումներուն:

Հետեւաբար, մեծ ակնկալութիւններ ունինք հայ ընտանիքէն: Հայ ընտանիքին նկատմամբ մեր գնահատանքին աւելցնելով, անոր պարզած ներկայ վիճակին ինքնաքննադատական մօտեցումը կը նկատենք խիստ կարեւոր: Անհրաժեշտ է որ ախտաճանաչումներն ու արժեւորումները ճիշդ կատարուին, որպէսզի հայ ընտանիքը կարենայ վերականգնել իր կեդրոնական տեղը եւ վճռական դերը մեր եկեղեցւոյ, ազգին ու հայրենիքին համայնական կեանքին մէջ: Այս նախանձախնդրութենէն մեկնելով, մեր ընտանիքներուն ազնիւ ու շարժողութեան կ'ուզենք յանձնել Մեր հետեւեալ մտահոգութիւնները ու սպասումները:

Հայ ընտանիքը պէտք է Ֆիզիքապէս աճի

Ընտանիքը տեսական յղացք չէ՝ ան ֆիզիքական գոյութիւն է: Եւ որքան ընտանիք մը թուապէս հզօր ըլլայ, նոյնքանով ան կը դառնայ զօրեղ նեցուկ տրուեալ ընկերութեան: Որակը անհրաժեշտ է, ճիշդ է՝ սակայն որակը ունենալու համար հարկ է նախ քանակը ապահովել: Մասնաւորաբար մեր ժողովուրդի պարագային պէտք է յատուկ կարեւորութիւն տրուի հայ ընտանիքի թուային պատկերին: Կեանքի պայմաններու բերումով ամուսնութիւններու թիւը ինչպէս նաեւ ընտանիքներէն ներս զաւակներու ծնունդը սկսած է նուազիլ ո՛չ միայն արեւմուտքի մէջ հաստատուած հայ գաղութներէն ներս, այլ նաեւ Հայաստանի մէջ եւ Միջին Արեւելքի հայ գաղութներէն ներս: Օրինակ, Միջին Արեւելքի երկու հայ մեծ գաղութներէն ներս, վերջին հինգ տարիներուն տեղի ունեցած ծնունդներու թիւը տեղ մը տարեկան 600-էն հետզհետէ իջած է 377-ի, ուրիշ տեղ մը, 565-էն 297-ի: Իսկ ինչ կը վերաբերի պսակներու թիւին, տեղ մը 300-էն իջած է 191-ի, ուրիշ տեղ մը 297-էն 235-ի: Նկատի ունենալով խնդրոյ առարկայ գաղութներուն թուային պատկերը, ամուսնութիւններու ու ծնունդներու պարզած ներկայ թիւը լուրջ հարց մըն է, որ կը կարօտի համապարփակ քննութեան՝ տնտեսական, հոգեբանական, ընկերային եւ այլ երեսներով:

Ազգի մը գոյատեւումը միայն հողով, մշակոյթով կամ պետական կառոյցներով չ'ապահովուիր:

Արդարեւ, ինչպէ՞ս կարելի է երաշխաւորել հայրենիքի մը ապագան, ուր իր ժողովուրդը Ֆիզիքական զօրեղ ներկայութիւն չէ: Ինչպէ՞ս կարելի է հզօր պահել եկեղեցի մը, ուր հաւատացեալներու թիւը սկսած է նուազիլ: Դարձեալ, ինչպէ՞ս կարելի է ապահովել յաւերժութիւնը ազգի մը, երբ անոր թիւը նահանջի մէջ է: Հայ ժողովուրդը «փոքր ածու» եղած է, մեր պատմաճօր բառերով: Եւ այս «փոքր ածու»ն իր մեծ իրագործումներով կը ցած է գոյատեւել: Սակայն, եթէ մեր «փոքր ածու»ն այսօր նոր ջրտուքով չզօրանայ, աւելի պիտի փոքրանայ ու կորսուի մեծ ածուներու մէջ: Հայ ժողովուրդի թուային աճը հրամայական անհրաժեշտութիւն է: Այս իրականացնելու համար թէ՛ ամուսնութիւններու եւ թէ՛ ծնունդներու թիւը պէտք է զգալիօրէն բարձրանան: Նման ընթացք մը անշուշտ կ'ենթադրէ տնտեսական բաւարար կարելիութիւններու ստեղծում: Հետեւաբար, Հայաստանի պետութիւնը, մեր եկեղեցին, մեր միութիւններն ու կազմակերպութիւնները պէտք է ծրագրուած ու հետեւողական աշխատանքի լծուին այս ուղղութեամբ: Հայ ընտանիքին աճը նախապայմանն է ու երաշխիքը մեր ժողովուրդի աճին, հզօրութեան ու գոյատեւման:

Հայ ընտանիքը պէտք է հոգեպէս ու բարոյապէս վերանորոգուի

Մեր եկեղեցւոյ ու ժողովուրդին համար ամուսնութիւնը սոսկ այր եւ կնոջ միաւորումը չէ՝ ֆիզիքական, ընկերային, կամ օրինական հասկացողութեամբ: Եկեղեցւոյ կողմէ նուիրագործուած խորհուրդ մըն է ամուսնութիւնը: Այս գիտակցութեամբ զոյգ մը պէտք է որոշէ ամուսնանալ ու ընտանիք կազմել: Եւ այս գիտակցութիւնը զոյգի կեանքին մէջ պէտք է վառ մնայ մինչեւ մահ: Արդարեւ, պսակի արարողութեան ընթացքին արտասանուած աղօթքները, Աւետարանին ընթերցումը, երգուած շարականները այնքան թելադրական են այս իմաստով: Հոն յատուկ կերպով կը շեշտուի ամուսնական կեանքը անբիծ, առողջ ու ամուր պահելու կենսական անհրաժեշտութիւնը:

Այսօր, դժբախտաբար նահանջ կը տեսնենք հայ ընտանիքին մօտ: Նահանջը բացայայտ է յատկապէս հետեւեալ ընդհանրացող երեւոյթներուն հետեւանքով՝-

Առաջին, խառն ամուսնութիւններուն թիւը սկսած է բարձրանալ: Արեւմտեան ընկերութեանէն

ներս դժբախտաբար այլևս բնական նկատուող այս մտահոգիչ երեւոյթը սկսած է թափանցել նաեւ այլ գաղութներէն ներս: Օրինակ, Միջին Արեւելքի հայահոծ գաղութէ մը ներս, վերջին հինգ տարիներուն խառն ամուսնութիւնը սկսած է կազմել ամուսնացողներու թիւին աւելի քան մէկ չորրորդը: Սա անընդունելի եւ անընդունելի երեւոյթ մըն է: Երկրորդ, ամուսնալուծումներուն թիւը եւս սկսած է բարձրանալ: Դարձեալ, Միջին Արեւելքի երկու հայահոծ գաղութներէն ներս, վերջին հինգ տարիներուն կնքուած ամուսնութիւններու շուրջ հարիւրէն քսանը ամուսնալուծուած են: Ահաւասիկ ուրիշ մտահոգիչ կացութիւն մը: Երրորդ, հայ ընտանիքին ապագան երաշխաւորելու եւ անոր հոգեւոր ու ազգային դիմագիծը առողջ պահելու կոչուած մեր գաւազները սկսած են յաճախել օտար դպրոց: Չորրորդ, մեր ընտանիքներուն մօտ նաեւ սկսած է հետզհետէ գգալի դառնալ հեռացում մը մեր հոգեւոր, բարոյական ու ազգային արժէքներէն: Մեր ծնողներուն մօտ երբեմն կը նշմարենք այնպիսի կենցաղակերպեր, որոնք բարոյական խաթարումի յստակ ազդանշաններ են:

Արդարեւ, եթէ այս վտանգաւոր ընթացքին առաջը շուտով չառնուի, այս երեւոյթները հայ ընտանիքը կրնան առաջնորդել դէպի բարոյական, հոգեւոր ու ազգային քայքայում: Համաշխարհայնացումը իր ապաբարոյ ու ապագային արժէքներով ու արժեքափերով կը քանդէ ընտանիք եւ համայնք, մշակոյթ եւ ինքնութիւն: Ներկայ աշխարհի երեւելի եւ աներեւոյթ չարիքներուն դիմաց, մենք կոչուած ենք միասնաբար պայքարելու՝ հայ ընտանիքը բարոյապէս ու հոգեպէս առողջ պահելու համար:

Համաշխարհայնացած ներկայ ընկերութեան մէջ չենք կրնար կղզիացած ապրիլ: Պէտք է բացուինք ուրիշին. սակայն պէտք է հեռանանք մեր ինքնութենէն: Պէտք է մօտենանք նաեւ օտար արժէքներուն. սակայն պէտք է օտարանանք: Մեր արժէքները պէտք է պահենք՝ զանոնք աւելի հարստացնելով: Մեր ժողովուրդի հոգեւոր, բարոյական, մշակութային ու ազգային ինքնութեան առողջ պահպանման պայքարին մէջ հայ ընտանիքին վիճակուած է յառաջապահի դեր: Վա՛յ մեր ազգին ու եկեղեցւոյ երբ հայ ընտանիքին ներքին մթնոլորտը ապականի, հայ ընտանիքին դիմագիծը աղարտի ու հայ ընտանիքը կազմալուծուի Փիղիքապէս ու բարոյապէս: Հռոմի

մեծ պատմիչը կ'ըսէ՝ Հռոմէական կայսրութիւնը քայքայուեցաւ, որովհետեւ հռոմայեցի ընտանիքը բարոյապէս քայքայուեցաւ: Մեր եկեղեցին կոչուած է հետամուտ դառնալու հայ ընտանիքի հոգեւոր ու բարոյական առողջութեան:

Հայ ընտանիքը պէտք է գործնապէս մասնակից դառնայ մեր հաւաքական կեանքին

Մեր ազգին, մեր եկեղեցւոյ, մեր գաղութներուն, մեր կառույցներուն հիմքը, ամէն իմաստով, ընտանիքն է: Իսկ հայ ընտանիքի հայօրէն գոյութեան ու գոյատեւման շրջագիծը ու կռուանը մեր հաւաքական կեանքն է: Հետեւաբար, հայ ընտանիքը իրաւունք չունի հեռու մնալու մեր հաւաքական կեանքէն: Ի՞նչ կ'արժէ հայ ընտանիքը նկատել փոքր եկեղեցի, երբ ան հեռու է մեր եկեղեցւոյ ընդհանրական կեանքէն ու մասնակից չէ անոր հաւատքի վկայութեան: Ի՞նչ կ'արժէ հայ ընտանիքը նկատել փոքր դպրոց, երբ ան հեռու է հայ դպրոցէն ու իր գաւազները օտարին օտարացնող գիրկն է նետած: Վերջապէս, ի՞նչ կ'արժէ հայ ընտանիքը նկատել փոքր հայրենիք, երբ անիկա գործնապէս յանձնառու չէ հայրենիքի հզօրացման նուիրական գործին:

Մեր գաղութներէն ներս դժբախտաբար կան ընտանիքներ, որոնք ամբողջութեամբ կտրուած են մեր ապրումներէն, մեր տազնապներէն ու աշխատանքներէն: Կան ընտանիքներ, որոնք սոսկ ձեւական ու պարագայական մասնակցութիւն ունին մեր ազգային-եկեղեցական կեանքին: Կան ընտանիքներ, որոնք անհրաժեշտութեան պարագային միայն կը մօտենան եկեղեցւոյ, համայնքին կամ հայրենիքին: Կան ընտանիքներ, որոնք որոշ առիթներով խորհրդանշական նուիրատուութիւններ կատարելով կը կարծեն արտայայտած ըլլալ իրենց հայութիւնը:

Նման մօտեցումներ ու մտայնութիւններ ճիշդ չենք նկատեր: Հայութիւնը հաւաքական կեանք է. հայութիւնը հաւաքական պայքար է. հայութիւնը հաւաքական սրբութիւններու, արժէքներու, աւանդութիւններու ու ձգտումներու ամբողջութիւն մըն է՝ եկեղեցւոյ, դպրոցի, մշակոյթի ու հայրենիքի ճամբով արտայայտուող: Հայ ընտանիք մը արժանի կը դառնայ հայ ընտանիք կոչուելու, երբ անիկա գործնապէս մասնակից է մեր հաւաքական կեանքին: Հետեւաբար, մեր կեանքի լուսանցքին վրայ պէտք է հայ ընտանիքը իր կեանքը ապրի. իր արժանի տեղը մեր կեանքի մայր էջին վրայ է: Մեր հաւաքական

կեանքին իր գործօն մասնակցութեամբ հայ ընտանիքը աւելի՛ կը զօրանայ բարոյական, հոգեւոր ու ազգային հասկացողութեամբ: Իսկ մեր ընդհանրական ու գերազոյն արժէքներու յաւերժացման բերած հայ ընտանիքին ներդրումով մեր ժողովուրդի հաւաքական կեանքը աւելի՛ կը ծաղկի:

* * *

Հետեւաբար, սիրելի՛ հայորդիներ, որքա՛ն կենսական ու նուիրական կառույց է հայ ընտանիքը մեր ժողովուրդին համար: Հայ ընտանիքին ֆիզիքական գոյութիւնը ապահովելը, անոր աճը երաշխաւորելը, զայն բարոյապէս եւ հոգեպէս առողջ պահելը ու մեր կեանքին մասնակից դարձնելը առաջին հերթին մեր հայրերուն ու մայրերուն եւ ապա մեր զաւակներուն առաջնահերթ պարտաւորութիւնն է: Ան նաեւ մեր բոլորի՛ն անյետաձգելի պարտաւորութիւնն է: Մեր հայրենիքը, մեր եկեղեցին, մեր կառույցները, իւրաքանչիւրը իրեն յատուկ մօտեցումներով պէտք է հայ ընտանիքին աջակից դառնայ, որպէսզի ան կարենայ իր հոգեւոր ու բարոյական արժէքներով, իր սրբութիւններով ու տոհմիկ աւանդութիւններով, իր ազգային ոգիով ու երազներով վերստանձնել իր վեհ առաքելութիւնը:

Այսօր, հայ ընտանիքը կը գտնուի լուրջ տագնապներու ու հսկայ մարտահրաւէրներու դիմաց: Հայ ընտանիքին առնչուած հարցերուն, մտահոգութիւններուն, սպասումներուն ու աշխատանքներուն մասին պէտք է լրջօրէն մտածել 2004 տարուան ընթացքին: Մտածելէն ու տագնապելէն անդին սակայն, հարկ է այնպիսի նախաձեռնութիւններու դիմել, այնպիսի ծրագիրներ մշակել, այնպիսի կարելիութիւններ ստեղծել, որով կարելի ըլլայ հայ ընտանի-

քին առջեւ բանալ վերականգնումի ու վերակազմակերպումի ճամբան:

Ահա այ՛ս սպասումներով ու հայրական ջերմ սիրով կ'ողջունենք մեր բոլոր ընտանիքները: Մեր արդար պահանջքն է, որ բոլոր այն ընտանիքները, որոնք արդէն մեր եկեղեցւոյ ու ազգի կեանքին մասնակից են, իրենց մասնակցութիւնը աւելի ամրապնդեն. եւ բոլոր այն ընտանիքները, որոնք պայմաններու բերումով հեռու են մեր ազգային-եկեղեցական կեանքէն, վերադառնան իրենց հարազատ արմատներուն: Մեր արդար սպասումն է մեր բոլոր հայ ընտանիքներէն, որ իրենց ընտանեկան յարկը միշտ ծաղկեալ պահեն հոգեւոր, բարոյական ու ազգային արժէքներով ու աւանդութիւններով:

Այս սպասումներով կոչ կ'ուղղենք մեր թեմերու Առաջնորդ Սրբազաններուն, Հոգեւոր Դասուն, ու Ազգային Իշխանութեանց, որ 2004 տարուան ընթացքին յատուկ նախաձեռնութիւններով վերարժեւորեն հայ ընտանիքին վերապահուած վճռական դերը մեր եկեղեցւոյ ու ազգին կեանքին մէջ:

Կ'աղօթենք առ Բարձրեալն Աստուած, որ իր երկնային շնորհներով ու բարիքներով ծաղկեցնէ ու պահպանէ հայ ընտանիքը՝ կեանքի ամէն տեսակ չարիքներուն ու փոթորիկներուն դիմաց:

Հայրական սիրով ու օրհնութեամբ,

Աղօթարար՝
ԱՐԱՄ Ա. ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ
ՄԵԾԻ ՏԱՆՆ ԿԻԼԻԿԻՈՅ

21 Դեկտեմբեր, 2003
Անթիլիաս, Լիբանան

Հայ ժողովուրդին գոյութեան ու գոյատեւման առաջին ու հօր կռուանը հայ ընտանիքն է: Հայ ընտանիքին մէջն է որ լոյս աշխարհ եկող մանուկին սիրտն ու հոգին պիտի ծաղկին ու բացուին հայ հոգիին, հայ շունչին, հայկական սրբութիւններուն ու աւանդութիւններուն: Հո՛ն է որ հայ մանուկին ականջները պիտի լեցուին հայկական բարբառին շեշտովը, եւ հո՛ն է որ անոր շրթները պիտի բացուին հայ խօսքին՝ իր մօր եւ հօր հայութեամբ օծուն շունչին տակ:

Ազգ մը կը բաղկանայ անհատներէ. այդ անհատները ազգին տուող ընկերային հաստատութիւնը ընտանիքն է. իսկ ընտանիքին ալ հիմքը, խարխուղը եւ ոգին կը կազմէ մայրը: Արդ, երբ կը խօսինք հայ ընտանիքի դերի մասին, չենք կրնար շեշտը չդնել հայ մօր վրայ, քանի որ մայրն է այն ոյժը, որ ոտքի կը կանգնեցնէ ամբողջ ընտանիքը:

ԽՈՐԷՆ Ա.
Կաթողիկոս Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ

Year of the Family

**Message of
His Holiness Aram I
Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia**

We greet you with pontifical blessings and warm Christian love from the Mother Monastery of the Catholicate of the Great House of Cilicia in Antelias.

As you know, we had proclaimed the year 2003 as “*The Year of the Bible*.” With deep satisfaction, we wish to affirm that the singular place of the Bible and its pivotal role in our Christian life, as an inexhaustible source of faith and the truth path of life, was appreciated with the highest degree of zeal during the entire year in the Mother Monastery of Antelias and in the dioceses of our Holy See.

Greatly encouraged by the spiritual receptiveness shown by our people, and after consulting with the Religious Council of the National Central Administration of the Catholicate of the Great House of Cilicia, we proclaim the year 2004 as

THE YEAR OF THE ARMENIAN FAMILY

Indeed, after the [Year of the] Bible, it is natural that we should focus our attention on the family, this sacred institution of our Christian life, our church and nation.

With this Pontifical Message, we wish to share the following thoughts and concerns with the beloved offspring of our people, as a general guide for contemplation and examination, as well as for the initiatives to take place during the course of the year 2004.

The Armenian family as church

In the first instance, this singular characterization may seem surprising. Indeed, the family, in terms of its birth, its nature and purpose, is a God-centered structure. God not only created Adam and Eve but also instructed them to live together and multiply, always in fidelity to their Creator. Let us not forget these words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*” (St. Matthew 18: 20). When Christ is present in the life of a family, that family is rendered into the living church. In a special way, the Bible has underscored the importance of the family with reference to love, unity, obedience and faithfulness. In other words, these vital values, the important pillars of the family, are what make a family a true family. The church fathers have been zealous and strict with regard to the family, considering it the secure foundation of the life and witness of the church. A special place is reserved for the family in the canons of the church and teachings of the ecumenical councils.

Due to historical circumstances, the special place of

the family in Christian life was lost in certain churches, particularly those belonging to Western society. Our nation deserves credit for having been able to maintain intact the sanctity of the Armenian family and preserve its sacred role unharmed, despite the harsh conditions of life it has had to endure. The family-church relationship became immediate and living. Family and church became complementary institutions, completing and strengthening one another. By means of the sacraments of baptism and marriage, the church assumed a central presence within the life of the Armenian family. The visits of clergymen and home blessings further reinforced the close ties between church and family. Furthermore, it is most uplifting to note that the sacred centuries-old tradition of having a small altar or icon in one warm corner of an Armenian house still continues to be a part of Armenian life to a certain extent. Now, with its atmosphere infused with religion, the Armenian family has always been and must remain a small church for us.

The Armenian family as school

For our people, the Armenian family also became a small school. Throughout our history, the Armenian family became the treasury and preserver of Armenian culture and literature, Armenian spiritual-intellectual values. Indeed, when Armenian schools, as presently constituted, did not exist, it was the Armenian family that imparted an Armenian character to its members, young and old alike, and served as the spiritual-intellectual forge to produce generation after generation in the Armenian

mold. When our homeland lost its independence, when our people became refugees and expatriates, when our people were subjected to massacre and deportation, it was the Armenian family that kept the Armenian alphabet alive on the lips of Armenian infants; it was the Armenian family that brought up the Armenian child with national values and traditions; it was the Armenian family that kept the Armenian identity intact, in the face of degenerating dangers. All in all, the Armenian family played a decisive role in the mission of building the nation and maintaining the national identity.

Today, as well, irrespective of life's conditions, the Armenian family remains an Armenian school from our viewpoint. Before going to an Armenian school, Armenian children gain their first exposure to things Armenian within the family environment; they hear the Armenian language and song in the home; they become accustomed to Armenian values and traditions, as practiced in the course of family life. Today, as well, despite the existence of a wide network of Armenian schools, despite the organized state of the Armenian school, the educational role of the Armenian family remains invaluable.

The Armenian family as fatherland

Along with religious and Armenian education, the Armenian family also took on a national obligation by becoming a micro fatherland. It is true that, first and foremost, the fatherland is soil, structure, and people; at the same time, however, the fatherland is a totality of values, sanctities and aspirations. It is spiritual reality and national identity. During the course of history, the Armenian family became all these.

Indeed, the mental and spiritual giants of our history, our immortals channeled by the spiritual values of our people, national concerns and heroic accomplishments, derived their love of fatherland, and the sacred zeal to fight and shed blood for the fatherland, from the Armenian family. They first experienced the fatherland within the consecrated confines of the family, and developed love for, and allegiance to, the fatherland there. After all, did not the Armenian family become, for us, fatherland during the tragic and uncertain times of our life, when we lost the integrity and independence of our fatherland? Over the course of history and, specifically in the Diaspora, when we did not have the native soil under our feet and Mt. Ararat in our view, did not the Armenian family infuse us with the love and dream of the fatherland? We experienced the macro Armenia through the micro Armenia of the family. Today as well, the Armenian family is

a "little Armenia," both in Armenia and in the Diaspora, and it must remain so. And when little Armenia is strong, greater Armenia becomes stronger too.

Dear Armenians, this then is the Armenian family with three important dimensions in its life and mission: church, school, and fatherland. Indeed, these three life-giving dimensions of our collective life are solidly mixed together, through their sacred values, spiritual atmosphere and noble purposes. Throughout its centuries-old historical experience, our people have understood church, school and fatherland within the realm of one entirety, within the structure of one collective life, making them the firm foundations of its existence, the precious treasures of its life, the luminous pharoses of its course of history, and the powerful stepping stones to its perpetuity.

The Armenian family has always been the apostle undertaking the mission of perpetuating those sacred structures and the values radiating from them. Today as well, perhaps more so, the Armenian family is called upon to achieve itself on the path of the same mission, by becoming the guardian and standard bearer of our moral and spiritual values and sacred trusts, the torchbearer of Armenian education, and the copious spring of our authentic national feelings and aspirations.

Therefore, we have great expectations from the Armenian family. While we appreciate the Armenian family, we consider it extremely important that a self-critical approach be taken with regard to it, considering its present state. It is mandatory that correct diagnoses and evaluations be made to enable the Armenian family to reestablish its central place and critical role in the collective life of our church, nation and fatherland. Based on this zeal, we wish to bring the kind attention of our families to our following concerns and expectations.

The Armenian family must increase physically

The family is not a theoretical concept; it is a physical entity. The stronger a family is in terms of numbers, the stronger its support to a given society. Quality is mandatory, it is true; however, in order to have quality, it is first necessary to ensure quantity. Particularly in the case of our people, special importance must be given to the numerical picture of the Armenian family. Owing to life's conditions, the number of marriages, as well as the birth rate, have begun to decrease not only in the Armenian communities established in the West but also those in Armenia and the Middle East. For example, in the past five years, the number of births in one of two large Middle

Eastern Armenian communities has gradually dropped from 600 to 377, while, in the other, from 565 to 297. As far as the number of marriages is concerned, in one place the number has dropped from 300 to 191, and from 297 to 235 in the other. Considering the numerical picture of the communities in question, the current number of marriages and births is a serious matter requiring a comprehensive investigation that will take into consideration the economic, psychological, social and other aspects of this issue.

The survival of a nation is not ensured solely through land, culture or governmental structures. Indeed, how is it possible to guarantee the future of a fatherland, in which its people is not a strong physical presence? How is it possible for a church to maintain its effectiveness, when the number of its faithful has begun to decrease? Again, how is it possible to ensure the perpetuity of a nation, when its population is receding? The Armenians have been a “small nation,” in the words of the father of our history [Moses Khorenatsi], yet this “small nation” has been able to survive by means of its great achievements. However, if our “small nation” does not experience growth today, its numbers will dwindle and become assimilated among the more populous nations. The numerical growth of the Armenian people is an urgent necessity. In order to achieve this growth, the number of marriages as well as the number of births must increase considerably. Such increase, of course, is contingent upon the creation of sufficient economic possibilities. Therefore, the Armenian government, our church, our associations and organizations must engage in planned and persistent effort towards this end. The growth of the Armenian family is a precondition and the guarantee of the growth, strength and survival of our people.

The Armenian family must become renewed spiritually and morally

For our church and people, marriage is not the mere union of husband and wife, in the physical, social, or legal sense. Marriage is a sacrament sanctioned by the church. With this awareness, a man and a woman must decide to get married and raise a family. Furthermore, this awareness must remain constant for the duration of the couple's life. Indeed, the prayers recited, the reading of the Gospel, and the hymns sung during the wedding ceremony are so suggestive in this regard. The vital necessity of maintaining the purity, soundness and integrity of married life is particularly stressed in that ceremony.

Unfortunately, we see a regression insofar as the Ar-

menian family is concerned. This regression is evident, specifically as a result of the following factors, which are becoming generally applicable: First, the number of mixed marriages has started to increase. This worrisome reality, which unfortunately is considered natural in Western society, has begun to make inroads in other communities too. For example, mixed marriages have begun to constitute more than one fourth of the total in the past five years in a Middle Eastern community with a heavy Armenian concentration. This is an inconceivable and unacceptable situation. Second, the number of divorces too has begun to increase. Again, approximately twenty percent of the marriages recorded in the last five years in two heavily populated Middle Eastern Armenian communities have ended in divorce. This is another worrisome situation. Third, our boys and girls, who are called upon to guarantee the future of the Armenian family and to keep its spiritual and national profile wholesome, have begun to attend non-Armenian schools. Fourth, a departure from our spiritual, moral and national values has also begun to gradually become noticeable within our families. Sometimes we observe such lifestyles among Armenian parents that are clear signs of moral degradation.

Indeed, if this dangerous course is not quickly arrested, these factors can lead the Armenian family towards moral, spiritual and national dissolution. Globalization, with its immoral and denationalizing values and standards, destroys family and community, culture and identity. In the face of the visible and invisible evils of the present world, we are called upon to jointly wage the struggle necessary to keep the Armenian family wholesome, morally and spiritually.

We cannot live isolated in the present globalized society. We must open ourselves up to the society at large but, at the same time, we must not stray from our identity. We must cut down on the disparity between our values and those of the society but we must not become strangers to ourselves in the process. We must maintain our values while further enriching them. The Armenian family is destined to play a leading role in the struggle for the healthy preservation of the spiritual, moral, cultural and national identity of our people. Woe unto our nation and church should the internal atmosphere of the Armenian family become polluted, the profile of the Armenian family become defiled, and/or the Armenian family become dissolved physically and morally. The great historian of Rome says that the Roman Empire disintegrated because the Roman family became morally dissolute.

The Armenian family must become an active participant in our collective life

In every sense, the family is the foundation of our nation, our church, our communities and our institutions. Our collective life, in turn, is the context and stronghold of the existence and survival of the Armenian family, as we understand it. Therefore, the Armenian family does not have the right to remain aloof from our collective life. What value is there in considering the Armenian family a small church, when it is removed from the general life of our church and does not participate in its witness of faith? What value is there in considering the Armenian family a small school, when it is removed from the Armenian school and sends its children to a non-Armenian school, with its alienating effect? Finally, what value is there in considering the Armenian family a micro fatherland, when it is not actually involved in the sacred work of strengthening the fatherland?

Unfortunately within our communities there are families that are totally cut off from our concerns, our anxieties and our efforts. There are families, whose participation in our national-religious life is solely of a nominal and circumstantial nature. There are families that approach the church, community or fatherland only out of necessity. There are families that think they have expressed their Armenianness by making symbolic donations on certain occasions.

We do not consider such approaches and mentalities to be correct. Armenianness is collective life; Armenianness is collective struggle; Armenianness is a totality of collective sanctities, values, traditions and aspirations, expressed through church, school, culture and fatherland. An Armenian family becomes worthy of being called *Armenian family* when it is an actual participant in our collective life. Therefore, the Armenian family must not live its life on the margin of our life; its worthy place is on the main page of our life. The Armenian family grows stronger in the moral, spiritual and national sense, through its active participation in our collective life. The collective life of our people, in turn, becomes more prosperous through the contribution made by the Armenian family to the perpetuity of our overall and supreme values.

Therefore, dear sons and daughters of the Armenian people, the Armenian family is an extremely vital and sacred institution for our people. The top priority obligation, first of our fathers and mothers, and then of our children, is securing the physical existence of the Armenian family, guaranteeing its growth, keeping it morally

and spiritually sound, and making it a participant in our life. This is also the pressing obligation for all of us. Our fatherland, our church, our institutions—each with its own approaches—must assist the Armenian family so it can again take up its noble mission, armed with its spiritual and moral values, its sanctities and ethnic traditions, its national spirit and dreams.

Today, the Armenian family is faced with big troubles and huge challenges. During the year 2004, it is necessary to give serious thought to the issues, concerns, expectations and efforts concerning the Armenian family. Beyond thinking and being solicitous, however, it is necessary to adopt the kinds of initiatives, to develop the kinds of plans, and to create the kinds of possibilities that will open the road to rehabilitation and reorganization before the Armenian family.

Thus, it is with these expectations and with warm paternal love that we salute all our families. Our just demand is for all those families, which are already participating in the life of our church and nation, to further strengthen their participation, and for all those families, which, owing to circumstances, are removed from our national-religious life, to return to their authentic roots. Our just expectation from all Armenian families is that they always keep their household flourishing with spiritual, moral and national values and traditions.

With these expectations, we call upon the Prelate Bishops and Clergymen of our dioceses, and national leadership, to reevaluate the critical role of the Armenian family in the life of our church and nation during the year 2004 through special initiatives.

We pray to God Almighty that, through His divine blessings and beneficence, He may make the Armenian family prosper and protect it from all kinds of evils and storms.

With paternal love and blessings,

ARAM I

Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia

December 21, 2003

Antelias, Lebanon

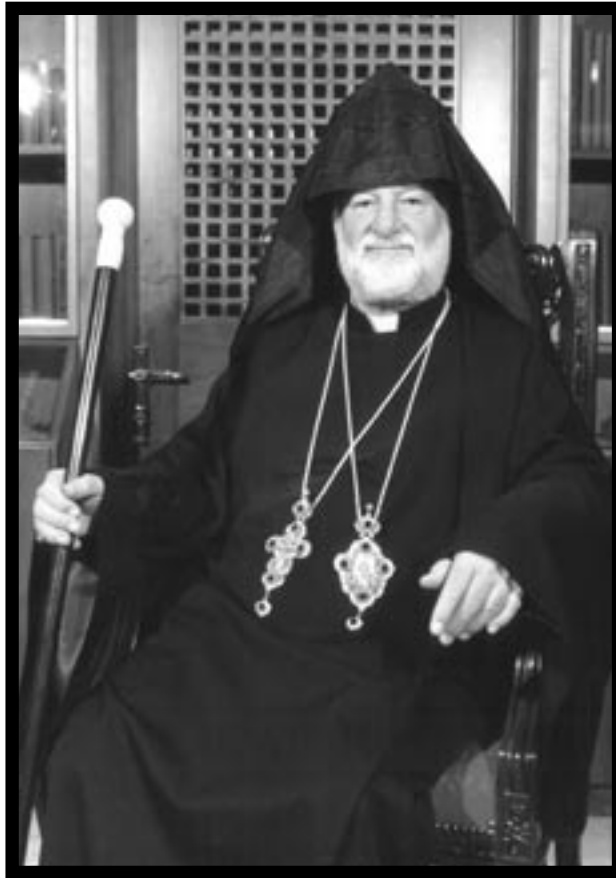
(Translated by Aris G. Sevag)

You are the sons which God gave to your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’”

Acts 3:25

Archbishop Sahag Ayvazian

1930—2003



Archbishop Sahag Ayvazian, who faithfully served the Armenian Church for half a century died Sunday, November 30, 2003, in Greece of a heart attack. His Eminence was 73 years old and was the Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Greece.

The Wake Service and the Extreme Unction took place Friday, December 5, at St. Illuminator's Cathedral in Athens, Greece. He was placed in eternal rest in the first mausoleum of Athens.

The Divine Liturgy was officiated by Archbishop Gomidas Ohanian, Spiritual Dean of the Armenian Diocese in Venezuela, with the attendance of a large number of people including dignitaries from various church denominations.

Archbishop Sahag was born on December 14, 1930, in Cyprus with the baptismal name Hagop. His education began in a Greek School in Cyprus and later continued at the Melikian-Ouzounian School and the Melkonian School. He was accepted at the Cilician See's Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon, in 1947, from where he graduated in 1953 and was subsequently ordained by Bishop Terenig

Poladian and given the name Sahag. He attended Beirut's Conservatory of Music and taught religion at the Vahan Tekeyan and Sourp Nishan Schools. He also served as the Director of Sundays Schools for the Holy See of Cilicia. He became the Prelate of the Diocese of Greece in 1958, the same year he was elevated to the rank of Bishop by Catholicos Zareh I. He was given the rank of Archbishop in 1964 by Catholicos Khoren I. Archbishop Sahag represented the Cilician See at various ecumenical conferences and ceremonies.

The message of His Holiness Aram I was read at the end of the church service. His Holiness eulogized Archbishop Sahag by vividly describing his life of service. "His whole life was shaped by his dedication and devotion, from his Seminary days right down to the very last moments of his life. Sahag Srpazan was our nation's faithful servant," Catholicos Aram said. "Truly, service was the central mission of his life. Unselfish service became his way of life and the realization of his goals his only glory and honor," said the Catholicos. ❖

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian 1941—2003



Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, who faithfully served the Armenian Church for nearly half a century, including twenty years as the Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of the Eastern United States and Canada, died on Tuesday, December 2, 2003, in New York City, of a heart attack. His Eminence was 62 years old.

Since 1998, when he concluded his service in New York, Archbishop Ashjian lived in Armenia where he did extraordinary charitable work including the care of orphans, the elderly, the re-transmission of the faith to the people after 70 years of communist rule, bringing back to life centuries-old monasteries and churches, and the publication of hundreds of historical and literary books. His Eminence was in the United States visiting his family and planned to return to Armenia on December 8.

* * *

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian was born in Beirut, Lebanon, on January 3, 1941, to Necess and Martha Ashjian, and baptized with the name Hrair. His early schooling and religious training took place in Beirut where he attended the St. Nishan School. Among his teachers were: Yetvart

Boyadjian, Yetvart Daronian, Yervant Bedrossian, and a young priest, Karekin Sarkissian, who years later was to become Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians. An ardent churchgoer and enthusiastic singer in the choir of St. Nishan Church, he gained the attention of Bishop Khoren Paroyan, then the Prelate of Lebanon. He was ordained a deacon of the Armenian Church in June 1958. After completing theological and armenological studies at the Seminary, he was ordained a celibate monk on May 28, 1961, by Catholicos Zareh I, who named him Mesrob in honor of the 1600th anniversary of the birth of Mesrob Mashdotz, the founder of the Armenian alphabet. In 1963 he received the rank of Vartabed (doctor) by Catholicos Khoren I; in 1977 he was elevated to the rank of Bishop and in 1983 to Archbishop by Catholicos Karekin II.

A man of keen intellect, with a life-long love for learning and books, Archbishop Ashjian furthered his studies at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, Switzerland; participated in the International Student Fellowship, a pilot project of the World Council of Churches and the

United Presbyterian Church; and Princeton Theological Seminary where he received a Master of Theology in 1970. He had completed all of his course work for a doctorate when he received word of his election as the Prelate of the Diocese of the Armenians in Iran and India. He was elected to serve as the Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy in December 1977, and began his tenure in January 1978. In 1991, Princeton Theological Seminary awarded him a second Master's Degree in recognition of the work he had completed toward the doctorate.

During his career as a teacher, he enthusiastically embraced the positions of Assistant Dean and Dean of the Cilician Seminary, a teacher and preacher at the Karen Jeppe College in Aleppo, Syria, and Principal of the Mardikian School in Antelias, Lebanon.

As a dedicated ecumenicalist, he participated in the International Student Fellowship, attended conferences in Lebanon, Jordan, France, Switzerland, Ghana, Finland, Egypt, and Odessa. He served as a member of the standing committee of the Conference of the Heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and was a delegate to the World Council of Churches' Assembly in Vancouver, British Columbia, as well as in Canberra, Australia. In 1991, His Eminence was appointed to serve on the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission. His travels have taken him to every corner of the world where he has lectured, preached, met with world leaders, and sought out Armenian historical sites.

Following the earthquake in Armenia in 1988 he spearheaded a campaign to provide immediate aid to the stricken people. He was also in the forefront of bringing international attention to the Karabagh struggle.

A prolific reader and writer, Archbishop Ashjian has written many articles and at least three dozen books in Armenian and English.

In 1995, His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians, appointed him as the Executive Director of the 1700th anniversary commemorating Armenia's official acceptance of Christianity

as a state religion, which was to be marked worldwide in 2001. Archbishop Ashjian assumed this post while still serving as Prelate in the United States. In 1998 he moved to Armenia to devote all of his time to the commemorative events.

For the past three years, he has intensified his mission work in Armenia through a wide variety of activities, all of which directly benefited the people. A project that was particularly close to his heart was the renovation of the St. Gevorg of Moughni Monastery in Armenia, which was accomplished through generous donations by his friends on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of his ordination. Throughout his service he approached his duties with love and an enthusiasm that earned the love and respect of those around him.

He was an honorary member of the National Academy of Armenia, a member of the Writers Union of Armenia, and a founding member of the Land and Culture Organization, USA, as well as a director of Land and Culture International and the Foundation for the Safeguard of Armenian Historical Monuments.

The Archbishop's immediate survivors include a brother, Hovhanness Ashjian, of Beirut, Lebanon; a sister, Hripsime, and her husband Mesrob Seropian, of New York; a nephew, Hrair Seropian of New York; and a niece Liza and her husband Bedros Yessaian

of New York. A brother, Hagop, predeceased him. ✕

Special Issue of Outreach

The next issue of *Outreach*, a publication he founded and named in 1978, will be devoted to his life and service.

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian Publications Fund

In accordance with his wish, the "Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian Publications Fund" has been established at the Eastern Prelacy in his memory and in tribute to his life-long devotion to the written word.



Archbishop Mesrob with children of Vakef in Mousa Ler during one of his trips through historic Western Armenia. Vakef is one of the few villages in Turkey with an Armenian population.

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian is Laid to Rest in Antelias, Lebanon

Extreme Unction Service Takes Place in New York City in Midst of Two-Day Blizzard

by Iris Papazian

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, who passed away on December 2, 2003, in New York, at age 62, was placed in his final resting place in the Zareh I Mausoleum at the Catholicate of the Holy See of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon, on Monday, December 8. His Eminence was the Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, Eastern United States and Canada for twenty years, from 1978 to 1998.

Funeral services and the Extreme Unction service took place in New York City on Friday evening and Saturday morning, amidst a severe blizzard that paralyzed the entire Mid-Atlantic and New England areas, preventing the presence of a large number of people who had planned to attend from various areas in the United States and Canada.

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, accompanied the remains of the late Archbishop to Lebanon where in accordance with Archbishop Mesrob's expressed wishes he was placed in the Mausoleum with other prominent clergymen. Also traveling to Lebanon were members of Archbishop Mesrob's family and some close friends.

Funeral Services

Archbishop Choloyan officiated during the Wake Service on Friday evening, and the Divine Liturgy and Extreme Unction on Saturday morning, at St. Illuminator's Cathedral in

New York, with the attendance of a large number of people including dignitaries from various church denominations, in spite of the severe weather. In expectation of an overflow of mourners, closed-circuit television had been set-up in the Church's Pashalian Hall.



H.E. Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan anoints Archbishop Mesrob's forehead. Photo by J.K. Hovhannes.

Joining the clergy serving the Eastern Prelacy were a host of other clergy who attended and participated in the services including: His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of

the Armenian Church of America; Rev. Fr. Michael Chevian, Dean of St. Vartan Cathedral, New York City; Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian, pastor of St. Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church, White Plains, New York; His Grace Bishop Manuel Batakian, Exarch, Armenian Catholic

Church of America; Monsignor Robert Stern, representing His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan, Archbishop of New York; His Eminence Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphren Karim, Primate of the Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church, accompanied by the Very Rev. Chorepiscopus John P. Meno; His Grace Bishop Dimitrios, representing His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Church of the USA.

During the Divine Liturgy the coffin was carried to the altar for the Extreme Unction ceremony accompanied by the chanting of the 23rd Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want... Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over..." With the words, "Blessed, anointed and sanctified be the forehead of the late Archbishop Mesrob, with this sign of the Cross and with this Holy Gospel..." Archbishop Oshagan anointed the forehead of the late Archbishop. Archbishop Barsamian then anointed Archbishop Mesrob's right hand, chanting "Blessed, anointed and sanctified be the right

hand of the late Archbishop Mesrob. With this sign of the Cross and with this Holy Gospel and with this Holy Chrism, and with the grace of this day in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.”

The angelic voice of Isabel Bayrakdarian, star of the Metropolitan Opera, resonated through the sanctuary along with the Cathedral Choir, adding to the poignant beauty of the Armenian Liturgy.



H.E. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church, anoints the hand of Archbishop Mesrob. Photo by J.K. Horbaness.

In a moving, extemporaneous eulogy, Archbishop Oshagan focused on Archbishop Mesrob’s devotion and dedication to the Armenian Church, Armenian culture and the Armenian people. He emphasized the exemplary service given by Archbishop Mesrob for nearly half a century from his earliest days in the church as a deacon, as a teacher and a dean, to his education at Princeton Theological Seminary and his first diocesan mission as Prelate of New Julfa when he was a young, but very mature and energetic clergyman. He served the New Julfa

diocese for four years. This was followed by his twenty-year tenure as Prelate of the Eastern United States and Canada. Archbishop Oshagan related how His Holiness Karekin I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, entrusted him with the important task of Executive Director of the 1700th commemorative events. Finally, Archbishop Oshagan described the exemplary religious and charitable work Archbishop Mesrob was currently doing in Armenia. “He was able to accomplish

things that organizations could not,” he said. “In Armenia during the span of only five years he published more than 220 important historical and cultural books; he baptized thousands of young people; he cared for hundreds of orphans; he organized important cultural events, he restored religious sites; he helped where help was most needed.”

Immediately following the Voghchoyn (Kiss of Peace), all of the clergymen ascended the altar and kissed Archbishop Mesrob’s anointed forehead and right hand after which the casket was closed and the Divine

Liturgy continued.

Archbishop Barsamian expressed condolences on behalf of the Diocese and the Diocesan clergy and read a message sent by His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians to His Holiness Catholicos Aram I. The message said in part, “We have had the opportunity to intimately know Archbishop Mesrob, especially during the last several years when he lived in Holy Etchmiadzin, where he was first an assistant to His Holiness Karekin I, of blessed memory, and later to me. Archbishop Mesrob served the Motherland with his unique, enthusiastic and graceful talents. He successfully served as the Executive Director of the 1700th commemoration. Through his singular efforts the Sourp Kevork Monastery in Moughni was totally renovated. Through his sponsorship and authorship many books were published. He organized symposiums and pilgrimages. He advanced the spiritual life of the people and he was instrumental in many charitable endeavors. One of his final works of charity was the opening of the Terchoonian Home in the earthquake-stricken area of Gumri. Truly, during his lifetime Archbishop Mesrob faithfully served our Christ-loving people. With his death our Church has lost one of her most faithful servants.”

Bishop Khajag Hagopian, Catholicos Vicar of the Prelacy of Canada, expressed condolences on behalf of the Prelacy of Canada and read a message from His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia.

With the conclusion of the Liturgy, the casket was carried outside to the waiting hearse and to JFK Airport for the Archbishop’s final journey to his spiritual home in Antelias, Lebanon.

Services in Antelias, Lebanon

Archbishop Oshagan accompanied the remains of his spiritual brother and dear friend at every step of the journey. In Lebanon members of the Cilician Brotherhood waited at the airport to escort the remains of Archbishop Mesrob to the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Antelias, where the Divine Liturgy was officiated by Archbishop Gomidaz Ohanian, Spiritual Dean of Venezuela, under the Presidency of Catholicos Aram I. The moving service was attended by a large number of mourners. The Gomidas version of the *Kobanank Uzken Der* (“We give thanks to you, O Lord”), which was one of Archbishop Mesrob’s favorite hymns, was sung in a slow dirge-like tempo.

Archbishop Barkev Martirosian, Primate of the Diocese of Artsakh, represented the Holy See of Etchmiadzin, and read the message of the His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians.

Catholicos Aram eulogized Archbishop Mesrob by vividly describing his life of service. “His whole life was shaped by his dedication and devotion, from his Seminary days right down to the very last moments of his life. His whole life was service,” the Catholicos said. “Mesrob Srpazan was our nation’s faithful servant,” Catholicos Aram said. “He regarded Armenian culture to be inseparable from his faithful mission to the Church. He was dedicated to our spiritual treasures—culture, the written word, and to the flourishing and illumination of literature. In Antelias he was consumed with our national dreams and crises. He considered our nation’s rights to be part of his work, first as a seminarian in Antelias, and later as prelate in Iran and in the United States and Canada. He became a leader in

our nation’s just cause and struggle. Through his writings and speeches he educated the world around him about the Armenian Genocide and

the remains of Archbishop Mesrob was placed in his final resting place in the Zareh I Mausoleum of the Holy See of Cilicia. “And now, Lord, You



Internment in Antelias, Lebanon.

our people’s unrealized rights. The dream of a free and independent Armenia was mixed with his life and mission. Especially in recent years he worked to strengthen the Homeland. With great devotion he served those in need. Perhaps more than any prelate in Armenia he served the people. Truly, service was the central mission of his life. Unselfish service became his way of life and the realization of his goals his only glory and honor,” said the Catholicos.

Messages of condolence were received from His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Patriarch of Jerusalem; His Beatitude Archbishop Mesrob Moutafyan, Patriarch of Constantinople; the government of Armenia; the Armenian Catholic and Evangelical Churches; all Cilician Dioceses; and Armenian international organizations.

With the ending of the service,

have called him, and his ministry is effaced from Your Holy Church and congregation. Wherefore, we pray, O Lord, in Your abundant mercy, welcome his spirit among Your elect and among those that do the will of Your Holy Name....”

His Holiness and members of the family accepted the condolences of mourners in the Veharan (Catholicos residence), followed by a memorial luncheon attended by the Catholicos, family members, and members of the religious order of the Holy See of Cilicia.

Archbishop Mesrob’s obituary was printed in many local and national newspapers, including major newspapers such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Boston Globe, and the Chicago Tribune. His death was also announced on several network radio stations throughout the United States. ❖

Year-long Commemoration of Narek Concludes

International Conference on St. Gregory of Narek Brings Together Scholars under Sponsorship of Eastern Prelacy and Harvard University

As the year 2003 came to a close, so too did the year-long commemoration of the 1000th anniversary of St. Gregory of Narek's "Book of Lamentation," a work considered to be the masterpiece of Armenian Christian literature.

Perhaps the major celebration that took place in the United States was the International Conference at Harvard University, co-sponsored by the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church and Harvard University's Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies. Professor James R. Russell, the holder of the Mashtots Chair and Dr. Vazken Ghougassian, Executive Director of the Eastern Prelacy, were the organizers of the two-day symposium.

St. Gregory's life and works were offered to an appreciative audience, filled to capacity Friday evening and Saturday. Those in attendance left the conference with a deeper understanding and appreciation of Narekatsi.

The conference opened Friday evening with an opening prayer and words by His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy. His Eminence's invocation was taken from

Prayer 12 of the Book of Lamentations. His Eminence welcomed everyone to the conference with special words of appreciation to the scholars who accepted the invitation to participate.

Professor James Russell of Harvard University had additional words of welcome to all and invited Professor P. O. Skjaervo, Aga Khan Professor of Iranian Studies, who welcomed scholars and audience on behalf of Harvard University. Professor Skjaervo expressed his joy at seeing such a large turnout to hear the presentations and

expressed Harvard's pleasure of being a co-sponsor of the event.

Professor Russell, who chaired the first session, introduced the two speakers of the Friday night session: Professor Theo Van Lint of Oxford University and Professor Abraham Terian of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New York. Professor Van Lint's topic was "*A Matean Oghbergut'ean* by Grigor Tghay? on the reception of the Narek in Cilicia." Professor Terian presented "Narekatsi's *K'aroz* on St. Gregory the Illuminator."

The morning session on Saturday was chaired by Professor Robert W. Thomson who presented the following

lecturers: Very Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar of the Eastern Prelacy, who spoke on "The Narek in the Armenian Liturgy and in the Life of the Faithful"; Professor Christina Maranci, University of Wisconsin, who described "The Built World of Grigor Narekatsi"; Professor Tamar Dasnabedian, Kaslik University, Lebanon, who spoke of "Mary's Sanctity According to Panegyricon II of the Mother of God Theotokos, pp. 12-

24"; and Professor Michael B. Papazian, Berry College, Georgia, who concentrated on "The Theology of Sin and Redemption in Narekatsi."

After a lunch break, which allowed participants and the audience to interact and also explore the charming Harvard University neighborhood, the second session began under the chairmanship of Professor Nina Garsoian, of Columbia University. Professor Garsoian introduced the following speakers and topics: Professor Robert W. Thomson, Oxford University, whose paper explored



Archbishop Oshagan with the scholars who presented papers during the two-day Narek Conference at Harvard University. From left to right, Prof. Abraham Terian, Archbishop Oshagan, Prof. Sergio La Porta, Prof. James Russell, Prof. Tamar Dasnabedian, Prof. Nina Garsoian, V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Prof. Michael Papazian, and Prof. Robert Thomson. Missing from photo: Prof. Christina Maranci and Prof. Theo Van Lint.

Continued on page 37

Towards the New Ecumenical Configuration for the 21st Century

by Aram I

[The following excerpts are from a speech delivered by His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, at the opening session of the International Ecumenical Consultation on “Reconfiguration of the Ecumenical Movement for the 21st Century” which took place at the Catholicate of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon, in November. His Holiness has been an active participant in the Ecumenical Movement since his youthful days as a young Vartabed. He is currently serving his second term as the Moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. In this speech His Holiness describes the Ecumenical Movement at a critical crossroads. “Some may say,” he notes, “that the ecumenical boat is left alone in a stormy sea without any clear orientation. Others may say that the ecumenical boat is sinking. The ecumenical movement is in the hands of God; we are called, in obedient response to God’s call, to protect and enrich it.”—Editor]

This is not an ordinary ecumenical consultation. We, a group of selected theologians, ecumenists and church leaders from different churches and regions, engaged in ecumenical witness in different ways, are invited by the World Council of Churches to assess the present situation of the ecumenical movement, identify emerging issues, problems and challenges, and propose a framework for the future course of the ecumenical movement. The purpose of this meeting is not, therefore, to take decisions but, rather, first, to embark on a process of reflecting together with a forward-looking vision; and, second, to prepare a working paper, which will be the basis for further discussion. It is very important that immediately after this initial meeting churches, both members of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and those not members, play an active role in this process. ...

God’s Gift and Call

The ecumenical movement is God’s gift and call; it requires human response. Our response to the ecumenical movement is strongly affected and shaped, and largely conditioned, by realities and devel-

opments that surround us, as well as by the churches’ requirements and needs. The ecumenical movement is not a fixed reality; it is, and has, throughout its history, always been in constant re-evaluation, re-structuring, and re-articulation. These features will continue to impact the ecumenical movement, which will thereby acquire different shapes and manifestations until its goals are realized.

Ecumenism does not deal with concepts; it deals with realities, not with structures but with people.

Recently, an ecumenist stated that he believes that the main “problems” of the ecumenical movement are the ordination of women, homosexuality, decision-making, and proselytism. These are certainly problems for the ecumenical movement. But in my judgment, the ecumenical “problems” go far beyond these issues. The real problems are those associated with global changes, major geopolitical and economic developments, and the resurgence of religion in the

public sphere; all of these have profoundly affected the life and witness of the churches, as well as the ecumenical landscape. The ecumenical movement is facing acute concerns and enormous challenges that call for a serious reflection. We must seek a new orientation for the ecumenical movement. We must look for alternatives and new models with and for the new generation. This should be the aim of this process entitled the “New Ecumenical Configuration for the 21st Century.” ...

Conservative vs. Liberal Ecumenism

For many years, the ecumenical movement was dominated by Protestant conservative thinking, which paved the way for a theological interaction and ecumenical collaboration with the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The emergence of Western liberal Protestant ecumenism has created a new situation. As a result, the two ecumenical ethos, namely *conservative ecumenism* and *liberal ecumenism*, are in tension. The signs of tension are seen in nearly all aspects and at all levels of ecumenical life, even within the same confessional family or church.

Conservative ecumenists maintain that visible unity is the goal of the ecumenical movement, and therefore, the whole ecumenical work must be directed towards it; whereas liberal ecumenists believe that working for justice and peace should become the priority for the ecumenical movement. Marked by activism, liberal ecumenism is spreading in many regions and within churches, shaking the ecumenical paradigms. New faces of ecumenism, new patterns of ecumenical reflection, and new ways of living ecumenically are emerging. The ecumenical panorama has already changed considerably. We cannot ignore these changes and become captives of our ecumenical ethos. The conservative and liberal approaches must not become mutually exclusive. We must provide space for them to engage in creative dialogue and to move towards convergence. We need to explore again new ways of being, reflecting, and working together “ecumenically.”

We speak of ecumenical crisis. In my view, it is not the ecumenical movement, but its institutions that are in crisis. Because of our deep concern to preserve history, memory and tradition, we have encouraged institutional ecumenism and have perpetuated it. Institutions are both a necessity and a handicap. Let us not confuse movement and institution, instrument and vision. The institutional expressions of the ecumenical movement have become incompatible with the new ecumenical realities and expectations. ...

The Movement at a Crossroads

The present ecumenical panorama indicates that the ecumenical movement is at a crossroads and needs clear orientation. Therefore, we must decide. What kind of

ecumenism do we want: an ecumenism of institutional churches or an ecumenism that embraces the whole people of God? Speaking about the WCC, Dr. Konrad Raiser says that it must have “more freedom and flexibility in its work and liberate itself from the exclusive control of its member churches.” ... I agree. We can no longer keep ecumenism in its frozen institutionalism; it must enter into a dynamic dialogue and a creative interaction with changing realities. Further, we must take the ecumenical movement to the

The ecumenical movement is first and foremost a challenge to the churches to come out of themselves and engage in dialogue with each other and with the world. It is a reminder for the churches to become more credible, relevant and united in their witness to the world.

people at the grass roots and open it to new horizons. I would, however, disagree with Dr. Raiser’s approach if that approach threatens to push the churches to the periphery of the ecumenical movement. Although the churches should not possess the ecumenical movement, they should become its primary agents. The ecumenical movement is first and foremost a challenge to the churches to come out of themselves and engage in dialogue with each other and with the world. It is a reminder for the churches to become more credible, relevant and united in their witness to the world. ...

One of the major contributions of the ecumenical movement was the revival of conciliarity. In fact,

sharing, trust-building, listening, accepting each other and praying together helped the churches to experience and articulate conciliarity, though not in its fullness. However, conciliar ecumenism is in decline, and confessionalism and bilateralism are replacing multilateral ecumenism. The experiences we have gained through conciliar ecumenism must help us to move forward towards conciliar fellowship.

After more than 50 years of common journey, and in spite of significant developments in conciliar ecumenism, the ecumenical structures have not enabled the churches to take concrete steps towards this goal. The “Global Christian Forum” is emerging as a new form of multilateral ecumenism. Can the “forum” with a *Charta Oecumenica* ensure a broader basis and bring all the churches together? Can it, with its open participation, less institutionalized structures and complex procedures, help the churches to deepen their fellowship and experience and express a deeper sense conciliarity? The time for institutionalized ecumenism is coming to an end. The time for conciliar life, conciliar decision and conciliar action must begin. The ecumenical structures and decision-making processes should be reshaped and developed in a way that challenges the churches to grow together towards conciliar fellowship. Conciliar fellowship is, indeed, a strong challenge to confessionalism, parochialism, universalism and bilateralism.

We must bear in mind two other concerns when discussing reconfiguration: responsiveness and coherence in the ecumenical movement. Although these are not new concerns, they have re-emerged more acutely and with new urgency.

Our ecumenical reflection and action are basically reactive. We set our ecumenical agenda to protect and defend the positions of the churches; and they react strongly whenever they perceive their identity and position threatened. The ecumenical movement must become *responsive* rather than reactive or protective, so that it may be contextual, discerning, dialogical and interactive. The Programme Planning Document for 2003-2005 calls for “a new ecumenical configuration which will effectively respond to the challenges of the 21st century.” This is precisely what the ecumenical movement should do. As it wrestles with a changing world, it should re-configure itself and articulate its goals clearly.

Major Goals

Unity, mission and diakonia have been the major goals and the permanent foci of the ecumenical movement. However, the question of their priority and their inter-connection has generated serious debate. The Orthodox Churches have always considered the visible unity of the church as the ecumenical issue, and have always complained that it is not given a clear priority on the ecumenical agenda. The churches of the Protestant tradition have always sought the centrality of mission in ecumenical engagement. The ecumenical partners have always struggled for the urgency of social diakonia. Since these approaches and concerns are legitimate and will continue, we must try to establish coherence, interaction and complementarity between them. Let us remind ourselves that the ecumenical movement emerged as the churches' common commitment to witness the Gospel together to the world. Therefore, all issues that concern

the Gospel are ecumenical issues. In order for the ecumenical witness to become more effective, it must first become coherent, integrated and contextual. If we fail this critical task, the ecumenical movement will suffer fragmentation and departmentalization and will lose much of its integrity and wholeness.

Ecumenism does not deal with concepts; it deals with realities, not with structures but with people. The driving force of the ecumenical movement is a vision that determines its form, shape and structure, its reflection and action in a given time and place. ... The ecumenical movement must discern the “signs of the times,” and must be continually reviewed and renewed, re-configured and reshaped in response to God's call, vis-à-vis the needs of the churches and the challenges of the times. Can we develop new models, new structures and new frameworks that will enable us to organize our ecumenical life more effectively, harmoniously and creatively? ...

What should the ecumenical movement become in the 21st century: a forum, a context, a framework for collaboration among the churches, or, a fellowship of churches aimed at visible unity? Probably the re-configuration process must start with this crucial question, since most of the problems that we are facing in the ecumenical movement are, in one way or another, related to it. Those who consider the ecumenical movement as a fellowship-builder, look with great suspicion at the growing openness of the ecumenical movement to secular organizations, non-church related structures and other religions. Those who perceive the ecumenical movement as an inclusive reality transcending the boundaries of the institutional churches, and as an effective global instrument

to promote justice, peace and human rights, are frustrated by the limited scope of the ecumenical agenda. If this dichotomy is not reconciled and converged within a holistic vision and articulated through a dynamic and comprehensive framework, it will eventually lead the ecumenical movement to disintegration and polarization.

The problem, in my judgment, is not so much between the Orthodox and Protestant churches, or between the WCC and the Catholic Church; it is essentially between the ecumenical movement and the churches, as well as between the ecumenical movement and the new world situation. If the aim of the ecumenical movement is to help the churches to take God's call seriously in the world today, it must engage in a serious process of renewal. I consider reconfiguration as only one important dimension of renewal. The youth have expressed their concerns and outlined their perspectives. The churches and the ecumenical partners are now invited to take an active part in this process.

Some may say that the ecumenical boat is left alone in a stormy sea without any clear orientation. Others may even say that the ecumenical boat is sinking. The ecumenical movement is in the hands of God; we are called, in obedient response to God's call, to protect and enrich it. The ecumenical movement is future-oriented. From time to time it must pause to look ahead more clearly in order to move forward more confidently. This is the time for critical self-reflection and discernment, a time for prayer and to listen to the Holy Spirit. How do we understand, define, articulate and live out the ecumenical vision in the 21st century? This is the urgent call and a serious task before us. ✠

Stewards of the Armenian Church Become “Pillars of the Prelacy”

Eastern Prelacy Inaugurates Annual Giving Program With First of Several Regional Gatherings

by Iris Papazian

Photos by J.K. Hovhannes

“The faces I see here tonight,” said Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy, “are the faces of people who have been pillars of the Prelacy for many years, without that formal designation.” The Archbishop’s remarks were made on Friday, November 7, at the Prelacy offices in New York



Archbishop Oshagan flanked by Richard Sarajian, Esq., (left) and Antranig Bondakian.

City during a gathering attended by about thirty of the founding members who have agreed to become “Pillars of the Prelacy” through their support of an annual giving program.

“Our mission is clear: To serve God, to serve the people,” said the Prelate. “We take our strength from the people. Our Prelacy in the United States is relatively young—only 45 years old. We still have a lot to learn, but the fact that we are young means that we have the energy to work.”

For centuries the Armenian Church has carried out its traditional religious ministry, as well as its role as the guardian and perpetuator of our national culture. The goal of the Pillars program is to raise a minimum of \$200,000 annually in order to permit the Prelacy to sustain and expand the services and programs it provides. In a relatively short time, with little effort, almost 50% of the goal has been achieved.

His Eminence explained that the Pillars program is a Prelacy-wide endeavor. In its brief period of existence it has garnered the support of more than 50 individuals, most of whom have pledged to donate at least \$1,000 annually to the Prelacy. Some have agreed to donate as much as \$5,000 or \$10,000 on an annual basis. Executive Council members, directors of the Endowment Fund, and members of the Pillars Committee, have stepped forward with their personal commitments to this endeavor.

Richard Sarajian, Esq., chairman of the Executive Council, told the gathering that during the past few years, the Executive Council has spent a tremendous amount of time trying to increase the endowment fund. “We have been relatively successful in this endeavor, but we recognized that we needed a more established annual giving program. I look around this room and I see faces that have been supporters for the past 45 years—the real pillars, because they were instrumental in building



Left to right: Antranig Sarkisian, Richard Sarajian, Dr. George Dermksian, Tammy Dermksian.

churches. Today, we need your help not only on a local level but also on a national level. We have to raise a new generation of clergy candidates and we need to expand our programs—programs like the Datev Summer Studies Institute, which is one of the best and most successful programs for young people in our entire community.”

Antranig Boudakian, who together with Noubar Megerian, is spearheading the Pillars campaign, spoke about the services offered by the Prelacy. "I often hear the question asked, What does the Prelacy do for us? I can tell you unequivocally that everyone benefits from the Prelacy." Mr. Boudakian told the gathering about his recent visit to Armenia where he visited the Prelacy offices. "What great work is being done by the Prelacy in Armenia! More than 800 orphans are being provided with monthly stipends. These are children who lost their fathers in defense of Karabagh. This is just one of the many projects that the Prelacy supports. Our Prelacy needs our help to continue in its mission to our community in the United States and elsewhere."



Left to right: Dr. Dertad Manguikian, Robert Setrakian, Archbishop Oshagan.

Mr. Sarajian introduced the members of the Council who were present at the reception: Rev. Fr. Sarkis Aktavoukian, a member of the Religious Council; Michael Hagopian, vice chairman; Bedros Givelekian, treasurer; Karen Jehanian, secretary; and members Dr. Dertad Manguikian, Stephen Hagopian, Noubar Megerian.

Also in attendance were some Prelacy staff members including, Dr. Vazken Ghougassian, Executive Director; Ms. Sofia Khatchatrian, Assistant Director of Development; Deacon Shant Kazanjian, Director of the Armenian Religious Education Council; Deacon Serop Terterian, Armenian secretary; Christine Karamanian, Bookstore Manager; and Iris Papazian, editor of *Outreach*.

Thus far the Pillars program has been an overwhelming success. The initial goal was to raise \$200,000, and in a very short time \$95,500 has been raised. The program has been introduced in other communities during recent

months with the hope of reaching the overall goals set by the committee. The committee overseeing the "Pillars" program is composed of: Antranig Boudakian and Noubar Megerian, co-chairmen; and Robert Haig Setrakian, Jack Mardoian, and Col. George Rustigian.

Archbishop Oshagan explained how during the past few years the Prelacy has been concentrating on recruiting clergy candidates. "After a difficult journey, I can tell you that we are now on an easier road," said the Archbishop. "We have good candidates now who are in various stages of completing their studies. But, we must continue our efforts. This is an ongoing endeavor."

Archbishop Oshagan thanked everyone for accepting his invitation to attend the reception and invited everyone to enjoy the good food and the fellowship of friends during the next hour or two.

As a final word, Mr. Sarajian asked everyone present to make a concerted effort to recruit others. "You are the founding pillars. I hope you will help us encourage others to join you," he said.

Judge Martin Nalbandian, who was in attendance with his wife Anik, explained his enthusiasm. "I like the accomplishments of the Prelacy and I am particularly happy with the advances made by our Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan. He is very focused on the important goals and mission of the Church. I am happy to be part of this program."

Mr. Onnic Marashian, a past chairman of the Executive Council, recalled how Prelacy programs depend on the support of individuals. "The Prelacy is always cognizant of programs that will help the parishes. The Prelacy is not just a local entity; it is for the collective good of all the parishes that together comprise the Prelacy. Verkin and I are proud to be Pillars of the Prelacy."

Dr. George Dermksian and his wife Tammy, longtime supporters of the Church and recently very involved with the reconstruction of St. Illuminator's Cathedral, praised the Prelate and the Prelacy for the work being done. "This Prelate and Executive Council are very much committed to providing educational activities and opportunities for our young people. Everyone talks about the importance about education for our youth, but the Prelacy is doing much more than talk. The Prelacy is creating the outreach and programs necessary to attract our young people."

Dr. Aram Cazazian, who has served on many Prelacy

committees including Pontifical Visits, and most recently the committee which organized the tribute to the film *Ararat* and Atom Egoian and Arsinee Khanjian, said: "Because of my involvement on a Prelacy level, I am aware of the great service the Prelacy performs for our community. I hope many more will become 'Pillars,' thereby providing the means for expanded Prelacy programs without additional financial hardship on our parishes."

Pillars of the Prelacy as of January 15, 2004 are: Mr. & Mrs. Vahe Amirian, Clifton, NJ; Rev. Fr. & Mrs. Sarkis Aktavookian, Worcester, MA; Drs. Diran & Seta Apelian, West Boylston, MA; Mr. & Mrs. Shavarsh Azizian, Worcester, MA; Mr. John Baronian, West Medford, MA; Drs. Carlo & Aurora Bayrakdarian, White Plains, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Antranik Boudakian, Forest Hills, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Boudakian, Kew Gardens, NY; Mrs. Tina Carolan, Mendham, NJ; Dr. Aram Cazazian, Bayside, NY; Dr. & Mrs. Rene Chirinian, New Canaan, CT; Dr. & Mrs. Gregory Ciottone, Westminster, MA; Archpriest and Yn. Arshag Daghljan; Mr. Harry Dalian, Rego Park, NY; Dr. & Mrs. George Dermksian, New York, NY; Dr. & Mrs. Ara Dumanian, Chicago, IL; Mr. Steve Dumanian, Forest Hills, NY; Senator & Mrs. Aram Garabedian, Providence, RI; Mr. & Mrs. Garbis Garboushian, Burlington, NJ; Mr. & Mrs. Bedros Givelekian, Flushing, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Astor Guzelian, Dedham, MA; Mr. & Mrs. Michael Hagopian, Dearborn, MI; Mr. & Mrs. Steve Hagopian, Glen Carbon, IL; Dr. & Mrs. Varant Hagopian, Wayland, MA; Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Hairabedian, Great Neck, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Jirair Hovnanian, Mount Laurel, NJ; Mr. Edward Jamie, Flushing, NY; Ms. Karen Jehanian, Haverford, PA; Mrs. Sosie Kachikian, Old Tappan, NJ; Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kaloosdian, Belmont, MA; Mrs. Sirvart Kaloustian, Wayne, PA; Mr. & Mrs. Vasken Kassabian, Manhasset, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Edward Kerbeykian, Tenafly, NJ; Mr. & Mrs. Arto Kirikian, Lawrenceville, NJ; Mr. & Mrs. Hagop Kouyoumdjian, Holmdel, NJ; Drs. Arthur & Louisa Kubikian, Roslyn, NY; Dr. & Mrs. Raffi Leblebidjian, Chicago, IL; Dr. & Mrs. Dertad Manguikian, McLean, VA; Mr. & Mrs. John Manoogian, Plymouth, MI; Mr. & Mrs. John Manuelian, Winchester, MA; Mr. & Mrs. Onnic Marashian, Oradell, NJ; Mr. & Mrs. Jack Mardoian, Lake Forest, IL; Mr. & Mrs. Varkis Markarian, Cranston, RI; Mr. & Mrs. Noubar Megerian, Newtown Square, PA; Mr.

& Mrs. Joseph Melikian, Weston, MA; Mr. Ara Melkonian, Darnestown, MD; Mr. & Mrs. Martin Nalbandian, Old Tappan, NJ; Dr. & Mrs. Michel Nalbantian, Radnor, PA; Mr. & Mrs. Sarkis Ohanessian, Paramus, NJ; Dr. & Mrs. Antranig Ovassapian, Chicago, IL; Mr. & Mrs. Andrea Pampanini, New York, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Jack Papazian, Ambler, PA; Mr. & Mrs. Tro Piliguian, New York, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Rafaelian, Cranston, RI; Col. & Mrs. George Rustigian, Newington, CT; Mr. & Mrs. Henry Sahakian, State College, PA; Mr. & Mrs. Alex Sarafian, Cresskill, NJ; Mr. & Mrs. Richard Sarajian, Chestnut Ridge, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Antranig Sarkissian, Plandome,



Left to right: Vahe Amirian, Edward Kerbeykian, Martin Nalbandian.

NY; Dr. & Mrs. Aram Semerjian, Munster, IN; Mr. & Mrs. George Semerdjian, Chester Springs, PA; Mr. & Mrs. Robert Setrakian, New York, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Kaloust Sogoian, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Rev. Fr. & Mrs. Aram Stepanian, Sutton, MA; Mr. & Mrs. Arshag Tarpinian, Old Tappan, NJ; Mr. & Mrs. Bedros Tashjian, Little Ferry, NJ; Mr. & Mrs. Norik Tatevossian, Forest Hills, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Zohrab Tazian, Fort Wayne, IN; Mr. & Mrs. Dikran Tenguerian, Old Tappan, NJ; Mr. & Mrs. Yervant Terzian, Rosemont, PA; Honorable Judge & Mrs. Sarkis Teshoian, Worcester, MA; Mr. John Vartan, Harrisburg, PA; Dr. & Mrs. Rouben Melik Vartanian, Kew Gardens, NY; Mr. & Mrs. Noubar Yeremian, Radnor, PA; Dr. & Mrs. Raffi Zohrabian, Huntington, NY.

If you would like more information about the Pillars program contact the Prelacy at 212-689-7810. Visit the web site, www.armenianprelacy.org for more photographs and up-to-date information about Prelacy activities. ❖

Profiles of Giving

Edward Malkonian: A Legacy Steeped in Faith and Commitment

By all accounts Edward Malkonian was a quiet, hard-working, humble man. He was a person who worked day and night at his Green Cross Pharmacy on Central Avenue in Albany, New York, to support himself and his wife. He was available night and day to fill prescriptions for his customers.

Garó Hazarian, his nephew and the executor of his last will and testament, recalls the long hours his uncle worked, only occasionally taking leave of work for other enjoyments. "Working in his pharmacy was Uncle Eddie's greatest enjoyment," says Mr. Hazarian. "He loved to serve the people of his community."

"My cousin was not a regular Sunday morning church-goer," said Richard Sarajian, one of Mr. Malkonian's cousins. "His pharmacy was open on Sundays until 1:00 p.m., and was filled with parishioners and their children who, after attending mass at the large Catholic church across the street, visited the pharmacy." However, his love for the Armenian Church was beyond reproach. "When I attended law school in Albany, I spent many Sundays there for dinner with Eddie and his wife Ruth and their friends Sarkis and Mary Minassian. Sarkis always updated Eddie of the progress of the construction of the new Holy Cross Church often describing to Eddie the work he had done with his own hands." Eddie was one of the godfathers of the Holy Cross Church in Troy when it was consecrated in 1976.

"I always stopped to see Eddie and Ruth whenever I was in Albany or driving through it," said Mr. Sarajian. "On my way home from the 1995 NRA in Montreal, I visited him in a rehabilitation center where he was recov-

ering from a broken hip. He told me that he was working on a will and wanted to leave an endowment fund to the Prelacy."

In his will he established "The Mardiros and Marguerite Malkonian Family Fund" in honor of his parents. He further stipulated how the proceeds of the fund were

to be utilized, with the largest percentage benefiting orphans or orphanages in Armenia and Karabagh. "Eddie and Ruth had no children. So he adopted the orphans of Armenia," said Mr. Sarajian. He also chose to continue his support of Holy Cross Church and to honor his grandfather, Der Hoosik Avak Kahana Katchouni, one of the martyrs arrested on April 24, 1915, by directing the balance of the income be used to benefit his local parish, Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Church of Troy, New York, and for general purposes, at the discretion of the Eastern Prelacy, with consideration given to clergy training, assistance to retired clergy, and the Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon.

Mr. Malkonian died on August 2, 2000. In a letter of condolence, the Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan, described Edward as "part of that generation of Armenian Americans born and raised in the United States, yet ingrained with a

deep faith and commitment to the Armenian Church and community. In March 2003, Mr. and Mrs. Garó Hazarian, Mr. Sarajian, Rev. Arsen Kassabian, and Board of Trustees members Ara Mahserdjian and Nadine Boornazian of Holy Cross Church met at the Prelacy with Archbishop Oshagan to honor the memory of Edward and Ruth Malkonian. Upon receiving the \$350,000.00 bequest, Archbishop Oshagan commented, "Through



Mr. and Mrs. Edward Malkonian (couple at left) with Mr. and Mrs. Garó Hazarian at Richard and Nora Sarajian's wedding reception in 1987.



Mr. and Mrs. Garó Hazarian with Archbishop Oshagan and Richard Sarajian in March 2003 when the check was presented to His Eminence for the establishment of the Malkonian Family Fund.

his foresight, Edward Malkonian memorialized the memory of his mother and father, and also himself. The income from this Fund will assist in a number of ways, all very positive. Orphans, the Holy Cross parish, clergy training, retired clergy, the Seminary—each one is a good cause in itself.”

“Discussions are underway for the Prelacy to use this fund to expand the Prelacy Orphans program to provide substantial support to the Noubarashen Orphanage near Yerevan, Arme-



Mr. and Mrs. Hazarian with representatives of Holy Cross Church, at left, Nadine Bornazian and Ara Mabserdjian.

nia,” said Vazken Ghougassian, Executive Director of the Prelacy who visited Armenia last April to look for an appropriate orphanage to support with this fund. “The Prelacy’s Orphans program already supports 740 orphans in Armenia and Karabagh and this bequest will help us do much more.”

Edward Malkonian worked hard during his lifetime, but the fruits of his labor will continue to work for the benefit of the Armenian Church and the advancement of the Church’s mission. ❖

Profiles of Giving:

Remembering Richard V. Carolan



Those who knew him remember Richard V. Carolan, who together with his wife Tina, was a major benefactor of the Armenian Church, as a modest individual who never sought the limelight, and who came to embrace the Armenian Church and community as his own.

Born in Waterbury, Connecticut, with Irish American roots, he met

and married Tina Peschekerian and thereafter established a strong lifelong bond of friendship with the Armenian community.

Within the Armenian community, the Carolans were major benefactors of the Great House of Cilicia, the Western Prelacy and the Eastern Prelacy. In recent months Mrs. Carolan has added St. Illuminator’s Cathedral in New York to her beneficence with an \$80,000 donation for the major renovations the Cathedral is currently undertaking.

In 1994 Richard was honored with the Knight of Cilicia insignia by His Holiness Karekin II of the Great House of Cilicia, who later became Karekin I, Supreme

Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. In 2000 His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, awarded him the highest award of the Holy See, the Prince of Cilicia medal.

Richard was the Chairman and CEO of Martindale-Hubbell Publishing Co., an international publisher of legal directories and serving a network of international lawyers in 160 countries. Following his retirement in 1990 he devoted more time to his philanthropic efforts with the establishment of the Tina and Richard V. Carolan Foundation which is dedicated to cancer research and humanitarian relief. His retirement years also provided him more time to spend with his children, son Richard C. Carolan and daughter Kimberly Carolan-Faga, and his grandchildren.

He served in Europe during World War II and later graduated from Rutgers University (NJ) with a Bachelor of Science degree.

Richard Carolan died on July 27, 2002 in New York City following a long battle with cancer. However, his good deeds live on through the Tina and Richard V. Carolan Foundation.

“Richard Carolan can never be forgotten,” said Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, “because of the legacy he has left us—his good deeds which continue even after death. We honor his sweet memory and we thank Tina for bringing him into the Armenian community.” ❖

Profiles of Giving

Pashalian Fund Benefits Education

“The Pashalian Fund is a model example of the good that can be accomplished by foresighted individuals...”
—Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan

The Eastern Prelacy recently announced the granting of awards totaling \$14,250.00 to various Armenian Schools and educational programs, from the Pashalian Family Education Fund.

The grants, which were awarded by the Fund’s Board of Trustees which include Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy, Ms. Gloria Tarsy, Dr. George Dermksian, and Mr. Michael Derian, were awarded to the following:

St. Illuminator’s Day School — \$5,000.00

St. Sarkis Suzanne & Hovsep Hagopian Saturday School — \$2,500.00

St. Stephen’s Day School — \$3,000.00

St. Gregory of Datev Institute — \$2,750.00

Siamanto Academy — \$1,000.00

“The Pashalian Family Fund is a model example of the good that can be accomplished by foresighted individuals. Through his benevolence Mr. Pashalian has left a lasting impact on Armenian education in the United States while perpetuating the memory of the Pashalian Family,” said Archbishop Oshagan.

“We are pleased to honor the memory of John Pashalian and the Pashalian Family by awarding these grants to such worthy institutions,” said Dr. George Dermksian, a trustee of the Fund. “The Pashalian family was a strong supporter of St. Illuminator’s Cathedral and educational programs for Armenian youth.”

The Pashalian Fund was established in the early 1990s, through the foresight and benevolence of a devoted parishioner of St. Illuminator’s Cathedral, Mr. Levon Pashalian. Mr. Pashalian was born in the historic Armenian village of Palou-Havav. He survived the Genocide, emigrated to the United States, and like many of his fellow villagers opened a small grocery store on the east side of Manhattan. With a limited command of English Levon Pashalian built a successful business while caring for his ill wife. He worked long hours every day of the week and managed to raise a family, a son John Levon, and a daughter, Siroon. True to his Armenian heritage and the American dream, he provided both children not only with a college education, but also post-graduate studies. The family faced a tremendous tragedy when son



John Pashalian in whose memory the fund was established.

John was killed in an accident in 1973.

In spite of the tragedies that befell the family, Mr. Pashalian had the goodness of heart to provide financial support, in the name of his son and the Pashalian family, for the Armenian Church, Armenian educational and relief organizations, and needy Armenian students in the United States and Canada.

The Fund was established with an initial contribution of \$138,000 with the stipulation that the earned proceeds from the investments be used to “promote and support Armenian language schools” and their students in the United States and Canada who were in financial need. Since its formation the Fund has distributed more than \$66,000 for educational purposes.

This year’s grant recipients are:

St. Illuminator’s Day School

St. Illuminator’s Day School, located in Woodside, New York, is now in its 28th year, and provides elementary bilingual education from Nursery through Grade Six. The

students consistently outperform public school students in New York State Standardized Tests. “We are grateful to the Pashalian Fund for its continuing support,” said Dr. Herand Markarian, chairman of the Board of Trustees. “This grant will help us provide scholarship aid for qualified students whose families cannot afford a private school education.”

St. Sarkis Suzanne and Hovsep Hagopian Armenian Saturday School

The Suzanne and Hovsep Hagopian Armenian Saturday School, Douglaston, NY, has grown leaps and bounds in recent years. Principal Mrs. Ani Nercessian acknowledged that the support received by the Pashalian Fund will help them to provide the very best instruction for their students. The school is named in honor of its faithful benefactors, Suzanne and Hovsep Hagopian, who believed wholeheartedly in the value of Armenian education and who made provision in their Last Will and Testament for the continuity of the school. “Suzanne and Hovsep were two of the Eastern Prelacy’s most ardent supporters,” said Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan. “Their dedication to the propagation of Armenian culture was supreme.”



Levon Pashalian in an early photo taken in his store in Manhattan. He established the Pashalian Fund in memory of his son John who died in an accident.

St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School

St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School in Watertown, Massachusetts, continues its growth since its establishment in 1984. The success of the school can be seen by the high ranking of its students in the state wide Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills in reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies. The test is given each academic year to students in grades two and four. This year students in the fourth grade scored in the top 15% and students in the second grade scored in the top 20%. Mrs. Houry Boyamian, principal, expressed the gratitude of the school family for the Pashalian grant. “We are extremely pleased that the Prelacy and the Pashalian Fund have recognized and supported St. Stephen’s School with this grant which will be utilized toward the expansion of the school in order to accommodate more students.”

St. Gregory of Datev Institute

Now in its 18th year, the St. Gregory of Datev Institute is a weeklong summer program in a pleasant, nurturing environment where young students experience worship, learning and fellowship. Promoting healthy minds in healthy bodies, the Institute provides a faith-based four-year program of studies for youth ages 13 and older. Many of the teens who complete the program return for postgraduate studies. The Institute is organized by the Eastern Prelacy’s Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC). Krista Guzelian, who has been attending the Datev Institute for three years wrote after last year’s program, “My experience at Datev has taught me to be a better Christian, to take pride in my Christian faith, and to connect more closely with God.”

Siamanto Academy

The Siamanto Academy is designed for high school students who are graduates of Armenian schools. The Academy offers accredited, college-level courses in Armenian studies and history, as well as Christian studies. Organized by the Armenian National Education Committee (ANEC), the Academy serves as a gateway to higher cultural awareness, preparing students for effective leadership. The Academy meets every Saturday during the school year in Woodside, New York. The Siamanto Academy is a prime example of ANEC’s mission of maintaining the Armenian language and culture in America. ANEC is a co-sponsorship of the Eastern Prelacy and the Armenian Relief Society.

Since its inception, the Fund has distributed the following amounts to educational institutions: \$4,500 in 1993; \$3,400 in 1994; \$13,810 in 1997; \$7,979 in 1998; \$12,500 in 2000; \$9,000 in 2001; and \$14,250 in 2003.

Donations to the Pashalian Fund, which is part of the Eastern Prelacy’s Endowment Fund, can be made at any time. For information about this Fund contact the Prelacy at 212-689-7810.

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Faces of God in Medieval Monasticism and Theology:

Anselm of Canterbury and Gregory of Narek

by Michael B. Papazian

I was asked to speak about the “monastic Middle Ages,” with a focus on the faces of God. While I’m honored to be considered enough of an expert on this topic to speak to you, it is also a bit disturbing to be associated with a period of time that has come to have something of a bad reputation. I’ve recently read a book by the French historian Regine Pernoud with the title *Those Terrible Middle Ages!* Pernoud begins her book by recounting a visit she made to an elementary school in which the teacher was leading a discussion of medieval history—the teacher asked the class what the peasants were called, and they answered that they were called serfs. Then she asked what they did—and the class responded that they were sick. The teacher went on and asked the students what diseases the poor serfs had—and the students answered “plague” and “cholera” and all sorts of other nasty diseases. The teacher responded approvingly: “You know your history very well.”

Later, Pernoud was asked to serve as an advisor for a TV program on the Middle Ages. The assistant for the program told her to provide an idea of the Middle Ages in general: “You know, slaughter, massacres, scenes of violence, famines, epidemic.”

Well, it’s true that there was a great deal of misery and illness during the Middle Ages. And it’s certainly not a compliment to call someone’s thinking medieval. The later propaganda of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment has convinced many people that the Middle Ages were a culturally impoverished and superstitious period, worthy of the title “The Dark Ages.” But I want to show that this is an unfair characterization. In the fields of philosophy and theology in particular the period starting from the 5th century and ending in the 14th was especially rich and fertile. I’ll focus on two figures in medieval monasticism and theology. One is “famous” and is especially appropriate to talk about here; the other is more obscure and “exotic”: St. Anselm, who ended his life as Archbishop of Canter-

bury, and the tenth century Armenian theologian, monk, and poet St. Gregory of Narek.

But before that, I should say a little bit about the background of medieval monasticism and its effects on the image of God. When we think about Christianity in the Middle Ages, we usually think of the cloistered life, monks living in remote monasteries isolated from the lives of the common people, devoting themselves to arcane learning and the copying of ancient manuscripts. While this is true to some extent, it also misses the fact that the monastic life was not utterly removed from the life of the common people but had a strong influence

on popular piety. As we’ll see, some of the famous monks had lay followings; they wrote to and advised people outside their monasteries.

The most important person for the development of monasticism in Europe was a man by the name of Benedict of Nursia (480-543). He

composed what came to be known as the Rule of Benedict, which regulated the way that people should live a monastic or cloistered life. Benedict stressed the importance of work—idleness is bad. The rule requires public prayer seven times a day. The Rule also emphasized the importance of study and learning, not for worldly glory but in order to come closer to God.

The importance of work and keeping oneself occupied remains an important part of Benedictine spiritual-

One is “famous” and is especially appropriate to talk about here; the other is more obscure and “exotic”: St. Anselm, who ended his life as Archbishop of Canterbury, and the tenth century Armenian theologian, monk, and poet St. Gregory of Narek.

Michael B. Papazian is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Berry College, Georgia. This article is based on a lecture he gave at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Rome, Georgia. Passages from Anselm are taken from the translation by Gillian Evans, Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works, Oxford University Press. Passages from Narek are taken from the translation of Thomas Samuelian, Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart, Vem Press. Samuelian’s book is available at the Prelacy Bookstore.

ity. And it is exemplified in an extraordinary way in the life and work of St. Anselm.

Anselm was born in 1033 in northern Italy, in the Alps (his town was Aosta, which is in the northwestern corner of Italy, near the borders of France and Switzerland). He seems to have been a very bright and religious boy.

As a child, Anselm had a vision. He thought that heaven was on the top of the mountains. One night he was told to climb up a mountain and go to the court of God. Along the way he saw God's servants, who were supposed to be reaping the wheat at the foot of the mountain, but were in fact just idly resting. Anselm was upset at this and decided that he would tell God that his servants were lazy. When he reached the top of the mountain, he found God with one of His servants. God asked Anselm who he was, where he came from, and why he had come. God ordered the servant to give bread to Anselm, and he ate the bread in the presence of God.

One of the reasons that I find the story of this dream interesting is because although it is clearly childish, it reveals an interesting feature of how Anselm's society viewed God—one that Anselm would continue to hold although in a more mature and sophisticated way in his theology. In the vision, God is represented as a medieval feudal lord having land on which his tenants farm. It is interesting to note how much our image of God is influenced by the political circumstances of our times.

By the time he was 15, Anselm had a strong desire to become a monk. However, his father did not want him to become a monk, and the local monastery would not accept Anselm without his father's approval.

Anselm prayed that he would become sick and in danger of death, so that the abbot of the monastery would admit him without his father's approval. He did become rather sick but even then the abbot would not relent.

In his later teens, Anselm became less religious and had a couple of "wild years." He was deeply affected by his mother's death a few years later. His father seems to have been abusive to him, and so Anselm decided to renounce his inheritance and to run away from home. He set off through the Alps with little food and in the cold winter.

Finally, he made it to the monastery of Bec, which is

in upper Normandy, northwest of Paris. Bec was a Benedictine monastery, and Anselm was originally intimidated by the presence of Lanfranc, the prior, who was one of the most renowned scholars in Europe. Anselm at first thought he would be better off at the monastery of Cluny, where there would be less time for study but he would not be eclipsed by a scholar of Lanfranc's stature. Eventually, he decided that Bec was for him, and he took his monastic vows in 1060 at the age of 27. Lanfranc soon thereafter left Bec to become prior of another monastery and then eventually Archbishop of Canterbury. Anselm replaced Lanfranc as prior and then became Abbot of Bec. Throughout his life, Anselm shied away from high positions, and he was reluctant to accept either of these positions. Of course, it was the custom of the time to appear to resist appointment to such positions, but even by the standards of this custom, Anselm's resistance was extreme. This was especially true after Lanfranc's death, when Anselm was the obvious choice to become Archbishop of Canterbury. He was persuaded to visit England

on the pretext of inspecting Bec's properties there. On his arrival, he was greeted by the king and acclaimed as Archbishop of Canterbury. Still, though, he resisted, and he had to be invested with the episcopal staff by force in 1093.

Anselm's trepidation was justified, for he was caught in a power struggle between the pope and the king. At several points, Anselm was forced to leave England because he would not renounce his allegiance to the pope, as the king had demanded. While stuck in this precarious position, he was still able to write a number of works that would have a lasting impact on Christian theology and philosophy. He seems to have had a popular following. When he decided to visit the pope in Rome against the king's wishes he was met by enthusiastic crowds in the towns of France and Italy where he stopped. He spoke not only with the monks but also the laypeople of the towns.

With a new king in England, Anselm had a quieter and more peaceful life, for the two came to agreement on most issues. Anselm died during Holy Week 1107 at Canterbury.

But more important than the life of Anselm is his thought. What was his approach to theology, and in

As far as I know, Christianity is the only religion whose sacred scripture is divided into two parts (the Old and New Testaments), the two parts of which are written in radically different languages spoken by people who have distinct and often conflicting cultures and perspective.

particular, to the idea of God? Anselm's work can be summed up in a Latin slogan that was the subtitle of one of his books and which became the motto of medieval theology or "scholasticism"—*fides quaerens intellectum*—"faith seeking understanding." One way of understanding scholasticism is to see it as an attempt to synthesize and to reconcile one's religious faith with reason and philosophy. As such, scholasticism is not exclusively Christian. The great Jewish and Islamic philosophers of the Middle Ages attempted to do the same thing—to show that Greek philosophy is compatible with the Torah or the Koran.

But the idea of synthesizing and combining different traditions and perspectives is especially relevant to Christianity. This is clear from the very structure and language of the Bible. As far as I know, Christianity is the only religion whose sacred scripture is divided into two parts (the Old and New Testaments), the two parts of which are written in radically different languages spoken by people who have distinct and often conflicting cultures and perspective. The Jews focus on God's revelation of the law and his covenant with a particular people. The Greeks focus on universal reason and philosophy. So right from the start the Christian is presented with two perspectives that seem to clash but need to be reconciled.

Anselm is doing the same thing by trying to reconcile faith and reason. Most of Anselm's writings are in the form of prayer. They are usually addressed to God, and it is clear that they are meant to be spiritual exercises for him and also for his fellow monks (although they were also distributed among educated laypeople). To understand Anselm, you have to see him as following the Benedictine Rule. In the spirit of the Rule of Benedict, his writings were not intended for a wide audience; rather, they were ways to focus one's mind on God. Here is how he begins one of his most celebrated books, the *Proslogion*:

Come now, insignificant man, fly for a moment from your affairs, escape for a little while from the tumult of your thoughts. Put aside now your weighty cares and leave your wearisome toils. Abandon yourself for

a little to God and rest for a little in Him. Enter into the inner chamber of your soul, shut out everything save God and what can be of help in your quest for Him and having locked the door seek Him out. Speak now, my whole heart, speak now to God: "I seek Your countenance, O Lord, Your countenance I seek" [Psalm 26:8]. (*Proslogion* 1)

Then Anselm, speaking to God, talks about what he seeks:

...I do desire to understand Your truth a little, that truth that my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand. For I believe this also, that "unless I believe, I shall not understand" [Isaiah 7:9]

I normally require my students to read the opening chapters of the *Proslogion* in my introduction to philosophy class. And every time I get the same response

from my students. Many students see Anselm as overly intellectual; many of the students believe firmly that all one needs is faith. Why do we have to understand, too, unless we don't really have faith in the first place?

While this is an understandable reaction, I try to defend Anselm on this point. I see Anselm as seeing faith as an emotional relationship with God—it is a love of God, a matter

of the heart. But Anselm understands that humans are more than emotional beings—we are rational beings as well—we have both a head and a heart. And we are called upon to love God with all our being ("you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." [Mark 12:30]) Anselm already loves God with his heart; to love God with his mind is to try to understand and know God as much as is humanly possible. If one truly loves someone, wouldn't one be genuinely interested in learning everything possible about that person? And that is what Anselm sees as the purpose of philosophy—to bring our minds closer to God.

On the other hand, Armenians, among them Gregory, adhered to an earlier understanding of Christ as having one nature—that is both human and divine—and that the one nature suffered and died. When modern theologians speak of the "suffering God" they are reintroducing in the West an idea that the Armenian Church has always held, an idea embodied in the peculiar form of the Trisagion hymn sung in the Armenian Church.

There is a tendency to see philosophical arguments for the existence of God nowadays as always having an apologetic function; that is, they are a way to convince unbelievers of the truth. But this is not what Anselm was trying to do. Philosophical speculation is very much an individual spiritual exercise that is based on a preexisting faith; it is not a way to convince people who do not already have faith. So there's no reason to think that Anselm was trying to convert the infidels. On a related point, it is interesting to note that Anselm was not an active supporter of the crusades. It was Pope Urban II, the pope whose authority Anselm otherwise dutifully defended, who launched the First Crusade in 1096. In his letters, Anselm discouraged his correspondents from joining the crusade, though his usual reasoning was that monks in particular should be withdrawn from the world and not concern themselves with political and military activities. Anselm was the very opposite of a fanatical proselytizer.

The first argument of the *Proslogion* is the remarkable and tantalizing “proof” of the existence of God that would later come to be called the Ontological Argument:

Anselm notes that all people, whether believers or unbelievers, define God as the greatest possible being (“that than which nothing greater can be thought of.”) But things that exist are greater than things that do not exist—if for no other reason than that their existence does not depend on anybody thinking about them. But if one were to assert that God does not exist, one would be saying that one can think of something greater than God, namely a God that does exist. Atheism is absurd; it leads to the conclusion that God is both the greatest possible being and not the greatest possible being. Only theism makes logical sense. Hence, Anselm concludes, God must exist.

Many people have looked at this argument and have seen at best clever wordplay. It remains a live issue in philosophy whether Anselm's argument is valid. But I believe it is nevertheless a beautiful argument in the same sense in which mathematicians talk of a beautiful or elegant proof. From this starting point, Anselm establishes other attributes of God—omniscience, omnipotence, and that He is supremely just and merciful.

Later in his life, as Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm pushed reason even further in trying to understand Christ and why it is that God had to become man in order

to save us. And in doing this, Anselm made an important innovation in thinking about Christ and redemption.

A prevailing medieval view of redemption was that the death of Christ was a ransom paid to Satan to free humans from the devil's captivity. This view implied that because of our disobedience to God, Satan gained rightful dominion over us. There is a very medieval notion of justice here: the sinning humans had broken their bonds with their first master, and had come under the lordship of Satan. Humans could only be freed from their fealty to the devil if a ransom was paid to Satan, and that ransom was Christ's sacrifice.

While Anselm did not mind the analogy of our relation to God to feudal political relations, he did not think it appropriate to believe that Satan had, in any sense, a just or lawful dominion over humans. So instead of employing the idea of a ransom, Anselm argued that God was a lord that was dishonored by his subjects. And whoever is responsible for the dishonor must make restitution. The problem is that our insult to God is so great that none of us is capable of making restitution (we are, so to speak, too poor to pay the price). Only a being as great as God can do this. And the only such being is God. But of

course it would make no sense for the dishonored party to make restitution. The only way out is for there to be someone who is both God and man. So the Incarnation, Anselm held, is a necessary fact for human salvation.

Many students see Anselm as overly intellectual; many of the students believe firmly that all one needs is faith. Why do we have to understand, too, unless we don't really have faith in the first place?

Many of Anselm's contemporaries thought of him as a “hyperrationalist”—one who went too far in trying to understand God by reason alone. The Christian faith is ultimately a mystery that is beyond human comprehension. So it is a legitimate objection that Anselm goes too far. But at the same time I see Anselm as a valuable corrective to a contemporary Christianity that often is based too much on emotion or is anti-reason and anti-intellectual. Anselm shows us that faith and understanding need one another, that they can be combined and synthesized in the life of the Christian believer.

About a century before Anselm, there was a monk and theologian who is not as widely known or read today. His name was Gregory of Narek, and he was an Armenian who lived in what today is Turkey. Gregory belonged to a tradition that was largely isolated from the European Christian world—and that was living in relatively hostile

territory, surrounded for the most part by adherents of the new religion of Islam. Armenia was also theologically removed from most of the rest of the Christian world, since the Armenian Church never accepted the Council of Chalcedon that, in 451, agreed to a definition of Christ as having two natures, one divine and one human. This definition allowed Chalcedonian Christians to hold that while Christ suffered in his human nature, his divine nature was not touched by the torture of the crucifixion.

On the other hand, Armenians, among them Gregory, adhered to an earlier understanding of Christ as having one nature—that is both human and divine—and that the one nature suffered and died. When modern theologians speak of the “suffering God” they are reintroducing in the West an idea that the Armenian Church has always held, an idea embodied in the peculiar form of the Trisagion hymn sung in the Armenian Church:

Holy God, Holy mighty one, Holy immortal one, who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us.

Who was Gregory of Narek? Gregory was born in 951. His father was a bishop who composed several books himself. Indeed, many of the members of Gregory’s family were scholars associated with the monastery of Narek on the southern shore of Lake Van. Unlike Anselm, who traveled a long distance to enter into a monastery far from his native town, Gregory entered this monastery near his birthplace. The time was auspicious—there was a brief lull before the invasion of the Mongols from the east laid waste to much of Armenia. Also unlike Anselm, Gregory wrote mostly to the heart rather than to the mind. His writings are mystical poems rather than philosophical arguments—though like much of Anselm’s writings, Gregory’s writings were prayers addressed to God or to the saints.

By the turn of the millennium, Gregory was a very sick man. He realized that he needed strong medicine, much stronger than the doctors of his day could provide. He needed prayer, and he began to write a series of prayers that have had an enormous impact on Armenian spirituality, and which he hoped would be read and provide comfort to people throughout the world. These prayers are known today as the *Book of Lamentations* or simply the *Narek*, and after the Bible it is the most important book of Armenian Christianity. The book has recently been translated into English by the scholar Thomas Samuelian. This beautiful translation provides English readers with an opportunity to appreciate Narek’s powerful prayers.

Gregory describes the torment of his illness:

I lie here on a cot, struck down by evil,
sinking in a mattress of disease and torment,
like the living dead yet able to speak.
O kind Son of God,
have compassion upon my misery. (Prayer 18g)

But nevertheless he has hope of completing his work:

But you, God,
Lord of souls and all flesh,
in the words of one divinely graced,
you are long-suffering and abounding in mercy,
in the voice of blessed Jonah
grant that I finish to your delight
this book of prayers, now begun.
And having sown these words with tears
and set forth on this journey toward the dwellings
you have prepared,
may I return joyfully in the time of harvest
with the bounty of atonement,
with sheaves of goodness and the fruits of delight.
(Prayer 2)

The universality of his prayer and his concern for all humanity pervades the work—

Let the perfume, the bouquet of this book of
confessions
be redoubled and affect multitudes
and let it be remembered everywhere,
filling the world like
the fragrant oil in the house of Lazarus. (Prayer 33b)

In many ways, Anselm and Gregory can be seen as contrasting figures of the medieval Christian world—a western, rationalistic, philosophical author and an eastern, mystical, and emotional poet. But in contrasting them, we should not ignore their common points—both dedicated to the monastic life and the importance of contemplation of God. And by studying them together, our Christian life is enriched—allowing us to see the value of faith and reason, and how they complement each other and are able to work together toward the good. ❖



News from the Catholicosate

World Council of Churches Reflects Upon the Ecumenical Movement

Theologians, church leaders, social scientists, ecumenists among others, came together November 17-20, 2003, at the invitation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to reflect on the reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement. The international consultation took place at the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon, at the invitation of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I, Moderator of the Central and Executive committees of the WCC.

At the first session His Holiness addressed the conference highlighting the major concerns and challenges facing the ecumenical movement. [Catholicos Aram's address is reprinted in this issue of *Outreach*—Editor].

The consultation was called to analyze the main challenges presented by the changing world situation and their implications for the configuration of the ecumenical movement; identify the key areas of change and renewal necessary for a reconfiguration; and design a process of consultation and study leading to a report on reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement to the Central Committee in 2005 and eventually to the WCC Assembly in 2006.

Since its beginning, the ecumenical movement has been dedicated to pursuing the goals of the visible unity of the church and common witness and service to the world. Participants in the Antelias meeting reflected on the relevance of this vision in light of the new global realities and affirmed that both of these goals for the ecumenical movement are still relevant. Unity and common witness and service to the world are not mutually exclusive, but in fact are mutually enriching.

Catholicosate Participates In New Julfa Conference at UCLA

A record number of people attended a three-day conference in November marking the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Armenian city of New Julfa in central Iran. The conference, organized by Richard Hovannisian, holder of the Armenian Educational

Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA, was the thirteenth in the UCLA international conference series titled, "Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces" and was the first to focus on a region outside the bounds of the Ottoman Empire and the present Turkish state. Participating in the conference from the Cilician See were V. Rev. Fr. Shahan Sarkissian, the Prelate of the Armenian Diocese of Isfahan/New Julfa, and Archbishop Gorun Babian, Catholicos Vicar of the Armenian Diocese of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The three-day conference offered a multidimensional overview of New Julfa during its four hundred year history.

His Holiness Aram I Congratulates Bishop Wolfgang Huber

In a letter addressed to Bishop Wolfgang Huber, Catholicos Aram I expressed his spiritual joy on his election as president of the Evangelical Church in Germany. His Holiness said: "As a person firmly committed to the ecumenical movement, you will undoubtedly strengthen further the ecumenical engagement of the Evangelical Church in Germany. We, in the World Council of Churches are so grateful for the continuing commitment of the German Evangelical Churches and the active participation of your representatives in the work of the Council." Referring to the long standing ecumenical relationship existing between the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, Catholicos Aram I expressed the hope that, "This relationship will be translated into ecumenical partnership aimed at strengthening our witness to the Gospel in the world today."

Dr. Sam Kobia, WCC General Secretary-Elect Visits Antelias

Dr. Sam Kobia, the General Secretary-elect of the World Council of Churches, visited Catholicos Aram I on November 16. The two leaders of the WCC had a long discussion on a number of issues. Dr. Kobia was elected General Secretary in September and assumed his new responsibility on January 1, 2004. Dr. Kobia attended the

Eucharistic celebration at the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Antelias. Before the sermon His Holiness introduced Dr. Kobia to the congregation. He also introduced Dr. Nayna Koshy, who served the WCC from 1975-1990 as Director of Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. His Holiness reminded the congregants of the important role Dr. Koshy played in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and Human Rights.

Holy See of Cilicia Hosts Meeting of Oriental Orthodox Churches

The sixth meeting of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in the Middle East took place in Antelias in October with the participation of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III (Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark), His Holiness Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I (Patriarch of Antioch and all the East) and Catholicos Aram I (Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia).

Important issues discussed included: Bilateral Theological Dialogues, Ecumenical Collaboration, Oriental Orthodox sub-committees; Christian-Muslim Relations and Pursuit of Peace and Justice.

Catholicos Aram Congratulates Pope John Paul on 25th Anniversary of Pontificate

Catholicos Aram I congratulated Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his Pontificate. In his congratulatory letter, Catholicos Aram expressed his profound spiritual joy and brotherly love on this occasion and said, "Your pontifical ministry was marked by many significant events, major processes and great achievements in different spheres of human life. All these initiatives have opened a new page in the contemporary history of the Roman Catholic Church. In this context, I deeply appreciate your ecumenical commitment, which was manifested through theological dialogues and several ecumenical events.... We give thanks to our common Lord Jesus Christ for all you have done for the visible unity of the church, and for His glory in this world. As thousands of people are gathered in Vatican City to celebrate the 25th anniversary of your pontificate, from the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon, together with our faithful living in different parts of the world, I join you in prayer and thanksgiving."

Catholicosate Hosts WCC Officers' Meeting

Following the International Consultation on Re-configuration of the ecumenical movement for the

21st century, which took place in Antelias, Lebanon, the officers of the World Council of Churches had their regular meeting on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, November 21-23, 2003. The meeting included His Holiness Aram I, Moderator; Dr. Marion Best, Vice Moderator; Justice Sofia Adenyera, Vice Moderator; Dr. Konrad Raiser, General Secretary; and Dr. Sam Kobia, General Secretary-elect. The agenda included the General Secretary's report, program report, finance report, assembly preparations, public issues, consultation on re-configuration, special commission, staffing, nominations and executive committee agenda. This was the last meeting of General Secretary Dr. Raiser. His Holiness Aram I highly praised the devoted services of Dr. Raiser to the ecumenical movement in general and to the WCC in particular. Dr. Raiser said that although he retires as General Secretary, he will continue to be on board with all those who are committed to ecumenical struggle. ✠

NAREK CONFERENCE

continued from page 20

"Gregory of Narek and the *Song of Songs*"; Professor Sergio La Porta, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, who spoke of the "Vision in the Narek," and Professor James R. Russell who concluded the conference with his observations on "The Memory Palace of St. Gregory of Narek."

Professor Russell brought the conference to a formal close with thanks to Harvard University and especially to Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan and the Eastern Prelacy, the major financial supporter of the conference. The Prelacy was able to underwrite the conference through the generous sponsorship of the following individuals: An Anonymous Friend, Dr. & Mrs. Aram Semerdjian, Mr. John Baronian, Mr. & Mrs. Hagop Kouyoumdjian, Mr. & Mrs. Onnic Marashian, Honorable Judge & Mrs. Sarkis Teshoian, and Dr. and Mrs. John Manuelian.

Each presentation was followed by questions from the audience, which quite often resulted in a lively discussion. As more than one of the participants pointed out, this is truly the measure of a good conference. The conference papers will be published in the near future.

St. Gregory's *Book of Lamentations* holds a special place in not only the Armenian Church, but the Universal Church as well. Gregory of Narek was a devoted son of the Armenian Church. He believed that the Armenian Church had a special mission and hoped that his book would help deliver that message. Prayer for him was powerful medicine for the body and soul. He believed in the necessity of communal worship. His prayers are used to this day in services and feast-day celebrations in the Armenian Church. ✠

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].

Sts. Vartanantz Church, Providence Commemorates Narek Anniversary

The Board of Trustees and the Christian Education Committee of Sts. Vartanantz Church, Providence, Rhode Island sponsored a program and lecture dedicated to the millennium celebration of the prayer book, *The Narek*, and the Year of the Bible, in November.

The procession of Mourad Armenian School and Sunday School students, led by Nareg Mkrtshjan carrying *The Narek* and Alyssa Rueb carrying the Bible, entered the church to the hymn, *Oorakh Ler*. Rev. Fr. Gomidas Baghsarian, pastor of the church, welcomed the audience and expressed his pleasure in presenting the children of the parish reciting in Armenian and English the sacred words from *The Narek* and the Holy Bible.

Christine Engustian, Esq., introduced the lecturer, Dr. Tom Samuelian, who has been living in Armenia since 1998 and is a practicing law and managing attorney of the legal and business consulting firm of Arlex International Ltd. Besides earning a JD from Harvard Law, he holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Pennsylvania. His proficiency in languages and his abiding faith combined to afford him the ability to translate St. Gregory of Narek's *Book of Lamentations* from the Classical Armenian to English.

Dr. Samuelian began his presentation by stating how happy he was to participate in the Liturgy in the very church where he was baptized. He spoke of both sets of grandparents and his Rhode Island roots. After a brief biography of St. Gregory of Narek, Dr. Samuelian gave an overview of that period of Armenian history. A thousand years ago, before the Turkic and Mongol invasions, Armenia was experiencing a renaissance in literature, the arts, architecture, and theology. He likened it to the present time when Armenia is once again independent and experiencing a rebirth. In a very positive manner he spoke of the possibilities that could be realized with a little effort on the part of all Armenians.

Dr. Samuelian noted that he has received many letters from Episcopal, Catholic, and other church leaders who ask why Armenians have kept this treasure—St. Gregory's Narek—a secret for the past 1,000 years. He

encouraged the audience to read the truth that is evident in the words of St. Gregory's prayers.

Mrs. Anahid Kibarian

Karabagh President Visits Prelacy

Arkady Ghoukasian, President of the Mountainous Republic of Karabagh (NKR) paid a visit to the Eastern Prelacy on October 24, at the beginning of a 12-day visit to the United States. President Ghoukasian's visit was primarily to meet with leading members of the Armenian American community and to help raise funds for critical projects in NKR. He was invited by Armenia Fund USA



From left to right: Bedros Givlekian, treasurer of the Prelacy's Executive Council; Dr. Moses Abelian, UN Secretary of Administrative and Budgetary Committee; Dr. Arman Kiragossian, Armenia's Ambassador to the U.S.; Arkady Ghoukasian, President of the Mountainous Republic of Karabagh; Archbishop Oshagan Chobloyan, Prelate; Armen Martirosian, Armenia's representative to the UN; V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar of the Prelacy; Richard Sarajian, Esq., chairman of the Prelacy's Executive Council; and Neiri Melkoumian, Director of the All Armenian Fund.

and he attended a tribute for major donors to the Armenia Fund.

The Prelate, His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan, welcomed the President noting that throughout the years whenever a visitor would arrive from the Homeland we would eagerly seek news. "It was a longing for our land—our free land. And, if ever there is one place that exemplifies our struggle for freedom and victory it is Artsakh. In

this humble setting you are surrounded by people whose hearts and souls are filled with deep love and commitment towards Artsakh.”

The President thanked the Prelate for the welcoming hospitality of the Prelacy. “Thank you for your dedication and support of many years. I look around this room and see the faces of many people who have stood by us during our most difficult years. Today we are a victorious people, but Artsakh and Armenia both need your continued help. We have progressed tremendously, but there is still much to be accomplished. We have to establish an honorable life for our people.”

Sourp Khatch Church Celebrates Anniversary; Ordination of Altar Servers Take Place



Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan officiates at the ordination of Deacon Rostom Sarkissian at Sourp Khatch Church in Bethesda, Maryland, on November 15.



Archbishop Oshagan and Archpriest Father Khoren Habeshian with the newly ordained altar servers, Deacon Rostom Sarkissian (second from left); Sub-deacon Sarkis Doudaklian, (second from right) and two acolytes, Christopher Arabian and Bedig Jelladian

Ministers of Agriculture and Health Visit the Prelacy



Tavit Lokian, Armenia's Minister of Agriculture, and Norayr Tavitian, Armenia's Minister of Health, paid a visit to the Prelacy in September to visit with Archbishop Oshagan. An exchange of ideas and concerns took place.

All Saints Church in Illinois Celebrates 60th Anniversary

The 60th anniversary of the All Saints Church in Glenview, Illinois, was celebrated on November 8 and 9. Archbishop Oshagan attended the festivities organized by the parish utilizing the opportunity to become better acquainted with the faithful in the Chicago area.

All Saints Church was formally founded in 1943. For the past sixty years the church has continued its primary mission of preaching the Gospel and providing religious education and developing cultural awareness. The church's first building located on the Northwest side of the city of Chicago, was consecrated on December 26, 1943. As the community's needs changed, a parcel of land was purchased in 1967 in Glenview. In the fall of 1979, after a traditional groundbreaking ceremony, the long-awaited construction began. The new building which was a dual-purpose facility was completed in the fall of 1980. In 1985 the adjacent property was purchased and the excavation for the church began two years later. The church was consecrated on June 3, 1990. In October 2000, through the community's dedicated effort the final mortgage payment was made and a mortgage burning ceremony took place coinciding with the parish's 57th anniversary.

Near East Foundation Seeks Support

The Near East Foundation (successor to Near East Relief) recently embarked on a fundraising campaign in order to help the organization continue its mission. The

Foundation's recent exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York attracted many visitors during October and December. The exhibition included never-before-displayed photographs and artifacts from the archives of the NEF, including many items related to the organization's life-saving humanitarian efforts to save survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Ryan A. LaHurd, President of NEF notes, "Our programs do not provide only food, clothing and shelter—as important as those things are—but they also



A 1922 cover of The New Near East, the magazine of Near East Relief. Between 1915 and 1925, NER shipped thousands of tons of donated food, clothing, farm equipment, and medical supplies to orphanages and refugee camps in the Middle East and Greece.

Sts. Vartanantz Church, Providence Takes Action for Better Communications

Sts. Vartanantz Church in Providence, Rhode Island, is continuing efforts at establishing better communications between the pastor, board, and church organizations and committees. A second of a series of meetings with the pastor, board and representatives of church organizations recently took place to establish better channels of communication and to discuss the overall needs of the church and community.

Topics discussed included Wish Lists, Fellowship Hour, Public Relations, Dates of Meetings, Use of Kitchen, the Church's Web Site, and the Annual Membership meeting.

provide a means to gain dignity, confidence and a sense of power over one's own life. The people with whom NEF works are not looking for a handout but a leg up. Your generous support can offer that boost."

The NEF is located at 420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 2516, New York, NY 10170, 212-867-0064. Visit the web page, www.neareast.org for more information.

ANEC Midwest Educators' Seminar Focuses on Non-Armenian Speaker

Braving the elements, school officials from Racine and Detroit joined their colleagues in Chicago for the Armenian National Education Committee's (ANEC) Midwest Educators' Seminar on December 13th.

Nayiri Balanian, ANEC chairperson and Gilda B. Kupelian, ANEC Executive Director, discussed innovated ways to teach Armenian language and history to the first grader, and communicated language instruction content and methodology targeting the non-Armenian speaking kindergarten, elementary and adult students.

Principals, teachers, school board and ARS members from the Racine Marzbed and Detroit Zavarian Schools gathered at the Taniel Varoujan host school for a daylong seminar on teaching Armenian to the non-Armenian speaking student.



Some of the participants at ANEC's Midwest Seminar in Chicago.

Following the opening prayer delivered by Rev. Fr. Zareh Sahakian, pastor of All Saints Armenian Church in Glenview, Illinois, Mrs. Lara Kalayjian, Taniel Varoujan School Principal, warmly welcomed the attendees.

ANEC provided an annotated bibliography of new educational material, handouts on core curriculum instruction, gifts, and an array of new publications and technological resources. In addition to learning inventive approaches, the exchange of educational experiences among the participants provided valuable insight into the practices of their respective communities.

At the conclusion of the seminar Ms. Kalayjian noted that, "The seminar was very informative and teachers had meaningful discussions regarding their students' abilities and interests. The teachers discussed different teaching techniques and successful classroom experiences. We are sure that the teachers who attended the ANEC seminar left with more innovative and useful methods of classroom instruction."

Datev Summer Institute Continues To Receive Rave Reviews

The St. Gregory of Datev Institute, which last year completed its 17th year, continues to receive accolades from the participants. The fundamental goals of the program are: To instill and nurture the Armenian Christian faith and identity in our youth; To discuss youth-related issues with Armenian clergy and teachers; To encourage Armenian youth to become more involved in the life of the Church; To provide a forum for our youth to expand their knowledge of Armenian culture through language, poetry, music, song and dance.

A program of the Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC), the Datev Institute is rooted in the Armenian Christian faith and culture and offers a seven day summer educational program for youth ages 13 and older, on five levels of study. The daily program includes worship, Bible study, group discussions, lectures, Armenian language, and recreational activities.

Many of the Datevatis have written about their personal feelings about the Institute. We recently received the following letter. For more information and thoughts about the Datev program visit the Prelacy web site, www.armenianprelacy.org.

As I reflect on my three years at the Datev Institute, I try to examine what I have gained from this valuable experience. While I have secured many tangible things, such as lifelong friendships, I have also benefited from a wealth of knowledge and a newfound appreciation for my religion. My experience at Datev has taught me to be a better Christian, to take pride in my Christian faith, and to connect more closely with God.

Since I began my studies at the Datev Institute, I have noticed a change within myself. I find that I make a stronger effort to attend church every Sunday. A few years ago, I would have been overjoyed on a Sunday morning to wake up to my mother's words: "We're not going to church today." However, today this joy for taking a day off is gone. Instead, I sense a feeling inside that does not want to miss one week of church. I find that in these few short years, I have truly grown and matured as a Christian.

The Datev Institute has given me so much knowledge and faith. I hope to complete my studies at that tranquil retreat next year as I graduate from the program. While I have learned so much in a very short time, there is still much knowledge left to be gained. This year I was able to share such a rewarding experience with two other members of our church community. I hope that in years to come, more will be given the opportunity to experience the same internal transformation as I have.

Thank you to the Merrimack Valley ARS for the Datev scholarship!

*Krista Guzelian
St. Gregory Church, North Andover, MA*

Bedros Givlekian Honored; Receives "Eagle of the Prelacy"

Bedros Givlekian was honored at a testimonial dinner on Sunday, November 1, at St. Sarkis Church in Douglaston, New York, for his 25 years of service to that parish, twenty years of which he served as chairman of the Board during some of the most difficult periods in the parish's history following the fire that destroyed the church that was located in Bayside.



Archbishop Oshagan presents the "Eagle of the Prelacy" medal to Bedros Givlekian, as Mrs. Givlekian expresses her support.

During the festivities, an encyclical from His Holiness Aram I was read and presented to the honoree and the Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan, presented him with the highest award given by the Prelacy, "The Eagle of the



Joining the honoree, from left to right, Archpriest Fr. Moushegh Der Kaloustian, V. Rev. Fr. Anoushavan Tanielian, Archbishop Oshagan, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Bedros Givlekian, and V. Rev. Fr. Muron Aznikian.

Prelacy.”

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, in one of his last public appearances before his sudden death, described Mr. Givelekian as a “man for all seasons,” and praised his leadership and dedication to the church and community.

Mr. Givelekian is currently a member of the Prelacy’s Executive Council.

St. Stephen’s Elementary School Students Utilize Updated Computer Lab

For Alex Vosghanian, using the Internet to further his business—a model airplane store—is a must. He has made a 30-second radio ad downloading software from the Internet, put together a television ad, created a logo and checked out the competition as well as bought spare parts he needs. Sounds impressive. Especially since Alex is ten years old and his business is a virtual one, created for his computer class at St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School in Watertown, MA.

A synergistic program between the main curriculum of the fifth grade, led by teacher Mrs. Skoog and the newly-enhanced computer lab, led by computer specialist Joanne Najarian, the virtual business teaches the students several subjects, from math to social studies.

Ms. Najarian, who is also the school’s technology coordinator, is thrilled with the upgraded computer lab, which has 13 computers, 11 of them brand-new Dells, and a notebook computer. The Armenian Youth Foundation, Inc., had donated the initial funds to set up the computer lab with six computers seven years ago. The new computers were bought with money donated by the Parent Teacher Organization.

Alin K. Gregorian

Siamanto Academy Students Bring Holiday Cheer to Residents of the New York Armenian Home

“You have no idea how much joy you bring to our Armenian seniors, some who do not have families or grandchildren. When I came to work on Monday, the residents were still talking about your visit” said Ms Aggie Ellian, Executive Director of the New York Armenian Home following a holiday visit by the Siamanto Academy students. Ms Ellian appreciated the students’ magnanimity for “visit-

ing the residents, entertaining them and bringing good wishes and goodies.”

Accompanied by ANEC’s Siamanto Academy Principal, Dn. Krikor Lakissian and ANEC Executive Director, Gilda B. Kupelian, and a few parents, Siamanto Academy students went to the Home laden with gifts and good cheer. Dn Lakissian and Ms Kupelian told the residents about the goal of the Academy as well as the students’ desire to be there to entertain them.

They sang, danced, played musical instruments and listened to one of the residents, Mrs. Yeranouhi, recite and deliver a prayer in Armenian.

Tamar Samuelian played an evocative Groong on the flute, bringing tears to the eyes of some of the residents and Berj Tenguerian played Christmas and classical tunes on his guitar. Tamar Samuelian and Rita Khorozian sang a duet accompanied by a member of the Home staff on the piano.

The students were happy to lead the seniors on the dance floor and later serve them homemade delicacies.

Academy student Rose Kiledjian, felt it was a day of great significance for her and the students, because of the joy they brought to the hearts of the elderly.

The visit was indeed an opportunity to raise the consciousness of the younger generation towards family, the elderly and our traditional values of respect and honor and continuing the Armenian heritage as was done by the elderly they visited. ❖



Shogher Baronian serves desserts and juice to the beautifully groomed seniors.

Honor Roll of Donors

We pay tribute to our generous contributors for donations received from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003. Your dedication to the Armenian Church makes all the difference. Thank you for leading the way. Every effort was made to make this list as accurate as possible. Any errors or omissions should be brought to our attention.

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Annual Giving: Pillars of the Prelacy Assures the Church's Future

We thank the following individuals who have come forth to become Pillars of the Prelacy (as of January 15, 2004). Your generous support propels the Church to ever-greater service for the people. (See page 24 for an article on the Pillars program.)

Anonymous	\$2,000	Dr. & Mrs. Dertad Manguikian	1,000
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Thank You!

Prelacy Calendar of Events:

Diarantaratch (Presentation of Christ to the Temple), February 14. A traditional celebration of the Feast will take place at St. Sarkis Church, Dearborn, Michigan.

Clergy Ghevontiantz Conference, February 16-17, hosted by Holy Trinity Church, Worcester, Massachusetts, with the participation of the Canadian Prelacy.

Ambassador Kirakossian – On February 20, 2004 the Prelacy will sponsor the presentation of the book, *The Armenian Massacres, 1894–1896 U.S. Media Testimony* by His Excellency Dr. Arman J. Kirakossian, Ambassador to the United States from the Republic of Armenia. The presentation will be made by Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian, Professor of Modern Armenian History, University of California Los Angeles.

Blessing of the Foundation, St. Gregory Church, Boynton Beach, Florida, February 29.

Mid-West Board of Trustees and NRA Delegates Seminar, March 27 hosted by All Saints Church, Glenview, Illinois.

Musical Armenia, March 28, at 2 p.m. at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, featuring Ani Kalayjian, cello and Karine Poghosyan, piano.

Mothers' Day Luncheon, May 3, sponsored by the Prelacy Ladies Guild at St. Regis Hotel, New York City.

National Representative Assembly will be held in Philadelphia, May 19 – 21, 2004.

Armenian Religious Education Council Programs

Bible Study at the Armenian Prelacy 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 AREC. Topic: The Gospel of St. Matthew. For information, contact the AREC office at 212 689 7810/4481 or arec@armenianprelacy.org

Lenten Program 2004 on Wednesdays of Great Lent at the Prelacy starting February 25, co-sponsored by

the Prelacy Ladies Guild (PLG) – the theme for the Lenten meditations will be The Family, in keeping with the theme for the year 2004 as proclaimed by **His Holiness Aram I**, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia.

National Conference for Christian Educators, February 27, 28, 29, 2004, at the Wonderland Conference and Retreat Center, Sharon, Mass. Theme: The Soorp Badarak (Holy Sacrifice).

Day-long Seminar at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church in Granite City, IL, March 13, 2004, led by Dn. Shant Kazanjian, Director of AREC. Theme: Badarak: Supreme Expression of our Communal Spirituality.

Mid-Atlantic Adult Christian Education Program at St. Mary of Providence Center in Elverson, Pennsylvania, on the weekend of June 25 – 27, 2004.

St. Gregory of Datev Institute – 18th Annual Summer Christian Studies Program for Junior & Senior High School students will be held at the St. Mary of Providence Center in Elverson, Pennsylvania, June 27 – July 4, 2004.

Armenian National Education Committee Programs

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

Armenian Jeopardy Tournaments in the Mid-Atlantic, New England and Midwest regions, February-May 2004.

Armenian National Educators' Seminar, August 28, 2004, New York.

Check the Prelacy website, www.armenianprelacy.org, for up-to-the-minute information about events.



Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian amidst the ruins of Kaghzerahayatz (literally "sweet-looking") Monastery of the Holy Virgin in Havav, a village in Palu, historic Western Armenia. Havav is the birthplace of His Eminence's mother. The next issue of *Outreach* will be devoted to the life and service of the late Archbishop.

Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America
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