

# CONSECRATION

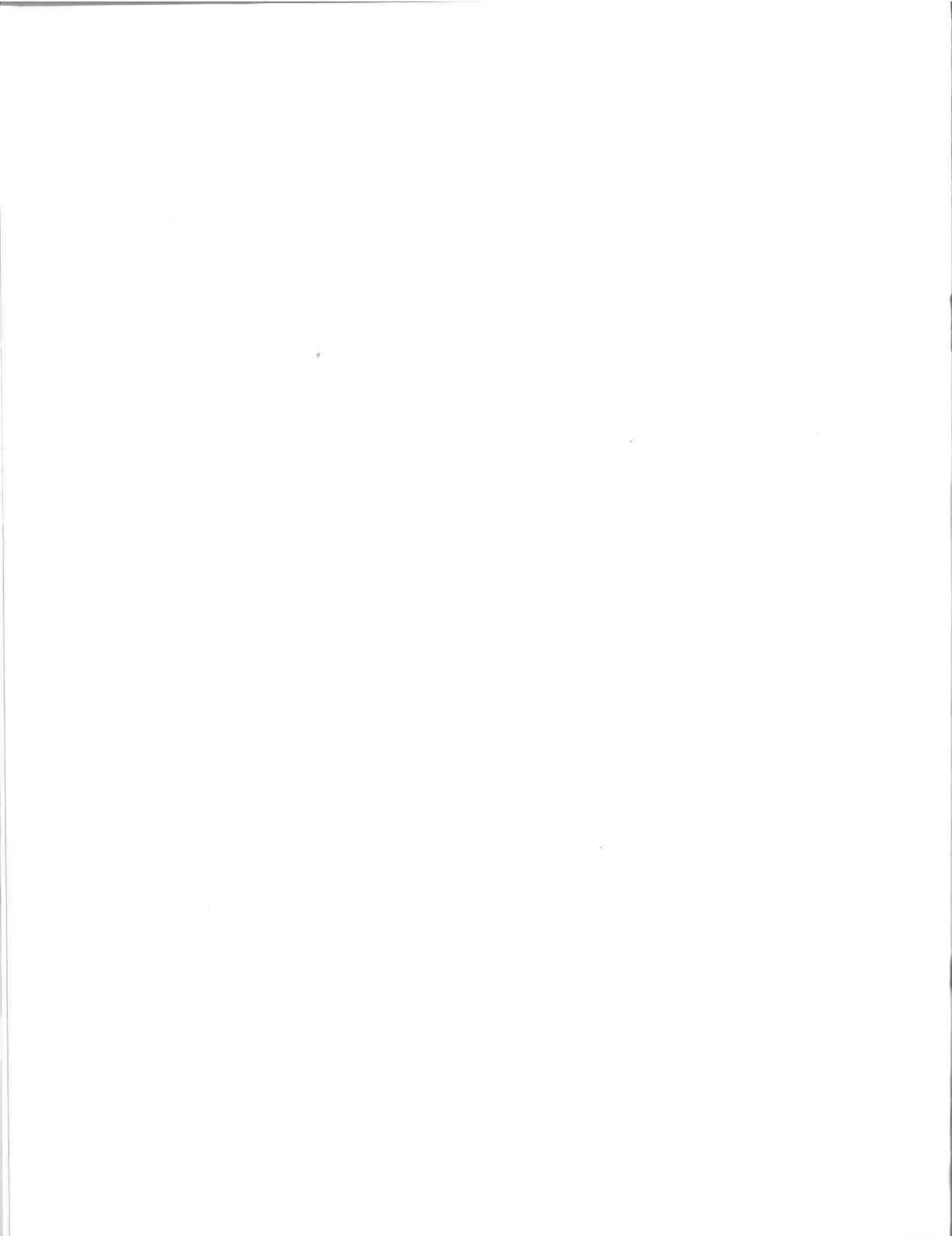
# ANI

Ss. Vartanantz Armenian Church

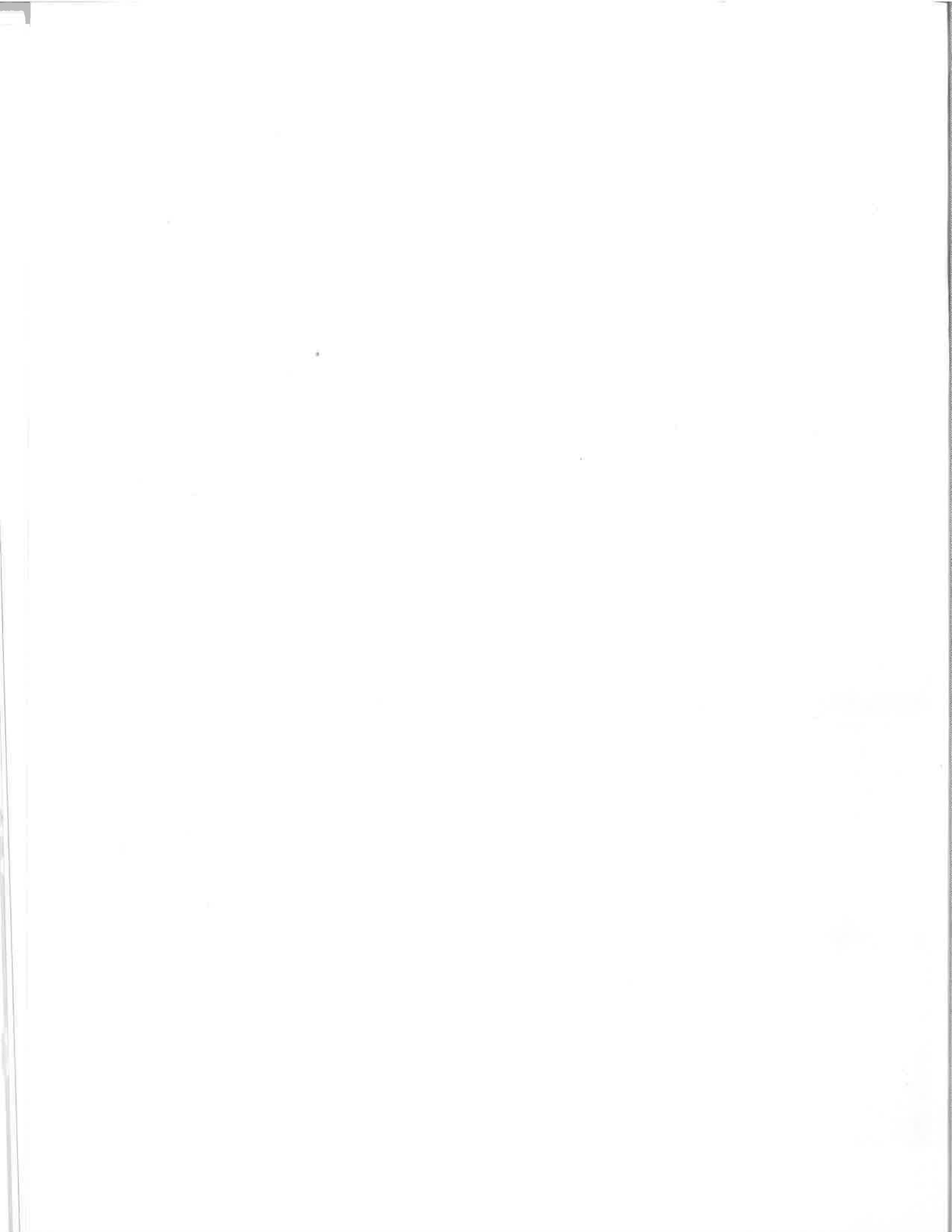


JUNE 11 1978









## CONSECRATION COMMITTEE

President *Very Reverend Ghevont Samoorian*  
General Chairman *George Simonian*

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

BALL	<i>Beatrice Sarkisian</i>
BANQUET	<i>Rose Amboian</i>
HISTORICAL PUBLICATION	<i>Louise Ajemian and Amy Gauvreau</i>
MEMORIALS	<i>Haig Goodsoozian</i>
CAR RAFFLE	<i>Joseph and Mary Sarkisian</i>
CONCERT	<i>Isabelle S. Hamel and Jirair Babikyan</i>
PUBLICITY	<i>Frank Minasian</i>
HOUSE	<i>Charles Diman</i>
CLERGY RECEPTION	<i>Irene Guregian</i>
ROBES	<i>Kathy Geyer and Alice Dossett</i>
GARDEN	<i>Mary Bagdigian</i>
RESERVATIONS	<i>Virginia Magarian</i>
YOUTH RECEPTION	<i>David Onanian and James Magarian</i>
PRE-CONCERT DINNER	<i>Flora Jeknavorian</i>
CLERGY DINNER	<i>Libby Kayajanian</i>
SPECIAL GUEST DINNER	<i>Margaret Chakarian</i>
SPECIAL GUEST RECEPTION	<i>Fred Garabedian</i>

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Michael Geyer	Margaret Sarkisian	Sam Sarkisian
Steven Parigian	Theresa Amboian	Rose Manoian
Raffi Bedoyan	Helen Sarkisian	Mary Melkonian
Simon Bagdigian	Deramayr Mary Samoorian	Queena Boyajian
Peter Bagdigian	Arsineh Seymourian	Louise Casey
David Bagdigian	Rose Longley	Diane Kludjian
Nancy Ajemian	Carol Babikyan	James Garabedian
Azad Juknavorian	Eva Boghosian	Don Depoian
Patricia Garabedian	Rose Kludjian	Takouhi Donabedian
Vaughan Minasian	John Amboian	Margaret Krikorian
Arshalous Goodsoozian	Thomas Magarian	Arpine Kludjian
Lillian Torcomian	Dolores Garabedian	Elizabeth Schiripo
Takouhi Aghazarian	Betty Diman	Kelly Wise
Mary Maimone	Sandra Boroyan	Gregory Krikorian
Sarah Kalivas	Patricia Amboian	ACYOA Jrs. and Srs.
Ovsanna Kludjian	Carmen Adamian	

*We would like to thank everyone who helped in any way. Also to our families who understood.*

A SHORT HISTORY OF LADIES AID SOCIETY OF  
ST. VARTANANTZ ARMENIAN CHURCH OF GREATER LOWELL

The Ladies Aid Society of St. Vartanantz Armenian Church was organized in 1906, long before the church was built.

All the Armenian ladies of the City of Lowell, both Protestant and Lousavorchagan (Gregorian), had formed an orphan-aiding association. A few years later the Lousavorchagan ladies of the association thought they should do something more important than just helping orphans of the old country. In those days there was lack of an Armenian Church. All the Armenian services and the sacraments used to take place in an Episcopal Church either by an Armenian or non-Armenian clergyman. The Lousavorchagan (Gregorian) ladies decided to put an end to this uncertain situation and establish their own church. They were very much concerned about the new generation's religious and cultural heritage which is the key of a nation's existence.

The ladies played a vital role on October 10, 1910. They gathered together at the home of Mrs. Soghme Markarian at 118 Lawrence Street. There they laid the foundation of the Ladies Aid Society, having the sole purpose of building an Armenian Church for their spiritual and cultural needs. All those who attended the first meeting were the founders of the Ladies Aid Society. They are as follows:

Martha Terzian	Khoranoosh Bedoian	Zevart Choolhagian
Mary Krikorian	Mary Kazanjian	Soghig Krekorian
Kanem Echmalian	Pelemetza Kazanjian	Mary Kalashian
Perooz Babigian	Yeghsa Kazanjian	Elizabeth Der Abrahamian
Victoria Gorgodian	Eva Tarpinian	Elizabeth Markarian
Sarah Hagopian	Alkatoon Asadoorian	Anna Markarian
Sarah Barsorian	Zaruhi Der Manuelian	Varteg Moushegian
Mary Arakelian	Yughaper Der Garabedian	Toorvanda Parechianian
Vartanoosh Krikorian	Nevart Goshgarian	Vartuhi Onanian

The first executive body of the Ladies Aid Society was as follows: Martha Terzian, Pelemetza Kazanjian, Perooz Babigian, Victoria Gorgodian and Sarah Hagopian.

The total number of membership was 45.

The executive body was as follows during the following years:

1933-1934		1934-1935
Pelemetza Kazanjian		Pelemetza Kazanjian
Dikranouhi Arabian		Arshaloos Goodsouzian
Kegouhi Mulkegian		Lousanoush Simonian
Bardaskan Armarschian		Dikranouhi Arabian
Miriam Kazanjian		Yegsa Shaboian
1935-1936		1936-1937
Pelemetza Kazanjian		Pelemetza Kazanjian
Tourvadar Amboain		Anna Avakian
Herepsime Paregian		Bessie Guregian
Arcabi Nortrasaian		Dikranouhi Arabian
Miriam Kazanjian		Victoria Gurinian
1937-1938	1938-1939	1939-1941
Tamar Krikorian	Tamar Krikorian	Victoria Gurinian
Miriam Kazanjian	Arshaloos Goodsouzian	(Rest of officers are unknown)
Bessie Guregian	Dikranouhi Arabian	
Sahig Aslanian	Pelemetza Kazanjian	
Martha Hoshmatian	Miriam Kazanjian	

1941-1942  
Horope Masmanian  
Arshaloos Goodsouzian  
Bessie Guregian  
Yegsa Shaboian  
Siranoosh Barbadian

1960-1965  
Sushan Torcomian  
Sarah Koltookian  
Tarkuhi Donabedian  
Eva Bogosian  
Azaduhi Kayajanian

1970-1972  
Shushan Torcomian  
Tourvada Amboain  
Tarkuhi Donabedian  
Margaret Krikorian  
Horope Mazmanian  
Helen Kazanjian  
Siranoosh Barbadian  
Yeranoohy Depoian  
Agavni Manoian

The present executive body consists of the following:

1972-1978  
Flora Jeknavorian, President  
Sarah Koltookian, Vice President  
Tarkahi Donabedian, Recording Secretary  
Margaret Krikorian, Corresponding Secretary  
Touvanda Amboain, Treasurer  
Helen Kazanjian, Assistant Treasurer  
Arshaloos Goodsouzian, Shushan Torcomian and Arpine Kludjian, Advisors

Perpetual members are those who keep their membership by donating to the Ladies Aid Society \$100.00 or more before their death, or by their loved ones in order to help the church morally and financially.

At the present time there are 26 perpetual members—they are as follows:

Yegsa Kazanjian	Ovsana Kaloostian
Tourvanda Parachanian	Saheg Aslanian
Miriam Arakalian	Haiganoosh Asadoorian
Dikranouhi Arabian	Tourvanda Mulkegian
Bessie Guregian	Margaret Arabian
Alkatoon Asadourian	Diramayr Prapion Aharonian
Annig Subanjian	Dirouhi Krikorian
Anna Subanjian	Agavni Markarian
Hirope Mazmanian	Martha Hoshmatian
Yeva Tarpinian	Yegsapet Shaboian
Miriam Kazanjian	Sultan Juknavorian
Altoon Juknavorian	Yogaper Barsamian
	Yegsapet Giragosian

1942-  
Dikranouh Arabian  
Miriam Kazanjian  
Pelemetza Kazanjian  
Sourpoohi Sarkisian  
Peprone Sarkisian  
Arstig Mulkegian

1965-1967  
Arshaloos Goodsouzian  
Tourvada Amboain  
Helen Kazanjian

1942-1960  
The records were not found.

1967-1970  
Flora Jeknavorian  
Sarah Koltookian  
Haiganoosh Asadoorian  
Margaret Krikorian  
Horope Masmanian  
Rose Manoian  
Miriam Minasian

## PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

1968

Gary Koltookian  
 Harry Moushegian  
 Charles Sarkisian  
 Zaven Kludjian  
 Frank Minasian  
 Richard Juknavorian  
 Anthony Der Garabedian  
 John Morookian  
 Azad Juknavorian

1969

Azad Juknavorian  
 Harry Moushegian  
 Zaven Kludjian  
 Frank Minasian  
 Richard Juknavorian  
 Barsam Barsamian  
 Vahan Minasian  
 Sam Manoian  
 Anthony Der Garabedian

1970

Azad Juknavorian  
 Harry Moushegian  
 Charles Sarkisian  
 Barsam Barsamian  
 Vahan Minasian  
 George Aprahamian  
 Charles Kerkian  
 Fred Garabedian, Jr.

1971

Azad Juknavorian  
 Peter Boroyan  
 Vahan Minasian  
 Bertrand Albert  
 Michael Geyer  
 Fred Garabedian, Jr.  
 Charles Kerkian  
 Charles Sarkisian

1972

Peter Boroyan  
 Vahan Minasian  
 Richard Juknavorian, Sr.  
 Barsam Barsamian  
 Sam Akkasian  
 Sahag Sarkisian  
 Jacob Ajemian  
 Michael Geyer

1973

Peter Boroyan  
 Jacob Ajemian  
 Michael Geyer  
 Sahag Sarkisian  
 Vahan Minasian  
 Lufti Nalbandian  
 Gary Mulkiagian  
 Richard Juknavorian, Sr.

1974

Fred Garabedian  
 Charles Boghigian  
 Charles Sarkisian  
 Samuel Akkasian  
 Vahan Minasian  
 Michael Geyer  
 Lufti Nalbandian  
 Gregory Krikorian

1975

Thomas Magarian  
 Peter Boroyan  
 Kathy Geyer  
 John Balian  
 Rose Manoian  
 Fred Garabedian  
 Larry Hedison  
 Charles Kerkian  
 Gregory Krikoriaa

1976

Krikor Krikorian  
 Charles Kerkian  
 Larry Hedison  
 Lufti Nalbandian  
 Michael Geyer  
 Harold Maloomian  
 Tom Magarian  
 John Balian  
 Rose Manoian  
 Kathy Geyer  
 Charles Diman

1977

Krikor Krikorian  
 Charles Diman  
 Kathy Geyer  
 Charles Kerkian  
 Michael Geyer  
 Azad Juknavorian  
 Vahan Minasian  
 George Simonian  
 Lufti Nalbandian

1978

George Simonian  
 Joseph Sarkisian  
 Charles Diman  
 Harry Adamian  
 Kathy Geyer  
 Vahan Minasian  
 Azad Juknavorian  
 Michael Geyer  
 Peter Boroyan  
 Krikor Krikorian  
 Frank Minasian



## WOMEN'S GUILD

1951-52	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Betty Daghdigian Mrs. Isabelle Gdanian Mrs. Alice Barsorian Mrs. Eva Boghosian	1962-63	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Esther Stepanian Mrs. Mary Melkonian Mrs. Betty Goff Mrs. Margaret Krikorian
1952-53	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Rose Martakos Miss Julia Giragosian Mrs. Alice Barsorian Mrs. Alice Nazarian	1963-65	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Louise Ajemian Mrs. Dolores Garabedian Mrs. Eleanor Onanian Mrs. Eva Boghosian
1953-54	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Betty Daghdigian Miss Agnes Manoogian Mrs. Alice Barsorian Mrs. Olga Akkashian	1965-66	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary Secretary	Mrs. Libby Kayajanian Mrs. Rose Kludjian Mrs. Ann Kazanjian Mrs. Alice Dossett Mrs. Beverly Hedison
1954-55	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Rose Martakos Miss Agnes Manoogian Mrs. Ann Depoian Mrs. Rose Kludjian	1966-67	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary Secretary	Mrs. Beverly Koltookian Mrs. Rose Martakos Mrs. Alice Manoian Mrs. Marge Kazanjian Mrs. Esther Stepanian
1955-57	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Isabelle Gdanian Mrs. Julie Moushegian Mrs. Margaret Krikorian Mrs. Flora Jeknavorian	1967-68	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary Secretary	Mrs. Marion Der Garabedian Mrs. Alice Dossett Mrs. Jessie Morookian Mrs. Virginia Magarian Mrs. Louise Ajemian
1957-58	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Louise Nalbandian Mrs. Julie Moushegian Mrs. Olga Akkashian Mrs. Virginia Juknavorian	1968-69	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary Secretary	Mrs. Dolores Garabedian Mrs. Mary Bagdigian Mrs. Eva Boghosian Mrs. Patricia Amboian Mrs. Louise Ajemian
1958-59	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Libby Kayajanian Mrs. Rose Martakos Mrs. Jessie Morookian Mrs. Betty Aitken	1969-70	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary	Mrs. Rose Kludjian Mrs. Dolores Garabedian Mrs. Eva Boghosian Mrs. Eleanor Onanian
1959-60	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary Secretary	Mrs. Flora Jeknavorian Mrs. Marion Der Garabedian Mrs. Jennie Babigan Mrs. Alice Dossett Mrs. Jessie Morookian	1970-71	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary Secretary	Mrs. Patricia Amboian Mrs. Rose Kludjian Mrs. Irene Guregian Mrs. Eleanor Onanian Mrs. Eva Boghosian
1960-61	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary Secretary	Mrs. Mary Melkonian Mrs. Rose Martakos Mrs. Rose Kludjian Mrs. Rose Manoian Mrs. Jessie Morookian	1971-72	Chairman	Mrs. Beatrice Sarkisian
1961-62	Chairman Vice Chairman Treasurer Secretary Secretary	Mrs. Rose Martakos Mrs. Olga Akkashian Mrs. Mary Melkonian Mrs. Marion Der Garabedian Mrs. Patricia Amboian			

## A.C.Y.O.A.

### Junior Chapter Chairmen

1969	Donna Melkonian
1970	Michael Kazanijian
1971	David Onanian
1972	James Magarian
1973	David Onanian
1974	Carol Sarkisian
1975	John Arguoyan
1976	Nancy Balian
1977	David Ajemian

### Senior Chapter Chairman

1976-78	David Onanian
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1969 marked the formal organization of a junior ACYOA in Lowell. With as many as 60 members at its height, one of the group's outstanding accomplishments was to raise \$2,500 toward the purchase of the cultural center next to the old parish.

Increasing activity and participation in regional and national functions broadened the perspectives and exposure of the membership. As a result Lowell has played an important and significant role on the regional and national levels of the ACYOA.

Through the efforts of the pastor and the cooperation of the members and parents Lowell gained notoriety for "shipping" bus-loads of youth to Armenian concerts, recitals and performances for dance, music and other cultural functions. This vastly affected Lowell's approach to ACYOA priorities and goals.

By means of travel and extensive filming and cataloguing, the youth of Lowell have already produced a number of documentary and instructional films with sound tracks and narrations. Some subjects include "Holy Land", Armenia, "Manuscripts", Art Treasures, etc. These programs have been presented throughout various areas of the Diocese.

Lowell's Youth also gained prominence in the area of church participation. Since 1969, the youth of our parish have actively participated in the liturgical and educational aspects of our community. The ACYOA has provided Sunday School teachers as well as deacons and acolytes for the church. The youth have performed great and vast roles in the spiritual life of the church via their participation in the sacraments, weddings, baptisms, funerals, grave-blessings, processions, Holy Week and throughout the entire year. The participation of youth gives great encouragement to the adults who otherwise might fear that each generation is the "last". The ACYOA has played a significant role in the moving to the new cultural facilities as well as the renovations and landscaping of the area. We look forward to Consecration Day on June 11th—and invite all our brothers to share in our joy.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDANTS

1951-57 Mrs. Isabel Gdanian  
 1964-65 Mr. Gary Koltookian  
 1969-70 Mrs. Louise Ajemian

1957-61 Miss Diane Kludjian  
 1965-68 Mrs. Eva Boghosian

1961-64 Mr. Richard Juknavorian  
 1968-69 Mr. Aram Jeknavorian

#### 1969-1970

*Louise Ajemian Superintendent*

Miss Queenie Boyadjian  
 Mrs. Mary Maimone  
 Mrs. Louise Ajemian  
 Mrs. Dolores Garabedian

Mrs. Marge Kazanjian  
 Mr. Anthony Der Garabedian  
 Mrs. Mary Melkonian  
 Mrs. Eva Baghosian

Miss Denise Kludjian  
 Mrs. Pat Amboian  
 Mrs. Irene Guregian  
 Mr. Greg Boghasian

#### 1970-1971

*Mrs. Louise Ajemian, Superintendent*  
*Mrs. Dolores Garabedian, Treasurer*

*Mrs. Eva Boghosian, Assistant Superintendent*  
*Mrs. Patricia Amboian, Secretary*

#### Teachers

Miss Nona Juknavorian  
 Mrs. Mary Maimone  
 Mrs. Patricia Amboian  
 Miss Quennie Boyadjian

Miss Linda Juknavorian  
 Miss Dinise Kludjian  
 Miss Denise Kludjian  
 Mr. Mark Juknavorian

Mr. Richard Juknavorian  
 Mr. Dana Kludjian  
 Mr. Anthony Der Garabedian  
 Mrs. Eva Boghosian

#### Substitute Teachers

Mrs. Rose Kludhian

Mrs. Dolores Garabedian

Mr. Gary Boghosian

#### 1971-1972

*Mrs. Louise Ajemian, Superintendent*  
*Mrs. Dolores Garabedian, Treasurer*

*Mrs. Eva Boghosian, Assistant Superintendent*  
*Mrs. Pat Amboian, Secretary*

#### Teachers

Miss Lorraine Karaysian  
 Miss Nona Juknavorian  
 Miss Linda Juknavorian  
 Mrs. Pat Amboian

Miss Queenie Boyadjian  
 Mr. Richard Juknavorian  
 Mr. David Juknavorian  
 Mr. Mark Juknavorian

Mr. Gary Boghosian  
 Mrs. Eva Boghosian  
 Mrs. Dolores Garabedian

#### 1972-1973

*Mrs. Louise Ajemian, Superintendent*

*Mrs. Dolores Garabedian, Treasurer*

*Mr. Richard Juknavorian Secretary*

Miss Rachael Maimone  
 Mr. David Juknavorian  
 Miss Linda Juknavorian  
 Mrs. Dolores Garabedian

Mr. Mark Juknavorian  
 Mr. Richard Juknavorian  
 Mrs. Eva Boghasian

Miss Nona Juknavorian  
 Miss Donna Barsamian  
 Miss Maimone

#### 1973-1974

*Mrs. Louise Ajemian, Superintendent*

*Mrs. Dolores Garabedian, Treasurer*

*Miss Quennie Boyadjian Secretary*

Miss Joanne Argoyan  
 Miss Susan Manoian  
 Miss Carol Sarkisian  
 Mr. Keven Bohegian

Mrs. Dolores Garabedian  
 Miss Queenie Boyadjian  
 Miss Kim Kazanjian

Miss Donna Barsamian  
 Mr. Howard Manoian  
 Mrs. Missy Manoian

#### 1974-1975

*Mrs. Louise Ajemian, Superintendent*

*Mrs. Dolores Garabedian, Treasurer*

*Miss Carol Sarkisian Secretary*

Mrs. Celene Aghajanian  
 Miss Carol Sarkisian  
 Miss Donna Barsamian

Mrs. Dolores Garabedian  
 Miss Kim Kazanjian  
 Mr. Keven Bohegian

Mrs. Pat Amboian  
 Mrs. Mary Melkonian  
 Mr. Joseph Sarkisian

#### 1975-1976

*Louise Ajemian, Superintendent*

*Mrs. Dolores Garabedian, Treasurer*

*Miss Carol Sarkisian Secretary*

Miss Leslie Melkonian  
 Miss Susan Maderosian  
 Mrs. Celene Aghajanian  
 Mrs. Dolores Garabedian

Miss Carol Sarkisian  
 Miss Kim Kazanjian  
 Miss Donna Barsamian  
 Mrs. Pat Amboian

Mr. Keven Bohegian  
 Mrs. Mary Melkonian  
 Mr. Charles Dimon

#### 1976-1977

*Mrs. Louise Ajemian, Superintendent*

*Miss Carol Sarkisian, Secretary & Treasurer*

Miss Nancy Balian  
 Mrs. Pat Amboian  
 Miss Carol Sarkisian

Mrs. Mary Melkonian  
 Miss Donna Barsamian

Mr. Keven Bohegian  
 Mr. Charles Dimon

# A Brief History of the Armenian Church

The Church of Armenia acknowledges as its original founders two of the twelve apostles of Christ, Thaddeus and Bartholomew, who are referred to as the "first enlighteners of Armenia" to distinguish them from the second enlightener, St. Gregory. According to tradition the two apostles were put to death in Armenia. The generally accepted chronology gives a period of eight years to the mission of St. Thaddeus (35-43 A.D.) and sixteen years to that of St. Bartholomew (44-60 A.D.).

Since there existed no Armenian alphabet until the first part of the fourth century, we have very little information concerning the progress of Christianity in Armenia before the official conversion. But there are strong indications that Christianity had taken root in the country at a much earlier time. Recently discovered fragmentary documents refer to certain bishops as successors to the two apostles. History records religious persecutions by at least three kings of Armenia during the years 110, 238, and 280. Moreover, the Armenian Church commemorates many Armenian martyrs of the apostolic era. Eusebius, the church historian, mentions a letter by Dionysius, Patriarch of Alexandria, written to Mehrourjan, Bishop of Armenia. It thus follows that Christianity had not only made inroads in Armenia, but had taken more or less organized form with bishops who were well known outside of Armenia.

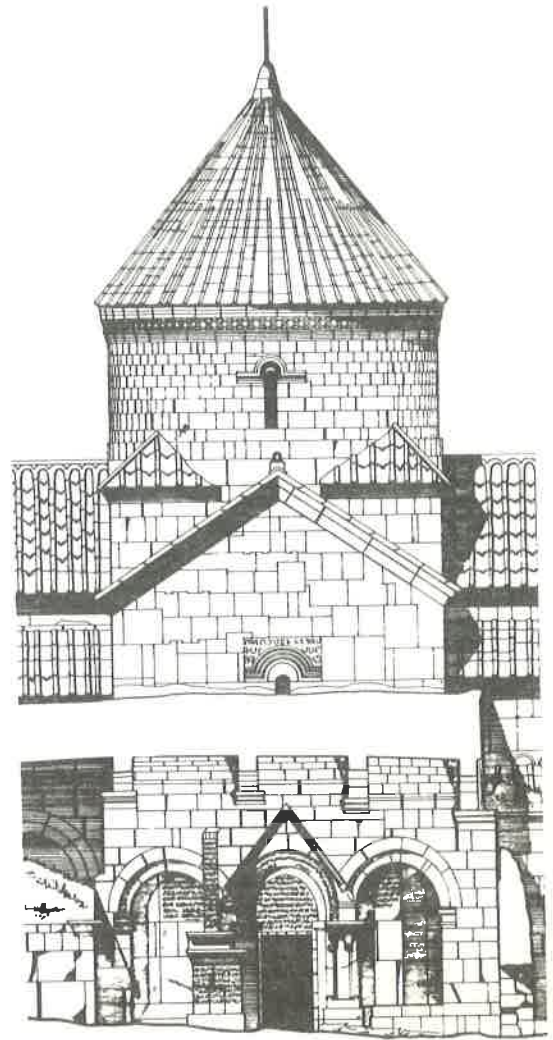
**CONVERSION TO THE NEW FAITH:** - In the year 301 (some historians place the date 10-15 years earlier) there happened a most important event not only in the history of Armenia, but in the annals of the Christian Church. The faith which from the beginning had been relentlessly persecuted throughout the world, was proclaimed as the national religion of Armenia.

Without entering into the biographical details of his life, it should be sufficient to state that Gregory was of noble family, educated in Caesarea, then a Christian center. He entered the service of King Trdat (Tiridates) of Armenia and after much persecution and suffering succeeded in converting the King, who in turn helped him to convert the whole country to Christianity. In some regions the change took place with relatively little difficulty; in others evangelization met with great resistance. With the help of the King, Gregory destroyed the pagan sanctuaries and crushed the armed opposition of the pagan priests. Paganism, nevertheless, lingered on especially in the remote parts of the country. Gregory strengthened and reorganized the triumphant Church in Armenia. He was formally elected as the supreme head of the Church. Therefore, he was sent, with a large retinue, to Caesarea to be ordained a bishop.

Gregory was also instrumental in the conversion of the neighboring countries of Georgia and Albania. He also built the first Christian cathedral in Vagharshapat near Mount Ararat, then the capital of Armenia, as directed by our Lord in a vision, in memory of which it is known as Holy Etchmiadzin, that is, "The place where the Only Begotten Son descended."

Having accomplished his mission, and advanced in age, Gregory relinquished the care of the Church to his second son, Aristakes, who already had been serving as his vicar-general, and, in that capacity, probably had attended as a delegate of the Armenian Church to the famous Council of Nicea, in 325. Gregory then retired from active life to life as a hermit until his death.

Aside from its moral and spiritual benefits, the adoption of Christianity helped to unite the various racial elements and divisions in Armenia, and forged them into a people.



PERSIA INTERFERES: Beyond their borders, however, the conversion of the Armenians to Christianity was a cause for grave concern, especially to the Persian rulers, for they could not fail to see that a Christian Armenia politically would be inclined towards Christian Byzantium, to the disadvantage of Persia. It was imperative, therefore, to uproot Christianity in Armenia, and the Persian kings made every effort to accomplish this end. They sowed dissension among the Armenian princes and enticed some of them to return to paganism. As a consequence of these intrigues, King Trdat was murdered, Aristakes, the son and successor of St. Gregory, was assassinated by an Armenian prince, and Vartanes, Gregory's eldest son, almost met a similar fate. The attempt to impose Mazdeism upon the Christian Armenians by the Persian kings, who then had already reduced the Armenian kingdom to the state of vassalhood, went on for more than a century and reached its peak in the middle of the fifth century, as we shall see.

The Armenian church, nevertheless, continued to make slow but steady progress. Christianity was taking root in the hearts of the people. The fifth successor of St. Gregory, St. Nerses the Great, a prominent figure in the history of the Armenian Church, gave much attention to charitable institutions. He established orphanages, homes for old people, and for lepers who in those days were left to their fate to die in the mountains or in the wilderness. He built hospitals for these and for others infected with incurable diseases. He built monasteries in isolated parts of the country not only to cultivate a deeper spiritual life, but also to care for and shelter travelers. In other words, he put into practice in Armenia the moral principles of the Christian Faith.

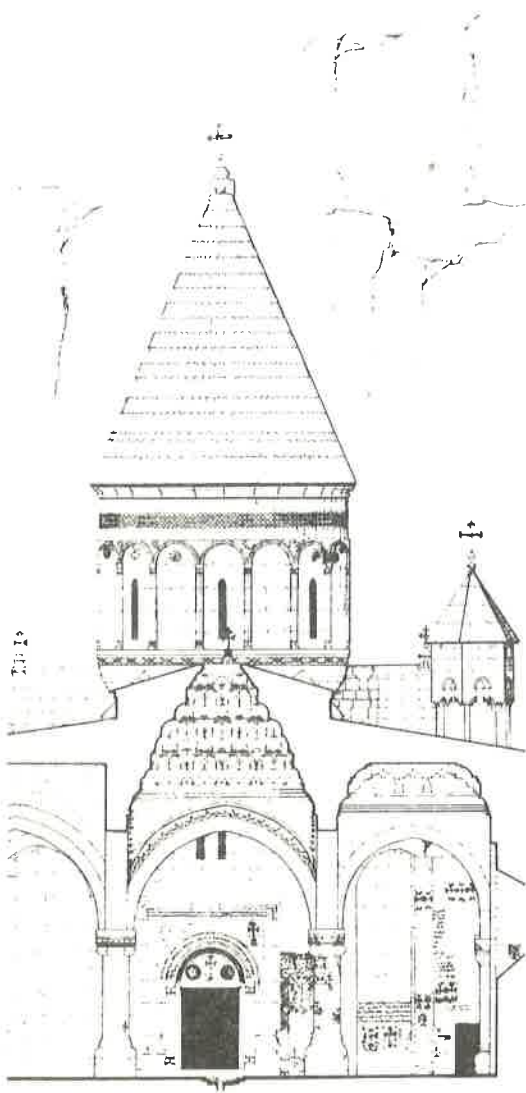
However, in her task the Church labored under a serious disadvantage. Since there existed no Armenian alphabet, the scriptures were read in Greek or in Syriac in the Armenian Churches. Clergymen had to learn one or both of these languages besides their native tongue. They would first read the Bible in either of these languages, then translate it into Armenian. This practice, besides its many obvious disadvantages, hindered their work of preaching and explaining the Holy Scriptures in terms that would be readily grasped by the common people.

THE GREAT TASK OF ST. MESROP: A man of vision and boundless energy conceived the idea of inventing letters for the Armenian language. He was Mesrob, a very learned former secretary at the royal court. Having received the call to serve his church by taking holy orders, Mesrob left the court and took the vows of a missionary monk. While preaching in remote parts of the country, where remnants of paganism persisted, he felt personally the difficulties involved in preaching the Gospel and in conducting services with the aid of foreign languages.

After much toilsome search, travel, and consultation with eminent scholars, Mesrob composed an alphabet of 36 letters in which each sound of the Armenian language was presented.

The Catholicos, St. Sahak, a scholar himself, gave much help and encouragement to Mesrob in his endeavors.

King Vramshapouh, one of the wisest rulers of Armenia, also patronized and supported this vital project. Upon the completion of the alphabet the first task was the translation of the Bible, and the very first words written in the new Armenian letters were: "That men may know wisdom and instruction, understand words of insight," the opening words of the Book of Proverbs, with which Mesrob started the translation of the Bible. Under the supervision and guidance of St. Sahak and with the cooperation of a group of young scholars, whom he had previously sent to Edessa, Caesarea, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople, for higher education, St. Mesrob translated the whole of the Scriptures into Armenian.



At the very time when the religious freedom of the people was seriously threatened in the land by Persian Mazdeism, King Vramshapouh, Catholicos Sahak, and Mesrob Vardapet, who were not only men of spirit but also statesmen and patriots of a high order, endowed the nation with a priceless treasure - letters and literature. Theirs is an inspiring example of cooperation between temporal and spiritual authorities for the national good. Together with the gallant group of literary men, whom we now call "the Holy Translators," they provided an armor to the Armenian people which proved most effective in the troubled times which followed.

The development of written or literary Armenian made people less dependent on their powerful neighbors, east and west, and placed greater stress on national identity. For the next two centuries, from 440-640, Armenia was divided among two rival empires, east and west. Eastern Armenia was governed under Persian "Marspans" (governors), the western provinces by Byzantine prefects, some of them Armenian.

In the western part of Armenia, although under foreign and, on the whole, inept rulers, the people had the advantage of living in a Christian state. In the east they enjoyed more internal self-government, but their condition was less enviable under the pagan Sassanid Persians, who strove to convert them to Mazdeism, with the aim of fastening on them the additional bond of a common religion with Persia.

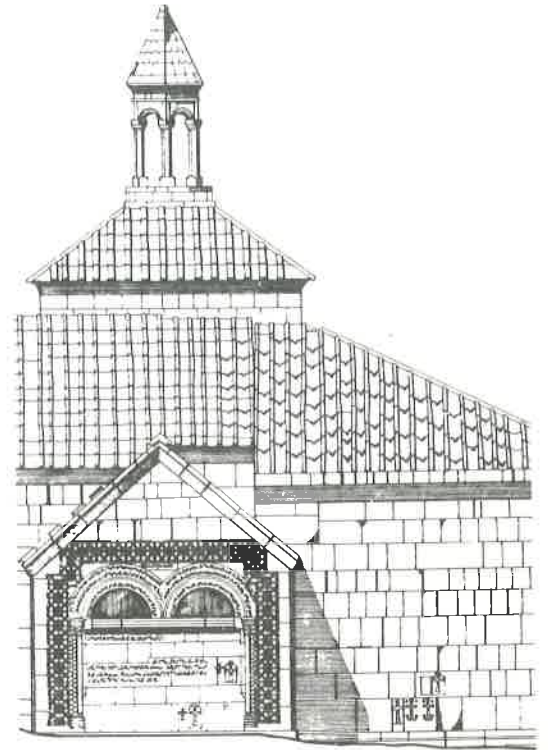
**REVOLT IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH:** In the year 450 Yazgerd II, the king of Persia, issued a decree commanding all Christians to embrace Mazdeism. This was the signal for a violent revolt in Armenia; the Persians and their priests, who were sent to convert the country to the Mazdean or Zoroastrian religion, were massacred, and the people rose in open revolt under St. Vardan Mamigonian. This brave and devout prince and his small army, however, were eventually overwhelmed at the battle of Avarayr (451) and Vardan was killed together with more than a thousand of his men.

Although the death of St. Vardan was a severe loss for Armenia, the battle of Avarayr saved the nation, for the Persians, not having expected such a stout resistance, were convinced that the Armenians meant to die before surrendering their Christian faith. Vardan's supreme sacrifice and that of his fellow soldiers, many of whom were from princely families, has been ardently cherished to the present day. The Armenian Church celebrates the anniversary of the Battle of Avarayr and pays tribute to the heroes who fell on that field. Their memorial day is a major holiday for all Armenians.

A period of disorder followed the battle of Avarayr. The Catholicos, Hovsep, accused as the instigator of this religious resistance, was arrested, taken to Persia and martyred with other members of the clergy, among whom St. Ghevont (Leontius) the Priest was the most famous for his zeal and courage.

The Persians, after a few years of peace, again started to force their religion upon the Armenians. Once again the Armenians were obliged to take up arms under the leadership of St. Vardan's nephew, Vahan Mamigonian.

Finally, Yazgerd's successor seeing the uselessness of persecution, proclaimed religious liberty in Armenia and named Vahan, the rebellious prince, first as military commander of the country, and then as governor-general of Armenia, a step which insured civil and religious peace in the devastated land.



The city of Dvin became at this time the capital of Armenia, in place of Vagharshapat. Since it was essential for the Catholicate to be located where the political center of the country happened to be, the spiritual center of the Armenian Church was transferred from Etchmiadzin (near Vagharshapat) to Dvin, whence in the succeeding centuries it was moved to other cities, until its return to Etchmiadzin in 1441. Hovhannes Mandakouni, the Catholicos, is one of the most honored names in the Armenian Church. Thanks to his wisdom and administrative abilities, he knew how to repair the ruins caused by these religious wars. He also is well known for his reform of the Divine offices which were enriched and regularized.

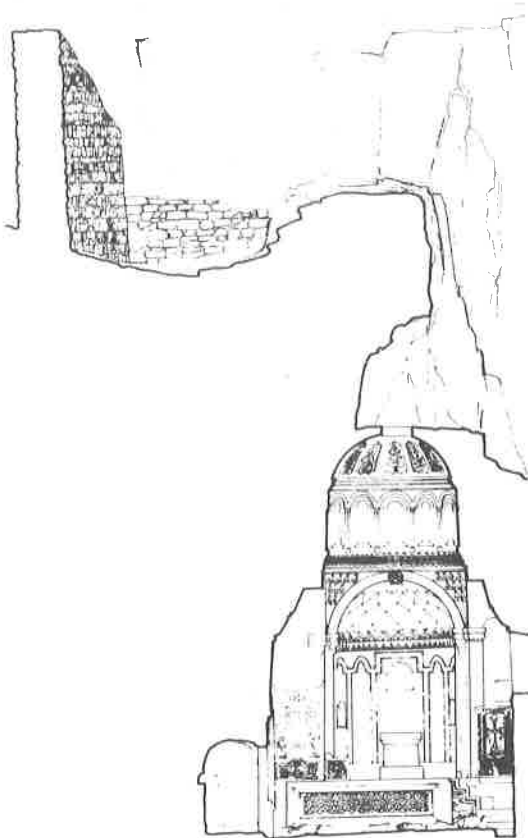
**THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON:** While Armenia was in the midst of a life and death struggle, in defense of Christianity, a great Church Council was held in Chalcedon, near Constantinople which was destined to be a cause for dissension and division among Christian churches.

The Council was called in order to settle some controversial points of doctrine connected with the nature of Christ. The main question was whether Christians should accept one nature or two natures in Christ. The Council gave its decision in favor of two natures. Eastern churches, under the leadership of the Patriarch of Alexandria, did not accept this decision objecting that by that formula the mystery of the redemption would be endangered. Besides, they thought that this new decision was contrary to the teachings of the previous Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431) where the formula of St. Cyril of Alexandria, "one nature united in the incarnate Word," was accepted. The Council stirred up strife among the great sees of Christianity, Constantinople, Alexandria and Rome. Owing to the war with Persia, the Armenian Church did not have a delegate at this council, but she could not escape its consequences. The Syrian Church was engaged in a controversy with Nestorians, who had been rejected by the Ecumenical Council Ephesus. The Armenian Church was strictly anti-Nestorian. The Nestorians had been using the decision of the Council of Chalcedon against their orthodox opponents who were in communion with the Church of Armenia. The orthodox party in Syria asked for guidance from the Armenian Church, and thus arose the first occasion for the consideration of the decisions of the Council. Catholicos Babgen, called a meeting not only of his own bishops but also those of the neighboring Christian countries of Georgia and Azerbaijan, together with their Catholicoi. They assembled at the headquarters of the Armenian Church in Dvin, under the presidency of Babgen, in the year 506. After long deliberations they officially proclaimed their adherence to the profession of faith which had been accepted in the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, and rejected everything that savored of Nestorianism, including the acts of the Council Chalcedon. This was not a declaration of separation from the rest of Christendom, that is, of Greco-Roman Christianity. It was a proclamation against the doctrine of two natures put forth by the Council.

This decision of the Armenian Church was followed by interminable controversies between the Armenian and Greek Churches. Many attempts at reunion were made during the ensuing centuries but without any permanent results.

**THE ARAB INVASION:** Arabs began to invade Armenia in the year 640. After their rule was definitely established in Armenia, Greek-Armenian disputes lost their importance. The Moslems made unsuccessful efforts to win the Armenians over to Islam. The Armenian Church gave numerous martyrs for the faith.

Eventually some Armenian princes grew strong enough to establish small kingdoms. Among them the Bagratid Kingdom was the most powerful. Therefore the catholicate eventually was transferred to the Bagratid capital of Ani. In this period the Church enjoyed comparative peace under wise and able leaders such as Anania of Moks, Khachik Arsharounik, Sarkis of Sevan, Petros Getadartz, etc.



After the fall of the Bagratid kingdom a better part of Armenia was taken over by the Byzantine Empire, which revived its efforts to subject the Church of Armenia to that of Constantinople, meeting with but little success. Tartars, Seljuks, and Turks invaded the Middle East. Armenians sought safer localities and found them in the region of the Taurus Mountains, in Cilicia, within the Byzantine Empire. In time they became so numerous and strong that they established there a principality, which eventually became a flourishing kingdom ruled by the Rubenian dynasty.

After the fall of Ani, the heads of the Church having no permanent place, eventually had settled in the castle of Romkla on the river Euphrates. For almost 150 years the supreme heads of the Church made this castle their place of residence and headquarters. However, upon the establishment of the Cilician Armenian Kingdom, the Catholicate was transferred in 1293, to Sis, the capital, which remained the metropolis of the Church for another century and a half.

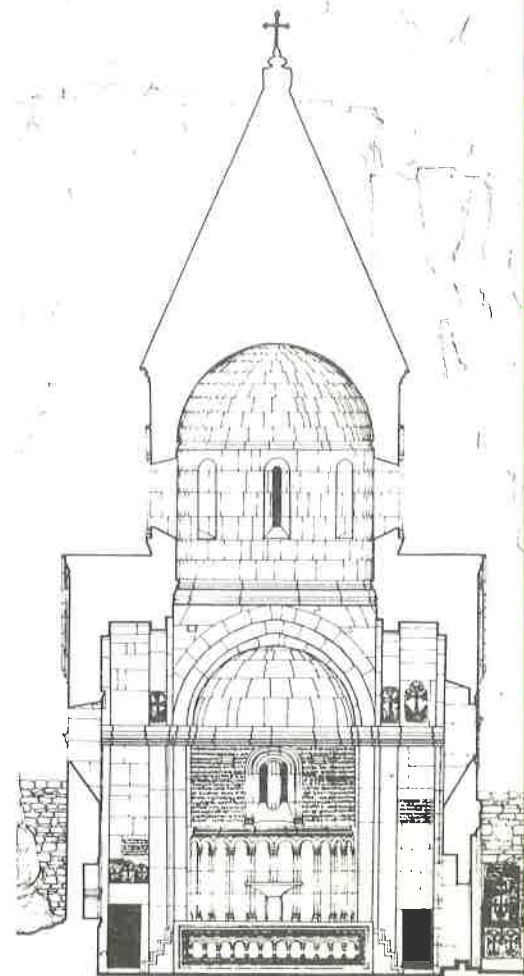
The dominant feature of the Cilician period was the attempts at union first with the Greeks and then with the Latins. The initiator of these efforts, on the part of the Armenian Church, was St. Nerses the Graceful. On his way back from a mission, Nerses met the imperial Greek governor-general of lower Cilicia. The question of union of the Churches was thoroughly discussed by the bishop and the prince, who was conversant in religious matters. Nerses prepared a statement on the doctrine and rites of the Armenian Church which the prince gladly undertook to present personally to the Emperor. The answer to this statement was delivered to Nerses, who then had succeeded his brother as catholicos. Nerses proposed a plenary council of Greeks, Latins, Armenians and Syrians to establish union among the four churches and so to put an end to the disagreements which had existed for seven centuries. Nerses did not live to see the response to his proposal. His nephew and successor, Grigor IV, received a statement of nine points from the emperor which purported to be a basis for reunion. But the Catholicos found them unacceptable.

The Emperor then reduced them to one point: acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon. Grigor invited the bishops and theologians of Armenia to deliberate on the Emperor's proposal, which again was not accepted.

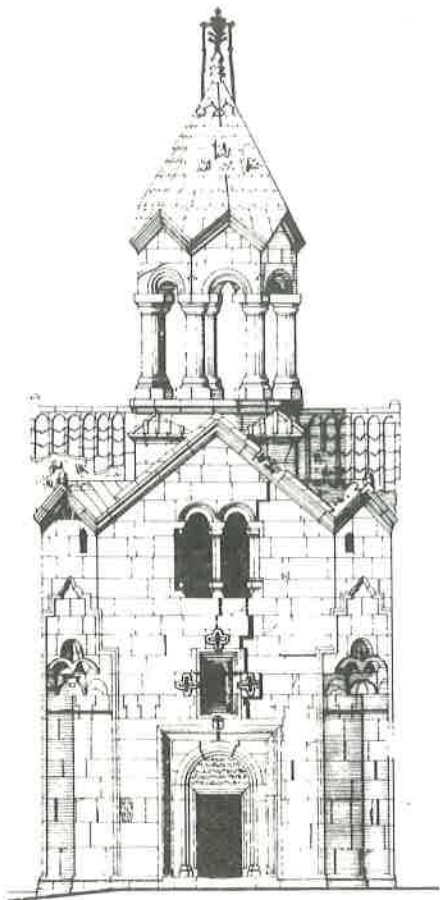
Prince Levon II of Cilician Armenia, favored union with Rome, but his wish on this question was politically motivated, for he desired to convert his principality into a kingdom, which he eventually succeeded in doing, by receiving his crown from the hands of the papal legate. The catholicos as a rule were sympathetic to the King's view, but the episcopate and clergy of Armenia proper, known as the "Band of Eastern Divines," were vigorously against any step in favor of the Latins. But for this Band, it is almost certain that the Church of Armenia would now be in the pale of the Roman Church. Most of the catholicos of this time were Latinophiles, some openly accepted the Roman Catholic faith.

Nevertheless the Armenian Church as a whole kept herself independent of the Roman Church and preserved her traditional orthodoxy.

After the fall of the Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia, in 1375 laxity of discipline prevailed in and around the Catholicate. Sis, once proud metropolis of the church, was no longer the right location for the spiritual center of the church. Little respect was left for the doctrine of the Church and the heads of the Church were ready to submit to any compromise to gain an advantage. Moreover, Rome carried on a successful propaganda in Cilicia. As a result there appeared a Latino-Armenian brotherhood called "Unitors," whose sole aim was to unite the Church of Armenia with that of Rome. Under these circumstances, it was neither sensible nor useful to leave the headquarters of the Church in Sis. Therefore the Band of the Eastern Divines, that is to say the Vardapets of Armenia proper, witnessing the decay in Cilicia and anxious to uphold their orthodoxy, resolved to transfer the See from Sis to Holy Etchmiadzin, to its original place.







**CATHOLICATE RETURNS TO ETCHMIADZIN:** The Theological Institute or the Grand Seminary of Siunik, in northern Armenia, which had for centuries enjoyed a justly merited reputation, had in these latter years acquired fresh vitality under the direction of the most famous divine, Hovhannes of Orotn (1388), Malakia of Khrim (1384) and the most famous of them, Grigor of Tathev (1410), who prepared the ground for the transfer of the Catholical See to Etchmiadzin.

The reigning Catholicos of Sis, Grigor IX, was invited to move to Etchmiadzin. He refused to move, but agreed to the election of a new catholicos in Etchmiadzin. Upon his consent, therefore, a general synod was assembled at Etchmiadzin, in 1441, with the participation of 700 bishops, vardapets, priests and princes. A saintly person, Giragos of Virap, was elected as Catholicos.

During this period and the succeeding two centuries, there developed, in Etchmiadzin, the practice of naming vicars (coadjutors) to the Holy See, who possessed the full titles and prerogatives of a catholicos. The one beneficial outcome of this practice was the simplicity which it introduced to the order of succession through the immediate enthronement of the vicar. For, as a consequence of the disturbed state of the country under oppressive Moslem emirs and khans and the dispersion of the Armenians, summoning the electoral synod had become almost impossible.

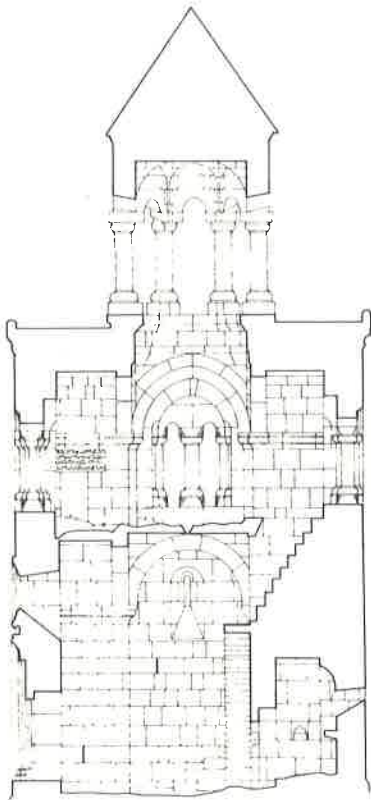
During this period one church leader worthy of mention is Mikael of Sebastia (1542-1570), who instituted Armenian printing. Presses were established in Venice, Rome, Constantinople, Etchmiadzin, Isphahan and Amsterdam. The most important and the best among all the books that were printed was the illustrated edition of the Bible *Osakan*, which was published in Amsterdam in 1666.

**PROGRESS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY:** A new vitality showed itself in the church during the eighteenth century. The pioneer of this new movement was the Catholicos Movses of Tathev. It was to his zeal for reform and restoration that the see of Etchmiadzin owes its recovery from a state of decadence. He procured from the Persian government a cessation of taxes and abuses which were imposed by the Moslem khans of Yerevan, who used to victimize the heads of the church, and he effected ecclesiastical reforms. His successors carried on the work of restoration.

Special mention should also be made here of Mekhitar of Sebastia. He was previously a faithful clergyman of the Armenian Church with liberal and progressive views who tried to establish a center of education in Armenia, but failing, eventually settled in Venice on the small island of San Lazaro (1717). Mekhitar had to yield to the demands of the Roman Church in order to be able to devote himself without restraint to the work of intellectual pursuits and scholarly endeavors. He founded the Armenian Roman Catholic religious order of Mekhitarists which has rendered commendable services to Armenian literature and culture. With the aid of two bishops and a few priests, a Roman patriarchal see in Cilicia was established in 1740. Bishop Abraham Ardzivian was the first of this line of patriarchs. The Catholic Armenians, however, represent a small minority.

In the heart of Armenia itself, Vardan of Baghesh was the best example of the revival, to which we have referred. His disciples, Hovhannes Golot and Hacobos Nalian, Patriarch of Constantinople and the more famous Grigor "the chain-bearer," Patriarch of Jerusalem, were able to render outstanding service, without departing from their loyalty, to the Mother Church. Owing to their efforts, the eighteenth century was a period of progress both in national and ecclesiastical life.

Simeon of Yerevan, catholicos from 1763-1780, was one of the most capable personalities of the period. His untiring energy was productive of much good work such as the organization of a college in Etchmiadzin, making more efficient

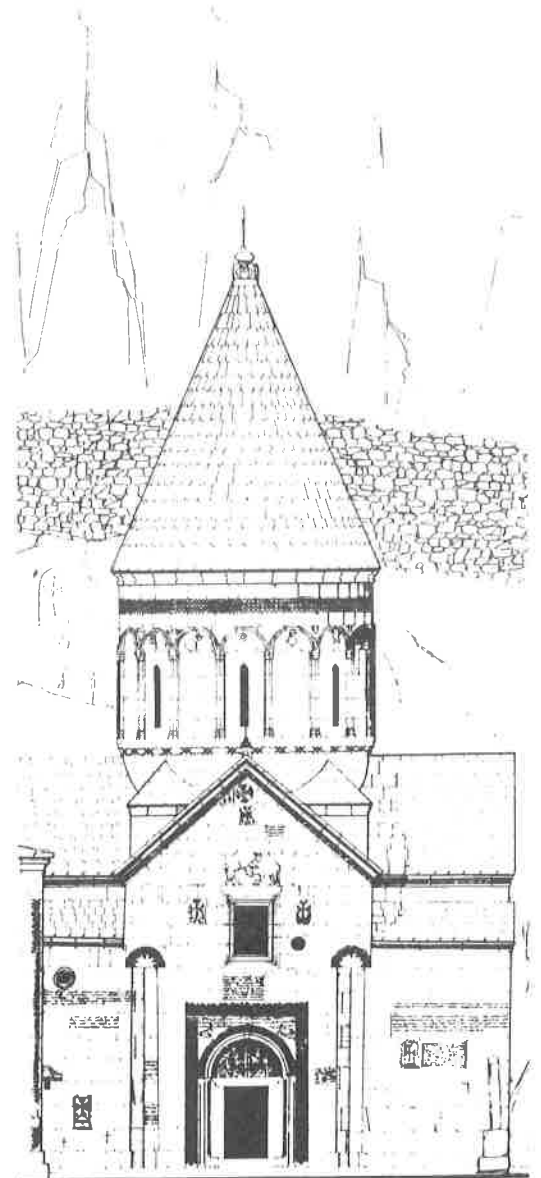


use of printing, etc. He also established the first contact with the Russian government. It was he who revised and gave the present form to our liturgical calendar which has now come to general use in the church.

**THE CHURCH IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY:** The most characteristic feature of the nineteenth century is the intervention of the laity in affairs of the church and the creation of "constitutions" for the administration of the Church and nation. As Armenia at this time was divided between Russia and Turkey, the Church had two different constitutions. The regulation which was enacted by the Russian Czars was called "Bologenia," issued in 1836. Despite its many shortcomings, "Bologenia" was more like a church "constitution." The national constitution which was established in Turkey, took final shape in 1863. It gave more power to the representatives of lay people and had a more communal and national character.

The nineteenth century showed signs of marked improvement in the educational and social fields by the increase of schools, by the growing number of students who attended European universities, and by the spread of primary education. As a result of this development the Church adopted a more systematic and active administration, had better trained clergy, was better housed, and was financed more adequately.

Education of the Armenian people, under the guidance of the Church, made noteworthy progress.



# Hierarchy and Titles of the Clergy

## I. Hierarchy

- A. CATHOLICOS — Universal head of the Armenian Church.
1. Functions
    - a. Blessing the holy oil (miron) and distributing it among all the dioceses.
    - b. Consecrating bishops.
    - c. Conferring the honorary degree of "Archbishop" upon recommended bishops.
    - d. Granting pardon to defrocked members of the clergy.
    - e. Deciding matters of divorce.
- B. BISHOP (Yepiscopos)
1. Functions
    - a. Ordination and consecration of priests.
    - b. Ordination of deacons, subdeacons, and servers of minor orders.
    - c. Conferring of the academic degree of "vardapet" (doctor) and "dzayragooyin vardapet" (supreme doctor).
    - d. Conferring of the honorary degree of "avag" (senior) upon married priests.
    - e. Conferring of the right to wear certain liturgical decorations upon members of the clergy.
    - f. Consecration of church buildings.
- C. PRIEST
1. Celibate — abegha. May be promoted to the degree of "vardapet," "dzayragooyin vardapet," bishop, and catholicos.
  2. Married Priest — kabana or yeret. May receive honorary degree of "avag" (Senior).
  3. Priests have the right to perform the following sacraments:
    - a. Baptism or christening — "Mucurtooyoon."
    - b. Confirmation — "Droshm" or "Gnoonk."
    - c. Penance — "Apashkharootyoon" — hearing confessions and giving absolution.
    - d. Divine Liturgy — "Soorp Badarag," or Communion — "Haghortooyoon."
    - e. Holy Matrimony — "Soorp Busag."
    - f. Burial — "Thaghoom."
    - g. Also rites specified in the Book of Mashdotz.
- D. DEACON (Sargavak)
1. Functions of an "Avag Sargavak" (Senior Deacon):
    - a. Performing the Anaphora (Varaberoom) in the Badarag.
    - b. Read the Jashou lection of the Gospel.
    - c. Chant the biddings of the Badarag and other services.
    - d. Cense the altar and congregation.
    - e. Carry the chalice and other sacramental objects.
  2. A "Cisasargavak" (Subdeacon) is entitled to all the prerogatives of an "avag sargavak" except the right to perform the "Veraberoom" (Anaphora).
- E. RANK OF MINOR ORDERS
1. Chorister (dpir)
    - a. Cantor of psalms and hymns.
    - b. Lector of the Scriptures.
    - c. Door-keeper.
    - d. Sweeper of the church.



**THE CATHOLICATE OF ALL ARMENIANS:** According to the chronicler Agathengalos, soon after the conversion of Armenia to Christianity, St. Gregory the Illuminator beheld in a vision, the Son of God, a heroic figure of light, surrounded with a mighty angelic host. He struck the ground with a golden mallet, indicating the place where the Mother Cathedral of the newly Christianized nation was to be established. Thus Holy Etchmiadzin (Where the Only Begotten Descended) became the seat of the Catholicate of the entire Armenian nation, and never ceased to be a revered sanctuary, even when owing to political changes the Mother See was temporarily moved to distant locations.

**THE CATHOLICATE OF CILICIA:** After the transfer, in 1441, of the Catholicate of All Armenians from Sis, Cilicia, back to Holy Etchmiadzin, the bishops in Cilicia, in an effort to uphold the prestige of the Armenian Church in that region in the eyes of the local Moslem rulers, established a local or special catholicate, known as the Catholicate of Cilicia, to which the Mother See at Holy Etchmiadzin wisely offered no objection.

Before the First World War the jurisdiction of the special Catholicate of Cilicia included several Turkish "vilayets." However, after the expulsion of the Armenian people and the Catholicate of Cilicia from Turkey by the Kemalist Turks, that ancient see found the area of its jurisdiction confined only to the small diocese of Aleppo. However, at this point, in a fine gesture of brotherly solicitude, the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem — with the wholehearted approval of Georg V, Catholicos of All Armenians, at Etchmiadzin — generously transferred to the refugee see of Cilicia all the churches, schools, and diocesan offices in Damascus, Beirut, Antioch, and Cyprus, which until then had been under Jerusalem. A new Catholicate was built at Antelias, near Beirut, which soon became a flourishing religious center. Unfortunately some of the more ambitious catholicos of Cilicia have been from time to time inclined to challenge, always unsuccessfully, the unquestioned spiritual supremacy of the Catholicate of All Armenians at Holy Etchmiadzin.

**THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM:** The patriarchate of Jerusalem owes its origin to the peculiar veneration with which Christian Armenians regard the Holy Places. The Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem is the guardian of the Holy Places, or rather, the sanctuaries and the rights and privileges which are in the possession of the Armenians. He is the superior of the congregation of St. James, which serves as one of the three principal custodians of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other important shrines and sanctuaries in the Holy Land.

**THE PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE:** The creation of a special Patriarchal see at Constantinople took place almost at the same time as the transfer of the Supreme Mother See from Sis to Etchmiadzin. The Turks after the conquest of Constantinople introduced radical measures for ensuring the submission of the Greeks. The Ottoman laws had a religious character, having been founded upon Islam. The Muslim powers, after conquering a Christian country, granted them administrative and social autonomy. They, therefore after conquering Constantinople, granted to the religious head of the Greek Church social and civil privileges with which to govern the Greek Orthodox communities in the Ottoman Empire.



After having thus recognized the religious rights of the Greeks, the Ottoman rulers brought a large colony of Armenians to Constantinople and placed them on the same footing as the Greek element. Bishop Hovakim, Metropolitan of the Armenian colonies in Asia Minor, was transferred from Bursa to Constantinople, where he was invested with the titles, honors and privileges similar to those accorded to the Greek Patriarch, in 1461. It was in this manner that the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople came into being.

From the day that a Patriarchal See and a strong Armenian colony were established in Constantinople, that city became the center of the Armenian nation in the Ottoman Empire. Since World War I, however, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has lost much of its former importance owing to the deportation of almost the entire Armenian population in Turkey, except those in Istanbul.



# Fundamental Teachings of the Church

## The Seven Sacraments of the Church

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Penance
4. Holy Communion
5. Matrimony
6. Holy Orders
7. Unction with Oil (for the sick)

## The Three Divine Virtues

1. Faith
2. Hope
3. Charity (love)

## The Three Christian Duties

1. Prayer
2. Fasting
3. Almsgiving

## The Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. To instruct the ignorant
2. To counsel the doubtful
3. To exhort and convert sinners
4. To comfort the sorrowing and afflicted
5. To forgive offenses
6. To suffer wrongs patiently
7. To pray for others, living and dead

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## The Four Cardinal Virtues

1. Prudence
2. Justice
3. Temperance
4. Fortitude

## Four Notes of the True Church

1. One
2. Holy
3. Catholic
4. Apostolic

## The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. The spirit of wisdom and understanding
2. The spirit of counsel and spiritual strength
3. The spirit of knowledge and true godliness
4. The spirit of holy fear (of the Lord)

## The Seven Capital Sins and their Opposite Virtues

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Pride        | 1. Humility    |
| 2. Envy         | 2. Contentment |
| 3. Anger        | 3. Meekness    |
| 4. Sloth        | 4. Diligence   |
| 5. Covetousness | 5. Liberality  |
| 6. Gluttony     | 6. Temperance  |
| 7. Lus'         | 7. Chastity    |

## The Four Symbols of the Gospels

- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| The Angel       | St. Matthew |
| The Winged Lion | St. Mark    |
| The Winged Ox   | St. Luke    |
| The Eagle       | St. John    |



# Armenian Version of the Bible

The Bible was translated into Armenian from the Septuagint between 406 and 436 AD through the efforts of the Catholicos, St. Sahag and the Vartabed, St. Mesrob and their students.

Armenian was the 7th language into which the Holy Bible was translated. The Armenian version of the Bible has been referred to by scholars as "the Queen of Translations" because of its beauty, precision and clarity.

The Armenian Bible was hand-written and beautifully decorated with brilliant illustrations called illuminations for many centuries. These hand-written bibles are called "manuscripts" — the same referred to in the repository of the Mandentaran of Yerevan.

Armenian manuscripts today are in the archives of:

1. The Madenatarn - Yerevan, Armenia
2. Manuscripts Library, Patriarchate of Jerusalem
3. Manuscripts Library, Zummarr, Lebanon
4. Manuscripts Library, San Lazaro, Venice
5. Dublin Museum, Ireland,

and other prominent museums, libraries and repositories throughout the world.

The Armenian version of the Bible was first printed in 1666 by a Vartabed named Voskan of Yerevan, in Amsterdam, Holland. In this publication, the canon of the Old Testament has 47 books, although the Armenian version has 48.

The earliest printings of the Armenian Bible, in classical Armenian were:

- 1666 - Amsterdam; Vosgan of Yerevan
- 1705 - Constantinople; Bedros the Latin
- 1733 - Venice; Mekhitar Abba
- 1805 - Venice; Zohrabian
- 1817 - St. Petersburg; Bishop Hovhanness
- 1817 - Calcutta; Sirampur
- 1860 - Venice; Bagratouni
- 1895 - Constantinople: American Bible Society.



# Saints & Feasts of the Armenian Nation

**ST GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR:** Gregory received his Christian education in Caesarea, returning to Armenia to take up a position in the royal palace. Learning that he was a Christian, King Trdat (Tiridates) subjected him to torture and had him thrown into a deep pit where he languished for 15 years. When the King fell seriously ill, Gregory was summoned to heal him. Out of gratitude the King embraced the Christian faith, for himself and all his subjects, and proclaimed Christianity the official religion of the state, making Armenia the first country to adopt the new faith. It was 12 years later that Emperor Constantine issued a proclamation declaring that Christianity could be freely practiced within the Roman Empire. After 301 Gregory returned to Caesarea to be consecrated a Bishop, subsequently becoming the first Catholicos of the Armenian Church.

**ETCHMIADZIN:** After his release from the imprisonment of the pit, St. Gregory had a vision of the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, descending to earth and outlining the shape of a church with pillars and arches of light. Once he became Archbishop of Armenia, he made this vision a reality by building a cathedral church bearing the name "Etchmiadzin," which means "where the Only Begotten Descended." Etchmiadzin remains the spiritual center of the Armenian people and is the seat of the head of the Church, "The Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of the National Paramount See of the Apostolic Mother Church of Ararat of Holy Etchmiadzin."

**ST. SAHAG THE CATHOLICOS:** St. Sahag, who lived in one of the most critical periods of Armenian history, was a towering figure in the nation's religious and cultural development. He supported the work of Mesrob Mashtotz in the invention of the Armenian alphabet, prevailing on King Vramshabouh to provide financial aid. After the invention of the alphabet in 404, he undertook the work of translating the Holy Scriptures, regarded by some scholars as the "Queen of Translations." With Mesrob, Catholicos Sahag organized schools and trained many students, some of whom came to be known as the "translator priests," because they helped in the translation of the Scriptures and other valuable literary works. This era is generally known as the Golden Age of Armenian Literature. St. Sahag is also responsible for certain canons and the creation of some hymns.

**ST. MESROB MASHTOTZ:** While preaching the Gospel in Armenia, Mesrob travelled from village to village, finally coming to the realization that the Armenian people would more easily understand the Christian faith and the church's services, if these were available in a language and an alphabet distinctly their own. With the support of Catholicos Sahag and King Vramshabouh, he undertook the difficult task of creating one. There had been a number of earlier attempts. After much research, St. Mesrob succeeded in developing an alphabet so well designed that almost all the sounds of the language had a corresponding letter. It is believed that St. Mesrob was also responsible for the creation of the alphabets for the Caucasian Albanian and Georgian languages. St. Mesrob died in 433 and was buried in the town of Oshagan. Over his tomb a church was built which stands to this day.

**VARTANANK:** Armenia was the first nation to accept the Christian faith as its state religion. The first war in defense of that faith was also fought by the Armenians in 451 under the leadership of Vartan Mamigonian. Yazgerd II, Emperor of Persia, sought to impose the same religion on all his vassal peoples, issuing a proclamation ordering everyone to follow the Mazdeian or Zoroastrian re-





ligion. The Armenian leaders refused and fought for religious freedom in an unequal battle on the Plains of Avarair. The Armenians lost before the superior might of the Persians, but there was no peace until some decades later when the Armenians won the right to follow the Christian faith.

**ST. LEONTIUS (GHEVONT):** With this saint's name are remembered a number of clergy who are among the glories of the Armenian Church. They preached the Christian faith, ready to sacrifice everything, even their very lives. They were with Fr. Ghevont at the battle of Avarayr and afterwards, along with some suspect nobles, were imprisoned in Persia as far from Armenia as possible. In 454, when Yazgerd II was defeated in a war with the Cushans, the Mazdeian priests claimed that it was the result of leaving the imprisoned Christian priests without due punishment. Accordingly Yazgerd ordered all the clergymen to be cruelly tortured and then put to death.



**MARTYRS DAY:** The massacre and deportations of the Armenians by the Turks during World War I was the most terrible event in the history of this ancient people. Taking advantage of the chaotic conditions produced by the World War, the Young Turk Government embarked on a plan to annihilate the Armenian nation. The plot was executed with barbaric ferocity, to which one and a half million Armenians fell victim, almost half of their entire population at the time. The European powers were indifferent witnesses to this first genocide of the twentieth century, initiated on April 24, 1915, when Armenian intellectuals and national leaders were in Istanbul were rounded up and brutally murdered.



# Armenians in America

We know very little about the first Armenians arriving in the new world. Immigration records of Virginia reveal the name of an Armenian called Hovhannes Mardigian, known as John Martin the Armenian, who landed on the shores of America in 1618; it is assumed that he was invited to Virginia to develop its tobacco plantations.

The next Armenian arrivals apparently were two silk growers from Constantinople who settled in Virginia in 1653-54, where they prepared two flags from their first silk crop and sent them to Holy Etchmiadzin as gifts. Other Armenian silk growers followed these pioneers and participated in founding the silk industry in Virginia.

The first noteworthy American-Armenian was Khachador Serobian, who came to the United States in 1849 and worked first as a veterinarian and later as a pharmacist. Through scientific research conducted by him, Serobian succeeded in discovering a fine green colored liquid which the Federal Government used in printing U.S. banknotes. The income derived from his process enabled Serobian to enter the university and specialize in medicine.

At no time did the Armenians in America remain uninvolved in the country's socio-political life. Records of the Civil War reveal the names of numerous Armenians who fought in the Army, among them physicians, Garabet Kalustian, Baronik Matevosian and the chief surgeon of the Philadelphia Hospital, Simon Minasian. Armenian officers include Armenak of Khas, Narinian of Smyrna and Zora Tadevosian.

An Armenian named Khachador Voskanian (Kristopher Osgan) is generally regarded as the first Armenian writer in America. Coming to the United States in 1854, he engaged in various literary activities and wrote a number of articles in the "New York Tribune," concerning Armenian history, culture and literature. His main objective, however, was to found an Armenian city here where he could bring together Armenian immigrants from various parts of the country; his proposals, however, were rejected by the Government.

Various statistics reveal that prior to 1870 the Armenian community of America did not exceed 100 and was formed mainly by students coming from Constantinople.

After the enthronement of Sultan Hamid in 1876, and the subsequent repressions of the Armenians in Turkey, the number of immigrants grew considerably, from 700 in 1880, to 2000 in 1890, and to 5000 in 1894.

Prior to World War I, males constituted more than three-quarters of the Armenians in the United States, and only 13% of these brought along their families.

The mass immigration of the Armenians to America began after the Adana massacres and after the Turkish atrocities of 1915 in particular, which forced thousands of refugees to find shelter on distant American shores. In 1910 the figure reached 70,000 rising to 130,000 in 1920.

In response to a petition from the Armenians in 1888, the first clergyman, the Very Reverend Hovsep Sarajian was sent to the United States by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and the first Armenian Apostolic Church was built in 1889 in Worcester, Mass.

On October 16, 1898, the American Diocese of the Armenian Church was established.

# Origin and Development of the Armenian Rite of the Liturgy

There are five Armenian texts of the Liturgy now extant. These were probably texts evolved in different centers in Armenia, or in the centers to the west and south of it. One of these five texts has later dominated the others and eventually put them out of use in the course of the fifth and following centuries.

Of these five Armenian Liturgies one was that of St. Basil of Caesarea. We have evidence from the first half of the fifth century that the Liturgy of St. Basil, as it was known and used in the great metropolis of Caesarea, was in common use in Armenia. We now have the text of this Liturgy, which can be called Caesarean Basil, because it is considerably different from the Liturgy known in the Greek Church as the Liturgy of St. Basil, which was subjected to changes much later than the time of St. Basil. This later form of St. Basil's Liturgy could conveniently be called Byzantine Basil.

Besides the Caesarean Basil four other liturgies were used in the Armenian Church during and after the fifth century. These were probably all translations from Greek texts, which are now presumably lost. One of these four liturgies is the most complete. This is the one which, after undergoing certain modifications and changes, mainly consisting of additional hymns and litanies, has been in general use in the Armenian Church since the tenth century at the latest.

Although there are references to this Liturgy in the literature of the seventh and ninth centuries, the earliest complete text, which we have, does not go beyond the middle of the tenth century. Its language and its intrinsic evidence gives us assurance to affirm that it was translated, and consequently used, in the fifth century.

Some of the features of the Armenian Liturgy reflect what is called the Jerusalem rite. This is due to the fact that in the fifth century, after 397 but before 431, the Jerusalem rite of the Liturgy of St. James was adopted by the church of Antioch, with which the Armenian Church has always been in close contact.

The few changes made in the Armenian Liturgy after the middle of the tenth century are almost all in the direction of the Byzantine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, which has been the most widely used liturgy in the Greek Orthodox Church. There are also in the Armenian Liturgy some minor indications of the influence of the Roman Liturgy, as a result of the contacts which Armenians had with the Crusaders.

The Armenian Liturgy, which is now used, took its final form and became the dominant Liturgy of the Armenian Church sometime after the year 950 but before 1177, which is the date when Nerses of Lambron wrote his commentary on the Liturgy. The first printing of it in 1706 gave fixity to its minutest details.

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