

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

**Remarks: 30th Anv. of Building Banquet/ATM Intro—November 3, 1996
Holy Trinity Church, Cheltenham, Pennsylvania**

450 words

Your Beatitude, Reverend Clergy, Honored Guests, Friends:

It is a great pleasure to be here in Cheltenham, for the observance of the 30th anniversary of this parish building. Your celebration today is a glowing testimony to the vision of those who originally built this church, and to the dedication of those who have continually renewed her life over three decades

The Holy Trinity Church stands apart from all the other landmarks of your lives. It was built to be a true sanctuary—a place of peace—where Armenian Christian families could come together, to be inspired by their distinctive tradition, and to dedicate their hearts to God.

Along these lines, we should remember that while we are honoring 30 years of the Holy Trinity building, the history of the Holy Trinity Church goes back even farther. After all, it takes more than a building to make a church. It takes a community which has formed and grown together; which has a vital spark of life; which renders humble service to God. It is the dedication of the people, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, which makes a church—no matter where they may meet.

An important figure from the larger history of this parish is here today—and his presence makes this a double celebration. For it was fifty years ago—in 1946—that a young Father Torkom Manoogian came to this country, to serve in your community. The journey he made from Baghdad to Jerusalem to America had been a remarkable one; but even more remarkable was the journey he was destined to follow afterwards.

This afternoon, as we honor His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, we are welcoming him in many capacities: as a visiting dignitary from the Holy Land; as the former Primate of our Diocese; and as the former pastor of this church. But, perhaps most of all, we are welcoming Torkom Srpazan as a dear family member, who has come back home.

Today, the noble virtues which Patriarch Torkom displayed during his 25 years as Primate have been put to work in the most sacred city in the world. May God always bless and inspire him in this historic mission. And may the people of the Holy Trinity parish also be blessed, whenever you come together to worship in our Lord's name.

With these words, it is now my distinct privilege to introduce our distinguished and honored guest—a man who reminds us of the promise and the poetic beauty of the Holy City: His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem.

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