

94th DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

Pastor Rev. Fr. Sahag Kaishian, Parish Council Chairman Albert Movsesian and Delegate Paul S. Tavitian of Saint Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church of Haverhill, Mass. attended the 94th Diocesan Assembly hosted by Saints Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church of Wynnewood, Penn.

The 94th Diocesan Assembly began the First Plenary Session on Thursday May 2, 1996 at the Sheraton Valley Forge Hotel in King of Prussia, Penn. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate presided over the Assembly.

Arthur S. Mardigian of Detroit, Mich., 1995 Assembly Chairman welcomed 25 newly elected Delegates, 43 Parish Council Chairmen, 76 Lay Delegates and 54 Clergy for a total of 198 registered delegates.

Elected 1996 Assembly officers were Dr. Garo Garibian Chairman, Berjoochy Haigazian Secretary and V. Rev. Fr. Nareg Berberian Armenian Secretary.

A message from His Holiness Karekin I Catholicos of all Armenians was read by V. Rev. Fr. Krikor Maksoudian consisting of prayers in memory of Armenian Genocide Victims. He thanked all Assembly delegates for all achievements rendered for the past year. He prays that the current Diocesan Assembly become a spur and source of implementing new projects related to future activities and rendering them more fruitful for the faithful of our people.

The Chairman appointed the Courtesies Committee and Parliamentarians. The agenda was adopted by the Delegates. Deacon Norman Odabashian gave the clergy conference report. Judge Vincent Gurahian delivered the Diocesan Council report.

Simon Y. Balian Executive Director of Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) reported FAR has a dual purpose: 1-To continue helping people in Armenia who are in immediate need; and 2-To implement projects that establish infrastructure in Armenia that will have a long-term social and economic impact of benefit in the country. He also explained that FAR, while an independent organization, works under the umbrella of the Diocese.

1st session recessed at 7:15 pm.

The second plenary session began Friday May 3, 1996 9:15 am with a Worship Service led by Archbishop Barsamian and assisted by Deacon Aren Jebejian.

Karen Dederyan Auditing Committee Chairlady reviewed the report previously distributed to the delegates. She stated that unpaid parish dues are of increased concern. Karen thanked John Phillips Diocesan Administrator and Guy Pontillo, Chief Financial Officer for their cooperation and a job well done.

Archbishop Khajag gave the Primates report. He highlighted the Catholicos visit to America and stated that prerogatives granted him as Primate. He will allow clergymen under the jurisdiction of the Catholicate of Cilicia to participate in Liturgical functions within our Diocesan Parishes, with his permission.

Chancellor Rev.Fr.Garabed Kochakian spoke of the youth forum panels and invited ACYOA and Department of Youth Ministry Directors to speak.

Proposal Committee Chairman George Marifian read the Proposal Bylaw Amendment submitted by Diocesan Council for a more efficient way of electing the Auditing Committee. Proposed was one member for a three year term, one member for a two year term and one member for a one year term. Proposal carried.

A Proposal submitted by Diocesan Council for Rev.Fr.Arnak Kasparian to build a cathedral in Yerevan and name it Saint Trdat Armenian Cathedral. Proposal was tabled.

Proposal by Diocesan Council for Rev.Fr.Arnak Kasparian to allot \$5,000 in the budget for retired Clergy who are active in the Diocese to be reimbursed for expenses to Clergy Conference and Diocesan Assembly. Proposal carried.

Proposal by Saint James Armenian Church, Watertown Mass. To direct Diocesan Council to establish a comprehensive technology policy and guidelines for implementation of a common network involving telecommunication and computer hardware and software within the Diocese and Parishes. Proposal carried.

Proposal by Holy Virgin Mary and Shoghagat Armenian Church Belleville, Ill. Primate and Diocesan Council communicate through proper channels the request of this Assembly that in the spirit of Church Unity the Prelate of North America refrain from organizing communities or consecrating any new churches under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Great House of Cilicia, unless and until they determine that Unity is not reasonably foreseeable. Proposal carried.

Election Results - Elected Delegates are for Diocesan Board of Trustees Helen Mardigian - Nominating Committee, V.Rev.Fr. Varoujan Kabaradjian, Kai Kazarian, George Nahabedian, Richard Norsigian and Oscar Tatosian - Proposal's Committee, Rev. Fr. Vasken Kouzouian, John Amboian, Aram Hintlian, Connie Kasparian and Sahag Sahagian - Auditing Committee - Karen Dederyan, Arthur Mardigian and Dean Shahinian.
Assembly recessed at 5:58 pm.

The Third Plenary Session opened at 9:15 am Saturday May 4, 1996 with Prayers said by Archbishop Khajag and Assembly singing Soorp Astvadz.

Greetings by Canadian Diocesan Representative Takvor Hopian extended from Archbishop Hovnan Derderian Primate of Canada.

Financial Report by Haig Dadourian Diocesan Council Treasurer. The 1996 budget was accepted and carried with a figure of \$3,613,260.00. Haig Dadourian then made a motion that the Assembly approve The Etchmiadzin Louma in the amount of \$25,000. Fr. Kochakian explained that "LOUMA" is a form of stewardship and obligation to Holy Etchmiadzin and was instituted by the Assembly in 1946. Motion carried.

The Assembly heard reports on mission parishes. Unity Committee Report by Zaven Kasparian - Diocesan Unity Committee met with the Primate on March 8, 1996 for finding a way to break the impasse with the Prelacy. The committee felt that the Primate's announcement of allowing Prelacy clergymen to participate in Diocesan Liturgical services would be an OLIVE BRANCH toward unity.

Mona Karoghlanian of Saint Gregory of Narek Armenian Church, Cleveland, Ohio announced the 95th Diocesan Assembly will be held in Cleveland.

Col. Victor Arzoomanian head of the Armenian Church Endowment Fund reported assets of 1.5 million dollars in 1989. Today assets are over 32 million dollars.

New England Regional Report by Zaven Kasparian - He stated that the New England Region is endeavoring to put together an organizational structure that can readily and more effectively serve New England Parishes.

Saint Nersess Armenian Seminary administrator Rev. Fr. Arakel Aljalian reported His Holiness Karekin I presided over the blessing and rededicating ceremony of the Seminary as well as the blessing and dedication of the Archbishop Tiran Nersoyian Library.

Reports of the Women's Guild Central Council, ACYOA and Association of Armenian Church Choirs of America were all heard and accepted.

Richard Sarajian Representative of the Prelacy was allowed to observe our Assembly and say a few words. He stated that his report to the Prelacy of the positive discussions that has taken place at this assembly will help toward receiving permission to proceed with discussions with the Diocesan Unity Committee.

Courtesies Committee report was read and accepted. The Primate closed the Assembly with a prayer and Hayr Mer was sung.

Respectfully submitted

Paul S. Tavitian - Delegate

