

ST. JAMES ARMENIAN CHURCH OF WESTCHESTER

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

APRIL 28 - MAY 1, 1994

Call to Order and Opening Prayer: The Diocesan Assembly of 1994 was called to order by the Chairman of the 1993 Assembly in the sanctuary of St. Kevork Armenian Church, Houston, Texas. The Primate was escorted by the clergy delegates. The invocation was offered by the Primate.

Permanent Officers: Dr. Garo Karibian was elected Chairman of the Assembly; Edward Chapien was elected Vice-Chairman; Very Rev. Fr. Krikor Maksoudian was elected Armenian Secretary; and Anne-Marie Norehad was English Secretary.

Minutes of 1993 Assembly: Minutes of the 1993 Diocesan Assembly were approved with one correction: the observer from the Prelacy, Richard Saradjian, addressed the Assembly on Saturday morning, not as recorded.

Voting: All delegates were provided with red and green cards to be used for the voting; red signifying a "NO" vote, and green signifying a "YES".

Messages: A message from the Catholicos of All Armenians, Vasken I, was read, as was Primate Abp. Khajag Barsamian's response. The reading of the list of members who had died during the year followed.

Proposals from St. James Church of Watertown, MA: The Proposals Committee reported that although proposals from St. James of Watertown, MA were received on time, they were not approved by the Parish Assembly of the church. St. James Church (Watertown) argued that proposals may be offered by action of the Parish Council. Motion was made to accept the proposals from St. James Church (Watertown). The vote failed, 57 to 59.

Discussions of Agenda Items: Clem Jshikian asked for the appointment of a Parliamentarian.

Crosby Goshkarian requested that Panel Discussions include the subject of Diocesan budget, finances, administration and related matters. It was not considered feasible because of the time needed for preparation and planning of panels.

The Agenda were formally adopted at 4:15 PM.

Parliamentarians appointed were: J. Vishab; George Mesrobian; Edward Brewster.

Greetings: Greetings were extended by Rev. Fr. Nerses Jebejian representing Houston and Allen Jenian on behalf of the Western Diocese. Mr. Jenian reported considerable progress in the Western Diocese in new churches, youth activities and dispatching of needed equipment to Karabagh. There was no representation from the Canadian Diocese.

Reports: Reports were received with thanks from The New England Regional Council and ACEF.

Nominations: The Nominations Committee presented slates of candidates for: Board of Trustees (two to be elected, one for a full 10 year term and one to complete the 3-year unexpired term of Edward Mardikian, deceased). Shah Aslan was nominated from the floor. In addition, nominations were offered for: Nominating Committee; Proposals Committee; Auditing Committee.

Year of the Family: Rev. Fr. Garabed Kochakian addressed the Assembly on the theme of the 1994 Assembly, the Year of the Family.

-----Adjournment of April 28 Sessions-----

FRIDAY APRIL 29, 1994.

Voting Preferences: It was agreed that when voting on a slate with two offices of variable terms, the candidate winning the longer term will be the one with the larger number of votes.

Primate's Address: The Primate made an eloquent plea for a successful completion of the negotiations on unifying the Diocese and Prelacy, under Holy Etchmiadzin.

Report of Diocesan Council: Since the Diocesan Council's Report was printed in the handouts, Judge Gurahian offered to answer questions.

Sahag Sahagian asked for a cap to be set on the priest's salary, depending on the size of the parish. He stated that some parishes can not afford the medical insurance payments.

Rev. Fr. Tateos Abdalian remarked that St. Nersess Seminary is not a part of the Diocese. This was confirmed.

Crosby Goshkarian asked that bequests be designated whether "restricted" or not. Rev. Fr. Kochakian was asked to conform to this practice.

Rev. Fr. Mampre Kouzoumian of Cambridge felt that the Youth Ministry had not produced any benefit for his Parish. He recommended that funding be eliminated from the budget.

Judge Gurahian stated that parish assessments are in arrears by about \$250,000. The concept of penalizing delinquent parishes was overwhelmingly rejected by the Boca Raton Assembly. The Diocesan Council meets with delinquent parishes to work out a payment schedule. Delinquencies are not forgiven.

The Diocesan Bookstore operates at a loss. Lionel Galstaun (St. James, Westchester) noted that the book store should be a profit center; however, in his church's annual book sale, the Prelacy Book Store has a better selection of salable books. Discussion indicated need for bringing the collection of books up to date.

Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian (St. James, Westchester) asked that the Diocesan Council Report be signed by the Chairman and Secretary.

Election of Board of Trustees: Kevork Hovnanian was elected to the 10-year term on the first ballot. A run off was required for the 3-year term. Harry Terzian was eventually elected to serve this short term.

Report of the Mid-West Regional Coordinator: The report was received and accepted.

Fund for Armenian Relief: Mr. Simon Balian, the Director, reported: The structure of FAR has changed. It is now autonomous and separated from the Diocese. It has two principal activities: Relief and Development Projects. During 1993, about \$50 million in aid from many sources including the U. S. Government was delivered. Two major agricultural projects are being supported. The expectations are that 1994 will see as much support as 1993 for projects in Armenia.

HAVAD: Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian, Chairman of the HAVAD Committee, reported. The work of HAVAD pursues three main objectives: Mission work; Christian Camp; and Religious Publications. The Diocese is setting up a program whereby clergy from the Diocese will go to Armenia to assist the church there. Twelve people are scheduled to go in 1994. Their primary mission is to instill faith and hope in the people of Armenia. The Catholicos in Etchmiadzin has approved the project and its objectives. Volunteers are being solicited to go for a term of 3 weeks. Cost of the mission has been estimated at \$15,000. Funds will be gratefully received.

Election of Primate: Archbishop Khajag Barsamian was elected by a large majority of the votes. On motion, the vote was made unanimous.

Choirs: The report was received. Prof. Khoren Mekhnedjian has been of enormous help in preparing a new edition of the *Sharagan's*. A flyer on Sacred Music of the Armenian Church will be issued soon.

Women's Guild: Margaret Atamian reported for the Central Guild. The school bag program has been completed. It was very well received in Armenia.

Auditing Committee: A more detailed audit of the books of the Diocese by an outside firm is desirable, but cost-benefit is a factor that needs to be considered.

Unity Committee: Zaven Kasparian, chairman of the Unity Committee for the Diocese reported significant progress. The two sides have reached an understanding on the By-Laws which will govern the united Church. Both sides have a job to sell the product to their congregations. One of the issues in contention was representation of clergy at the annual assemblies. They limit clergy participation to 1/7 of the total delegates; The Diocese places no limits to clergy assigned to Diocesan churches. The compromise reached is that all pastors of churches may attend. A copy of the Unity Committee's report is attached.

Budget for 1994: After much discussion, the Budget as presented was adopted. It shows a balance between receipts and expenditures. It also provides for a reserve fund to accumulate facility depreciation charges.

ACYOA: The report was presented by Lucine Baronian.

Some signs of tension towards the Dept. of Youth Ministry are believed apparent. The ACYOA has "lost" four chapters, and it will take work to get them back. Harry Terzian commented that ACYOA seem to need help from the seniors of the church. He felt they should bear more responsibility. Maro Karoghlanian who used to be very active in ACYOA in New York, reported that ACYOA is working well in Cleveland, and that attendance at church by ACYOA members is good.

Very Rev. Fr. Semerjian moved to receive the report, and to instruct the Department of Youth Ministry to resolve any problems.

Proposals: Proposal 1 from Holy Trinity Church in Boston, asked for a limitation on two terms for delegates to the Diocesan Assembly. It failed to pass.

2. Church of Our Saviour, Worcester, asked for amending Proposal 2 by elimination of paragraph "A", with "B" becoming the lead paragraph, and the rest in sequence. The Proposals Committee recommended a "NO" vote. It failed to pass.

3. St. Mary's of Washington, D. C., submitted a proposal on the publication of a book on a religious theme. They look to the Assembly for funding. Archbishop Barsamian stated that the proposal had merit, but the project could be handled differently. The proposal failed to pass.

4. Cooperation on the Unity Issue. In view of the progress made by the Unity Committee, it was voted to table this proposal.

New Business: 1. Consideration was requested to make parking space available at St. Vartan Cathedral.

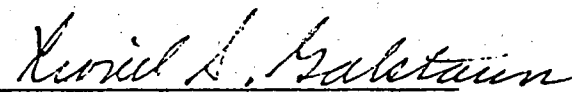
2. The Vicar General was asked to develop a modified structure for the New England Regional Council.

Both items of New Business will be considered in the future.

Address by Prelacy Representative: Richard Saradjian, representative of the Prelacy churches expressed appreciation for being invited to attend the Diocesan Assembly.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer: The 1994 Diocesan Assembly, having completed its Agenda, adjourned at about 5 PM on Saturday April 30, 1994. Closing benediction was offered by the Primate.

Notated by


Lionel S. Galstaun