

A significant year has terminated in the life of our community and the church. We have celebrated the 200th birthday of our country and the 45th anniversary of our church. As the years are absorbed into history, the acts, deeds, and achievements of men and women, church communities and countries leave a record for the survivors to study, research, ponder upon, search new perspectives, and plan for the years ahead.

Last year I titled my report an "Annual Checkup". Together we examined the overall health and vitality of our parish. We were satisfied, gratified, and hoped for the best. This year, since we are more established, better organized, and with expanded activities we are in a position, like good businessmen, to take inventory, in order to determine the difference between the past and our present.

An Annual Assembly is usually associated with giving and receiving many reports, electing officers, and busying ourselves in lots of bookwork, budgets, and appropriations. Like secular businesses, we too have to take inventory to make sure that all the figures and "merchandise" correspond with the reality they actually possess at the end of the fiscal year.

For a conscientious Pastor, taking inventory can be a painful process. You may discover that some of the "merchandise" you thought you possessed has been lost or stolen. You may discover glaring errors, miscalculations, and misunderstandings that can throw every off.

Yet, it is also an exhilarating process, for once it is over and everything is reconciled, then you have the satisfaction of knowing that what your figures and appraisals show is really what it is.

This inventory at the completion of another year of our church life affords all of us an opportunity to also take a personal inventory, to assess what is transpiring within us, to face those things which hinder us from being the persons we are called upon by God, to be, and to reaffirm that which we believe is important and necessary for our growth and maturity, and our involvement in God's work, and the nation's work, while in this world.

Introspection - that is looking inward, self-examination, is always difficult, as well as exciting and rewarding. When we look inward, we begin to ask questions, and then try to come up with the real answers.

Thinking and pondering along these lines, I can sincerely communicate to you that during this period I have tried, to the best of my ability, to attend to the spiritual needs, administrative chores, and educational programs by officiating, preaching, lecturing, organizing, providing leadership, visiting, writing, printing, by hearing and absorbing the cries of need and by having an in-depth evaluation of every event and every situation.

I have shared my experience, knowledge and spiritual wealth with the young and old, who have made this little church an object of their love and concern, and have stood by their pastor through thick and thin, supporting him in every respect.

As I prepare this Annual Report, my thoughts are focused and drawn to the former pastors, trustees, delegates, benefactors, Godfathers, deacons, choir members, Sunday School and Armenian School Teachers, members of the various organizations from the consecration of this edifice and on down, to the beloved individuals who passed away during the year of 1976. Sam Jevarjian, Paul Jamgochian, Mother Elmas Dushugian, Vartan Stambolian, Haigouhi Nigosian, and Nishan Kolligian, for whom I would like to say an "Hokvotz" at this time. .

1. RELIGIOUS WORSHIP Soorp Badarak has been offered on 49 Sundays, and sermons have been preached in Armenian and in English. On various Sundays, special Sermonettes were also preached for the benefit of our Sunday School pupils.

On Special occasions, services were conducted according to Diocesan directives and church calendar.

At this time I would like to thank each and every member of the Choir, Mrs. Keghan Stambolian, Deacon F. Yapoujian, Hrand Rakejian, Hrand Arakelian, and our Organist Yeretzgin Grace Arakelian, who faithfully rendered their services throughout the entire year.

Our thanks also the Mr. Edward Jevarjian, for dry cleaning all our choir robes; to Mmes. Felice Avakian, Siranoush Demirjian, and Verjin Jevarjian, for preparing Sunday "Mas" with their combined efforts and at their personal expenses.

Special thanks are also extended to all the Executive Committee members of our various organizations, their Chairmen, who along with the Pastor, shared the heavier load of responsibilities and anxieties.

2. RITUALS One Baptized, Two Confirmed, Three Married, Six deaths, 44 Requiem Services, Seven, Memorial Day blessing of Graves.
3. PASTORAL VISITATIONS These visitations are categorized as follows;
  - a. Hospital (sick calls) b. Nursing Homes (sick and elderly) c. Shut-ins d. Home calls for counseling and family crisis e. Home calls to bereaved families f. Home calls for happy occasions g. Home Blessings h. Welcoming visits i. Family social visits j. Visits to other church groups and organizations k. Administrative and business call.s l. Fund-raising visits m. Miscellaneous Total visitations. . 139.
4. Administrative Duties This includes office, clerical work, correspondence answering inquiries, management, Parish Council and church affiliated organizations, general and committee meetings, attendance at functions of said organizations, promotion and execution of cultural and educational programs, involvement and leadership in social concern projects, issuance of certificates, directives, execution of proposals, and decisions of various Bodies, and miscellaneous chores.
5. PUBLICATIONS AND CIRCULARS

The "Voice" has been published and mailed to our parishioners, as well as throughout the country and abroad, to a mailing list of 800 addresses, consisting of 32 pages in each issue. The entire editing, art work, typing, printing and mailing, is handled by the Pastor and Yeretzgin Grace Arakelian.

The "Voice" has brought us acclaim, and introduced our parish throughout the entire Diocese as a lively, progressive and up-coming community.

Unsolicited contributions, mostly from out-of-town donors, have made our church bulletin self-supporting, and even a profit-making enterprise.

In addition to the "Voice" special pamphlets with artistic rendering, advertising our various functions and affairs, as well as "in lieu of flowers", Christmas and Easter "Yughakin" donations lists, number 39, have been edited, printed, addressed and mailed, again by the same team.

At our personal expense, we have mailed 368 Christmas, Wedding, Get-well, Sympathy, Birthday, and miscellaneous cards during this year, on the appropriate dates and occasions.

The updating and correcting the addresses on our mailing list have been another time-consuming project.

## 6. ORGANIZATIONS

Our church affiliated organizations functioned diligently, except the Mr & Mrs Club, and they had committee meetings, luncheons, dinners, programs, etc. The pastor availed himself and presided over all of these activities without fail.

There is no doubt that at this time we are faced with new and urgent situations, projects, undertakings, and first-priority actions.

Our interest and concern as members of this parish should not be limited to balancing budgets, attending secular affairs, dinners, parties, but rather our concern should be aimed at rekindling the faith of our Fathers, preserving our heritage, orienting and educating ourselves and our children in and with our Armenian spirit and culture. Your church attendance in this instance is most imperative.

It is of the utmost importance that we have a NEW HOME, a NEW CHURCH, with and auditorium, Sunday School rooms, and all that is necessary, with the purchase of acreage in a suburban area, and commence with the construction of this project. I strongly recommend that we start a campaign with a KICK-OFF BANQUET, during this coming year.

To wage a healthy interest within the ranks of our youth, I recommend the appointment of a Youth Director, Choir Director, the forming of a Junior Choir, the training of Deacons and Acolytes, and a Junior Parish Council.

A Membership Drive is imperative and a fundamental necessity to consolidate our parish with committed men and women. We know there is a great influx of new comers into our area. Therefore I recommend a two category membership:

- a. Communicant
- b. Contributing membership

Communicant members will be comprised of voting, office-taking, regular church attending and responsible members of the church.

Contributing membership will include all families, no matter what denomination

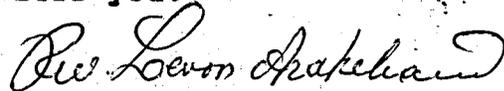
or conviction they follow, and who would affiliate themselves with the Holy Ascension Armenian Church of Southern Connecticut, and who would contribute to its maintenance, projects, and would like to attend, enjoy, and benefit of all the programs of the church.

The weekly Pledge System will be regulated and better organized and controlled with the establishment of the dual system of membership.

The project of establishing a parish register will be the by-product of this effort. I have already started this, and have registered 31 families.

We now look forward to the year ahead with the anticipation that God has even greater blessings in store for us in 1977. Let us all be realistic and optimistic and continue to worship, serve, love, and sacrifice faithfully and regularly.

Glorious prospects and great challenges are ahead, and we shall overcome. Remember, there is nothing that God, you, and us together, cannot accomplish. Thank you and God bless you.



Rev. Levon Arakelian  
Pastor