

PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

FEB. 2, 1992

THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY HAS EXPERIENCED MORE MONUMENTAL CHANGES IN THE 20th CENTURY THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN ITS VERY LONG HISTORY. THE UPROOTING INVOLVED IN THE EMIGRATION OF THOUSANDS OF ARMENIANS FROM THEIR 3000 YEAR OLD HOMETLAND TO EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND THE UNITED STATES, CLOSE TO TWO MILLION LOST THEIR PRECIOUS LIFE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE 1915 GENOCIDE. SEVENTY YEARS OF SOVIET DOMINATION ALMOST RUINED OUR ARMENIAN - CHRISTIAN IDENTITY. THE 1988 EARTHQUAKE THREW US BACK IN MANY MANY WAYS AND THE REBIRTH OF KARAPAGH AND THE ARMENIAN REPUBLIC EACH REPRESENTED ENORMOUS ALTERATIONS. ANY ONE OF THESE BY ITSELF WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO CREATE EXTRAORDINARY PROBLEMS IN THE ARMENIAN LIFE; THEIR OCCURRENCE IN RELATIVELY RAPID SUCCESSION HAS CREATED RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PROBLEMS OF UNPARALLELED MAGNITUDE.

HERE WE ARE IN TRUMBULL. THE YEAR IS 1992. WHERE DO WE STAND IN THESE CHANGES AND WHAT ARE WE DOING FOR US AND FOR OUR CHILDREN?

TWO WEEKS AGO, I STARTED MY 9th YEAR OF SERVICE AS THE PASTOR OF OUR 61 YEAR OLD PARISH.

1991 WAS A GOOD YEAR IN GENERAL.

IT WAS FULL OF RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL-EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES.

I BELIEVE THAT ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS DID THEIR BEST. I THANK EACH ONE OF YOU FOR YOUR SERVICES, ASSISTANCE AND FINACIAL SUPPORT. WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT WE CAN'T KEEP THE DOORS OF THIS CHURCH OPEN. I PRAY THAT GOD INCREASES THE NUMBER OF GOOD SERVANTS AND VOLUNTEERS.

BESIDES THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND FUND-RAISING ANNUAL ACTIVITIES, WE HAD SOME OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT ARE WORTH MENTIONING:

- 1- On Jan. 20, I showed some of Alexander Saroukhan's works through slides.
- 2- Feb. 11-13, I attended a clergy workshop (on marriage counseling) in Larchmont, New York.
- 3- Mar. 6, I invited newly ordained minister Rev. Janice Touloukian to participate at our lenten service and speak at the Michink dinner. I congratulated her publicly both for graduating from Yale Divinity School and for being ordained. Prior to that I also attended her ordination ceremony with Yeretzgin.

- 4- Mar. 13, I attended Women's Saints Day in Tenafly with some of our women.
- 5- May 4, Sunday and Armenian School successfully sponsored a dance and raised close to \$3,000.00 for the Mortgage fund.
- 6- May 7-11, I attended the annual clergy conference and the Diocesan Assembly in Tenafly, New Jersey.
- 7- June 17-21, I attended the International Armenian Clergy conference in New York. This was the first in its kind.
- 8- Sept. 15, Kavafian's Concert was a success. It was the idea of Carmen Cartiglia.
- 9- Sept. 22, attended the Centennial celebration in Worcester, Mass.
- 10- Dec. 8, We had a gathering to have suggestions from our parishioners in regard of new cultural, social, educational and religious activities.

#### 60th Anniversary of our Church

On Sun. June 2nd, the 60th Anniversary of our Church was celebrated with proper program. Over 165 people attended the Badarak and the banquet. The main speaker was Louise Manoogian Simone, the President of the AGBU.

At that dinner, as you know, \$33,000 was raised of which \$25,000 was donated by a former parishioner, unfortunately now deceased, Tony Jevarjian. May his soul rest in peace. Mainly because of his contribution, we lowered the mortgage to the present amount. I am happy to announce that the Pastor and Parish Council decided to dedicate the Narthex in memory of Tony Jevarjian.

We have made a commitment and a goal to burn the mortgage at our June 7th 1992 Banquet in the presence of our Primate, Bishop Khajag Barsamian. For that we are asking each family (or two families together) to pledge \$500.00 towards the Mortgage Fund and pay it by June 7, 92. As of now, I am happy to say that we have close to 40 families who made that pledge.

Will we succeed in burning the mortgage?

You and I will give the answer by our action. I gave my portion, hoping also to become an example to my flock.

I strongly believe that together we can should burn the mortgage and look forward for other and more important projects and issues.

Harry & Connie Agahigian Educational Fund

At our June 2nd banquet, as you are aware, I also announced about the establishment of the Harry and Connie Agahigian Educational Fund. The annual interest of this fund will be given to the sons and daughters of our parishioners that are pursuing higher education, provided that they are active in our parish life. The first scholarship hopefully will be given at our June 7th, 92 banquet.

Land Survey

Two years ago, this assembly passed a resolution in regard of doing the land survey of our back property.

Almost in every council meeting this subject was on the agenda. We couldn't do it partly or mainly because of lack of funds. Here I want to thank the Women's Guild for contributing \$1,000.00 towards the land survey expenses.

Renovations

The Library, Conference and Choir rooms were completely renovated during 1991. A new air conditioner was installed in the choir room area. The library and conference area roof was completely renovated to prevent leaking. Also a new \$1,000.00 pump was bought.

In regard to our new library, conference and choir rooms, I want to express my joy and gratitude to the donors namely:

Dr. Berdj and Theresa Harabedian (they also contributed \$2,000.00 for the purchase of new books) Edward & Helen Mardigian for the Library. Rose Stambolian, for the library oriental rug.

Berch and Arsha Khachadourian  
Annie Khachian  
Richard & Elise Khachian  
Edward & Gladys Jevarjian , for the Conference room.

Sara Der Megerdichian  
and Isabelle Minella  
Keghan Stambolian , for the Choir room.

The opening of the Harabedian-Mardigian Library is planned for Feb. 23rd Sunday, the choir room hopefully on Palm Sunday (Apr. 12) and the Conference room on June 7th Sunday in the presence of our Primate.

Here again as in previous years I want to thank Shavarsh Papazian for sending his electricians at a lower cost, David Avakian for doing the renovation job and the council members for their advice and support. Hopefully with these three, we finished the internal renovations projects.

NEW ARMENIA

In my last year's annual report I said "the events that took place in Armenia in 1990. definitely will effect the diaspora-Armenia relationship. The country's trend is towards independence, more freedom and a complete comeback to religion and church". And I added "we cannot cut ourselves from our motherland".

Well, today Armenia is free and independent, but not necessarily safer, richer or better. Our brothers and sisters have a long way to go and undoubtedly they need the moral and financial support of the diaspora. I am happy to mention here that only two months ago we did just that by collecting cloths and \$6,000.00 for the needy Armenians of Armenia. I thank those 65-70 families that contributed for this purpose. My words of appreciation to Nazareth Azarian for leaving his family and going to Armenia as a volunteer to assist in distributing the collected clothes. I know that others also expressed their desire to do a similar trip. This is only a beginning and a new era in our relationship with our motherland. Many things will change for the better. The Diocese is planning to start the sister-parish program. The Primate is waiting for Fr. Krikor Harabedian (who was sent from our Diocese to stay in Armenia for 9 months) to advise him in this regard.

FEW WORDS ABOUT MY EDUCATION/SCHOOLING

I want to express my gratitude to our Primate and my appreciation to all our (9) council members and my family, of course, for their support. Hopefully in ten months I'll finish my religious studies at the graduate level. This opportunity is giving me a different perspective of religion, theology and of biblical studies, and of western and non-orthodox religious thinkers. Fortunately the more I go to them, the more I attach my self and come back to ours.

NEW DIRECTORY

This year we published our new directory. I want to thank Lionel Ketchian for printing it at a very reasonable cost. I also want to thank Barbara Bousian who started the job and Margaret Azarian for ending it. In between there were others who assisted such as Helen Misakian, Sonia Trapasso etc.

NEEDY FUND

We started or opened a new account and called it the "Needy Fund". In 1991 we collected close to \$2,000.00 and we almost gave all to the needy families of our parish. I thank all those who contributed to this fund.

If I had told you at last year's assembly that we should raise \$8,700.00 to help the needy both in Armenia and here, most of you probably would have said - he is losing his mind.

But that's what we collected.

\$6,000.00	Armenia
700.00	Earthquake victims
2,000.00	Local needy Armenia families

Speaking about the \$700.00 which was raised by the Kavafian's Concert, I want to thank Carmen Cartiglia and the committee and all that contributed.

In 1991, I participated in all the clergy meetings be it in New York, New Jersey, Westchester or St. Nersess. I attended graduation or commencement ceremonies of St. Nersess Seminary.

I gave a two hour lecture on the history, liturgy and symbols of the Armenian Orthodox Church at Sacred Heart University. I attended the ordination of a Lutheran minister. I have performed two weddings, three baptisms and three funerals. I have made over 70 house and hospital visits. I attended nine Diocesan Council meetings at the Diocese NYC, and I presided over 60 meetings here in my parish. During lent, every Wednesday evening I had evening services followed by bible study or a lecture. Here I want to express my disappointment for not seeing more parishioners attending these services + lectures.

In my priesthood three things have remained incomprehensible to me when I face....

- (1) Some parishioners throw "beautiful looking ideas" but they themselves neither attend nor assist. e.g. Explaining our Badarak. or if its an activity, they will say I'm busy, I can't.
- (2) People come, serve and retire a few years. Many times in the minds of some, it is the Priest who threw them out or got rid of them. In my life, I haven't thrown anyone out of the church. People come and go by their own action or will. I don't have any agenda to bring and later get rid of them. Please, let no one that leaves his church blame the priest saying he forgot me: there is no such thing. But when you do leave, it is the job of the priest to replace you. I did not become a priest to throw

People out of the church. Just the opposite, to gather my people under God's roof. It's two way, I can do so much.

- (3) False rumors and accusations. Please, if you have doubts or questions about anything, call your pastor or Parish Council Chairman before going left and right with your unconfirmed and many times false information. I am here to build not to ruin. I'll not let anyone destroy what I am building with the majority of my parishioners. Any good shepherd cannot and should not allow anyone to destroy the harmonious and peaceful existence of his flock. During a given year I ignore 100 different things. But sometimes I cannot ignore, I have to speak or take action.

#### CHURCH SERVICES AND ATTENDANCE

Do I have to remind that liturgy starts at 10:30 and not 11:30?

Do I have to inform you that I give great importance for the preparation of my Sunday Sermons?

Do I have to invite you every Sunday? By now, I am hoping that you all know all these.

#### PLEDGES

I don't know why this should be an issue, when most of us do know what it means, or what kind of financial burden it is to run a home, let alone a huge centre like this. If every husband-wife together pledged a minimum of \$250.00 a year, I think we will run this place with much less difficulty. Those who can't afford, let them pledge what they can. I assure you even a \$25.00 pledge a year is acceptable. Let's not forget this is the House of God. Remember the widow that threw her silver coin in the box of the temple. That was her only wealth. The amount was much much less compared to what the others were throwing, but Jesus praised this widow.

I thank all those who do pledge and support the church financially. I also thank the pledge and dues committee members: Connie Kasparian, Garo Garabedian and Richard Najarian.

#### OUR POLICY WITH NON-CHURCH AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

This issue was discussed in our last Parish Council meeting. It was made clear in this meeting that the members of these organizations (such as ARS, ASA, AYF) are also members of our holy church by their baptism. Some of them are active in our parish life. The Church and the Pastor cannot take sides with any one of them,, My presence at their activities should only prove that.

In my Armenian report, I said the more I serve the more I see that the greatness of a parish priest are neither his diplomas nor his beautiful preaching, nor his hard-working nature - but besides his humility, his desire to be with his people and for his people. And I gave the name of Mgrdich Khrimian Catholicos who was called "Father" exactly for those reasons.

But I also said that, I think this is true not only for Pastors but also in reality for each one of you.

I ask you to remember this!

### CHURCH COMPUTER

First, I want to thank the Armenian School for donating \$1,500 for a new computer. We formed a computer committee, they were Patrick Kane, Richard Kalfaian and Mark Gavoor. They gave their written report to the council, after which Vartan Vartanian, with the help of Kevork Toroyan, was able to get for us an IBM used computer for almost free. I thank all of them. Eventually we will buy a new computer with the Armenian School's money.

### MAY 4 DANCE

Special thanks to the Sunday and Armenian School for the May 4 fund-raising dance. I cannot forget the full support and the cooperation that I had particularly from Linda McGann and Jenny Vartanian, the heads of the schools after the conception of the idea. As I mentioned, \$3,000 was sent to the Mortgage Fund. Over 200 people attended this dance.

### MAHS WOMEN

I thank Felice Avakian and Arshalouys Dinihanian for making Mahs for all these years. One Sunday in the church I acknowledged their service publicly and with a proper gift.

I am happy to see that Sara Der Megerdichian and Karen Kaechelle took their place.

### MAINTENANCE VOLUNTEERS

I want to thank Stanley Zysk, Herbert Avakian, David Avakian and Richard Kalfaian for their assistance in this regard.

### MAILING & COLLATING "ANI" NEWSLETTER AND OTHER FLYERS

Here I thank Hermine' Azarian, Helen Misakian, Sonia Trapasso and Marge Malkasian. There are others who help such as Eleanor Zysk, Annie Khachian, Grace De Young, Connie Kasparian and God bless her soul Ann Gorakian.

### "ANI" EDITORS

I thank Sharyn D'Urso for helping me as an assistant editor in publishing the newsletter. Because of her busy schedule she couldn't continue. We are fortunate to have as the new editor Lisa Misakian, a capable person. I see she is going to give a new face/style to the newsletter.

I thank her for accepting this position.

As I have been saying for the past 8 years, I want to say again that your church related articles are welcomed. Give them to the editor. Also if you have news to share with the community, you are welcome.

Don't forget this is your newsletter. I thank all those who contributed to reduce the publication cost.

### WOMEN'S GUILD

I cannot picture my or any Armenian Parish without this organization. I want to thank the five officers namely:

Elsie Chaghatzbanian, Sara Der Megerdichian, Rose Avakian (out), Margaret Manugian and Rita Chaghatzbanian.

I thank them (the 4) for wanting to serve one more year.

What a true statement it is when they say "you never know until you give the job. Elsie, as the chairlady ran this organization beautifully with the rest, with no major problem. They were involved in all major lunch-dinner activities and coffee hours. I don't know how this woman with 3 children can take this kind of responsibility. She can be a good example to many of us.

I thank all those who sponsored coffee hours or made special donations on different occasions. Sara, call her, don't worry Der Hyre, it's taken care of.

#### SUNDAY & ARMENIAN SCHOOLS

I thank the principals (Linda & Jenny) and all our school teachers for giving their precious time for the religious and Armenian education of our precious children. Allow me to expand on these schools. Sunday Armenian, Sunday, Badarak. Liturgy - I want my children - after 13 years old.

#### CULTURAL COMMITTEE

I thank the cultural committee members for re-organizing this organization under the leadership of Ralph Trapasso. I am very happy to see that their next activity will be in May 92', they are inviting the Antranig dance group.

#### PEWS

I thank Ralph Trapasso for being in charge of this project. I understand that almost half of them are sold.

I thank Vrej Yapoujian for taking care of the plates.

#### MORTGAGE BURNING COMMITTEE

This committee was re-organized too. We brought four new members. The chairman is Edward Jevarjian and the treasurer is Richard Khachian. I want to thank Mardy Azarian and Ralph Trapasso for serving in this committee until this past year. If we succeed to burn the mortgage on June 7, then this committee's job will fully be accomplished.

It is worth to mention here that in January of 1984, when I came to this parish the church mortgage was \$205,000.00. Today we have \$70,000.00 left. I thank you for helping us financially reduce the mortgage.

#### BAZAAR 1991

It was a success with a net profit of \$16,000.00. The Co-Chairmen were Herbert Avakian and Harry Tashjian, treasurer, Richard Najarian and Secretary, Elsie Chaghatzbanian. I think everyone of them worked hard and with your support and assistance we had a wonderful bazaar (I can't give everyone's name) both socially & financially.

This year we will try also Poon Parententan or Mardi Gras Mini Bazaar (Feb. 29).

#### ACYOA JRS.

Chairperson was Elise Yapoujian. With the help of Kim Kasparian, their advisor, the group was re-vitalized. I am happy to see Tom Artinian also helping the group. I thank Kim, Tom for their volunteerism and for their patience with the kids.



CHOIR

What an important organization this is. Can we have Sunday Services without them?

I thank each one of them. I thank our organists, Charles, Rose, Hovig and our deacon Vrej and sub-deacon Tom, and Virginia for leading the group in the absence of the conductor.

I am very much concerned about our choir. We need new people. Please join the choir, don't wait for an invitation. If you can't sing, if you don't know the choir part, ask, we will help you.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT "THANK YOU'S"

I just want to inform you that juring this past year I have mailed over 200 thank you letters to parishioners and non-parishioners for either their financial contributions or services.

FEW WORDS ABOUT "APPRECIATION"

We do many good things in our Parish. You all see. I don't expect that each and everything we do, you come & tell us how nice it is & praise us. But what has bothered me as a priest is that even when you do appreciate, many times the stress is put on a wrong place and the attention is on secondary things.

e.g. library - rug/french door.

I'm still waiting

e.g. paintings - beautiful, cost  
frame , donors  
size

but miss the point. Tell us something about these people.

I thank Connie Kasparian for representing our Parish as delegate at the Diocesan Assembly in Tenafly, N.J.

I also thank all our Parish Council members for providing the leadership with the Pastor, of this community. I want to mention their names:

- 1- Margaret Azarian, Chairperson
- 2- Garo Garabedian, Vice Chairperson
- 3- Shavarsh Papazian, Treasurer
- 4- Connie Kasparian, Ass't treasurer
- 5- Tom Dabakian, Secretary
- 6- Charles Goorhigian, Ass't secretary
- 7- Herbert Avakian, 8-Richard Najarian 9-Vartan Vartanian, advisors.

Last but not least, I thank all of you for supporting our church morally and financially and by all your unselfish services.

We need each one of you. May God bless you and your family, all your loved ones and give you health of soul, mind and body.

I want to thank the two outgoing Parish Council members Margaret Azarian for serving four years and Charles Goorhigian for serving two years in the council. I hope to see you back in the council again one day.

I want to open a bracket here and speak about Margaret Azarian whp as I said served four years in the council and prior to that two years in the Women's Guild. For two years she was the Women's Guild Chairperson and the past two years she was the Parish Council chairperson. During the first four years this woman assisted me in my office work,

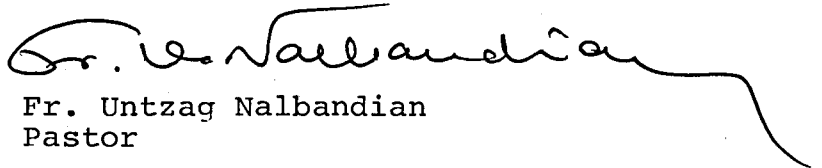
typing, mailing, ordering etc. until she was hired by the council for 12 hours a week. Even then she volunteered at least 10-12 hours on a weekly basis. I bothered her at home, sometimes late at night, other times at early morning hours. We had our disagreements, arguments, but they did not last over 24 hours. She gave too much to this church and now that she is departing from the leadership or Parish Council I wanted to tell you and inform you about this woman's unselfish services. I'll miss her and her services. I promised not to bother her for at least a year. On behalf of the Parish Council and the Church I present you with this gift.

God Bless you and your family.

I conclude my report by the words of Jesus, which he directed to his disciples and which he directs also to us today and always:

"Anyone wanting to be a leader among you, must be your servant. And if you want to be right at the top, you must serve. Your attitude must be like my own, for I, the Messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve".

Prayerfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Untzag Nalbandian". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Fr. Untzag Nalbandian  
Pastor