

PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT
JANUARY 31, 1999

I welcome you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and of our Holy, Apostolic and centuries old Armenian Church to the 68th Annual Parish Assembly.

I started my 16th year of service here at Holy Ascension and hope to make this year a very exciting and active one with your understanding, cooperation and full support.

The mission of our Holy Church remains the same. Our church's purpose is to bring her members closer to God, to the teachings of the Holy Bible and Church and to one another. And surely, the Armenian Church has the additional responsibility in bringing our people closer to their cultural heritage and ethnic roots.

In 1998, I have attended all my local, regional and clergy and Diocesan meetings,. I have lectured or preached not only in my parish, but also at the Diocese, St. Nersess, St. Leon's in Fairlawn, Hartford at the State Capital and so on.

I was asked by the Primate to serve in the five-member "Clergy Relations" Committee, which replaced the Clergy Stipend Committee.

In 1998, I have performed six baptisms, two weddings and two funerals. I have attended graduations, anniversary or surprise parties in my parish, whenever invited.

I published the "Ani" newsletter every two months (except the summer months), and I am happy to receive so many positive and appreciative notes from in-state and out-of-state readers. "Ani" newsletter is your newsletter, feel free to contribute your church related articles in English or Armenian.

I have done most of my paper and administrative work during the two days of my secretary's work days. I thank Margaret Azarian for being the church secretary for almost nine

years, and I welcome our new secretary, Heather Tarpinian. Due to changes in our present secretary's personal life, starting in September 1999, our part time secretary will be Linda McGann - who will work two days a week. Meanwhile, I 'll finish the season (February to May 1999) with Heather working on Saturdays typing my paperwork. I was happy to have Heather as the church secretary.

In 1998, in addition to our regular and routine activities we had the following activities:

1. "Hayrig Day Camp" in August with the participation of approximately 25 children.
2. We hosted a St. Nersess seminarian to do his internship in our parish.
3. Leslie Ayvasian, the playwright of "Nine Armenians" was the main speaker at our church's 67th anniversary banquet in June.
4. St. Nersess seminarians visited our parish with their administrator Fr. Arakel Aljalian.
5. We hosted the Women's Saint's Day with the Primate presiding and Dottie Bengoian as the mistress of ceremonies.
6. Dr. Topouzian spoke at our "Michink" Lenten luncheon, about his experience in Armenia.
7. Fr. Haig Nargesian talked during one of the Wednesday night Lenten lectures.
8. Dr. Herand Markasian spoke about his visit to Western Armenia, now in Turkey.
9. Lucine Kasbarian, the author of "Armenia a Rugged Land, an Enduring People" spoke in our church upon the invitation of AYP.
10. Mark Gavor spoke on inter-personal communication during lent.

In 1998, we continued with our Needy Fund, we placed a box in the Narthex and we had a special collection both for Armenia and for other causes (Bridgeport Hospital Pastoral Care, the hurricane victims in Central America, etc.)

In 1998, we are hoping to adopt a newly formed parish in Armenia, not only by sending the required \$3,000.00 through our Diocese, but also by putting our Parish and our school children directly in touch with theirs.

In 1998, Ellen Theriault became the new owner of All-in-One Nursery, replacing Barbara Stultz. I am glad that the transition was very smooth.

In 1998, the following special and memorial donations were given to our church:

1. Additional donation of “Kevork & Zarouhy Der Magerdichian” endowment fund by Sara Der Megerdichian and Minella Family.
2. Two new Wedding Chairs by Dr. Berdj and Theresa Harabedian.
3. A small Altar Khachkar brought from Armenia and donated by Nazareth & Margaret Azarian.
4. A Religious Painting donated by Nicky and Andrew Taraian.
5. A Religious Painting donated by Andy Topalian and his sister Rose.
6. A new Altar lectern donated by Kehkejian Family.
7. A new Hand-Cross donated by Sharyn D’Urso.
8. Eighteen new black capes to be used by choir members donated by Edward & Gladys Jevarjian.
9. New Front sign donated by Elisa Griego and Paul Marottolo.
10. Hall Rug donated by Margaret Manugian.
11. One hundred twenty new chairs donated by parishioners through the efforts of Margaret Manugian.
12. An over-hang donated by Dr. Berdj and Theresa Harabedian.
13. Red brick wall and parking lot lights partly donated Dr. Berdj and Theresa Harabedian.

14. The entire cost of the extended parking lot - donated by a family who wished to remain anonymous.

15. Air Conditioner for Pastor's office is promised to be donated by Berch & Arsha Khachadourian. (Not purchased yet.)

In 1998, close to \$42,000.00 was pledged and paid by some 120 families. That's the good news. The bad news is that still close to 200 families ignore our pledge system which eventually, if it got the attention and participation of all, will grow and be the answer of our money problems and will put a halt on all other fund-raising events, something which I am dreaming to see since my ordination. I don't believe that any clergyman enjoys giving time to fundraising.

Please, help your pastor, parish council and pledge committee and educate the rest about our pledge system and its importance.

In 1998, we continued to have special Adult Armenian Language and Bible Study Classes. We continued to have our Sunday and Armenian Schools function, our choir, deacons, sub-deacon, organist, conductor and altar boys serve the church on a weekly basis. I do not take their service for granted and I pray for others to join them. The Women's Guild remains the backbone in many ways of our social activities, including weekly coffee hours.

One of the great points of light in my ministry is my visits with the ACYOA members to the elderly and nursing homes a night before the American Christmas Eve. How nice it is to see the joy & comfort that they bring to them.

In conclusion, I want to request from you to put first things first, and do not get upset when things do not go your way, in the same way I don't get upset when things don't go my way here in our Parish. To be spiritually mature means to have disagreements, discussions, exchange

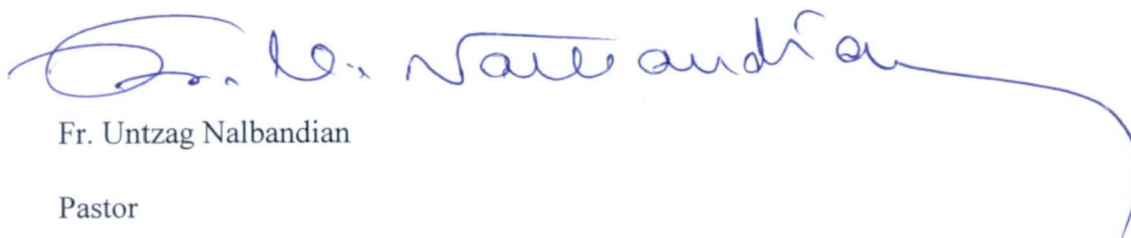
disagreements, discussions, exchange of ideas without hurting one another. And “when all is said and done” we must stand together in front of our Holy Altar to pray and get ready to face the future challenges, which are many. Remember, this is not only our church, but also the church of all those who will come after us. Our mailing list is 360, and still growing. In 1999, we will pave the parking lot and driveways, so far close to \$60,000 is pledged, by some 60 families. We hope that everyone of our families will contribute toward this expensive project.

My appreciation to you all for your constant support and service. I thank very much our nine council members, who worked diligently and attended most of our activities:

Maureen Najarian, Chairman: Richard Najarian, Vice Chairman: Darwin Jamgochian,
Treasurer: Richard Kalfaian, Secretary: Sarkis Kalfayan, Assistant Treasurer: Sarkis Kaolian:
Scott Paklaian: Heather Tarpinian and Vartan Tarpinian.

May God bless you all and your loved ones and may He guide us in this new year...the last year of the millennium, to make this year a very fruitful one for the good of all.

Takavor yergnavor zegehtzee ko ansharj bahia. Heavenly King, preserve thy church unshaken and keep the worshippers of thy name in Peace.



Fr. Untzag Nalbandian

Pastor