

Pastor's Report

Dear Parishioners,

On May 16th, 1967, according to the order of the Primate, His Grace Bishop Torkom Manoogian, and by the approval of your Parish Council, I came to Washington, D.C. to assume the Pastoral duties of St. Mary's Parish.

At the welcoming party on the 19th of the same month in presence of the Vicar General, Very Rev. Fr. Vasken Kebreslian, (now Bishop) I was officially assigned as the Pastor of this Parish. At that meeting I made no promises and did not lay any plans, but asked all of you parishioners and friends alike, to help me in carrying on my duties as the Pastor of this Parish. At this point I should say, I am happy with the cooperation that I received from all the organizations of this Parish and Parishioners in general. Though I must say it could have been better, not only because there is always the possibility of the better in general, but also because I truly believe that there are more people in this Parish able to give more of their time for the improvement of the life of this Parish. Unfortunately the committed members of this Parish are very few in numbers, what we need in this Parish more than the addition of new members, is the committment of more of our present members because only in this way we will be able to grow in numbers and absorb into our fellowship more friends.

To make my plea more explicit, I will mention the areas where we need help most urgently.

- A. Altar servers, especially young people to be trained as prospective Deacons.
- B. More voices in the Choir, especially male voices.
- C. "Mas" makers, to take the burden off the shoulders of one person
- D. Substitute organists, to relieve our present organist from her duty once in a while.
- E. Sunday School Substitute teachers, and car poolers, to bring the children in outlying areas to Sunday School.
- F. Experienced advisers to give guidance to the Junior Chapter of A.C.Y.O.A.
- G. Shnorhali Club Staff members, to organize the cultural and social life of this Parish.
- H. Shnorhali Bulletin Staff members as editors, guest writers, assemblers, etc.
- I Home visitation groups to assist the pastor in visiting the homes of the Parishioners.
- J. Membership drive groups to promote the idea of Stewardship among present and new members.
- K. Part time office secretaries, to organize and expedite office work.

There might be other areas where we need help which I might have forgotten, but the omission is not intentional.

I mentioned the needs of our Parish explicitly so that no one in this assembly will go home thinking that all a church needs is a Parish Council and a few other organized bodies to carry on her work. Any one of the offices mentioned above is as important in the life of the Parish as it is holding office in one of the already existing bodies. A young man working in our church today remembers with gratitude the person who had a car-pool some fifteen years ago to bring him to Sunday School, while he has forgotten the names of Parish Council members then.

Statistical Data

It is customary in the Armenian Church for a Pastor to give a statistical report to the Annual Parish Assembly. To abide by this custom, I present this report, although I question its value. Because I believe that in spiritual matters, one is seldom sure of one's achievements in the field.

Since the assumption of my Pastoral duties, I have conducted Church Services every Sunday except thrice. Twice I was away from this Parish on Sundays. Once the Very Rev. Fr. Mesrob Semerjian offered the Divine Liturgy. On another occasion, the Arch Deacons of the church conducted the services. On the 12th of November, 1967, the Primate of our Diocese, His Grace Bishop Torkom Manoogian, offered the Divine Liturgy and encouraged us by His presence, and we enjoyed his company throughout the four days when He was with us on the occasion of the 21st Annual Choir Association Assembly of the Armenian Church Choirs of America. On one Sunday the Church Services started 45 minutes late, I had overslept, "May God have mercy on me".

Since the middle of May 1967, five parishioners have passed away. Andrew Nargizian, Paul Andonian, Ester Onanian, Mendouhi Khatchikian, and Vahan Bogosian, May God rest their souls in His Eternal Peace and give solace to the members of their families.

There have been five Christenings in this same period, may God make these newly baptized children true Christians and good children for their parents.

Unfortunately there was only one wedding during this same period. John & Denis Manouelian were wedded in our church in Holy Matrimony. May God sweeten their yoke of love and make them a good Christian family.

During these past eight months I have participated in 66 meetings with various church organizations, namely, Parish Council, Women's Guild, Building Fund, Sunday School, A.C.Y.O.A., Choir Association Assembly Planning Committee, and Bazaar Committee. During these meetings we have discussed and planned the past and the future activities of this Parish.

I have made 121 home visitations in this same period. My visits have not been as well planned and just as I wanted them to be, and certainly there is room for improvement. My initial unfamiliarity with you, and the desire to be available readily to those who call first have been the reasons and not intended omissions.

In this same period I have made 64 sick visits at hospitals and at homes, I would appreciate to be notified from the hospitals or close relatives as soon as one is hospitalized. Second hand information annoys me.

Since October, on Tuesday afternoons from 3:30 to 5 Pm at Twinbrook Elementary School, I have conducted Armenian classes for children. We have 17 regular students at this point, anyone interested could still join in this lovely class. We have another class for adults interested in Armenian on Thursdays from 7:30 to 9:30 Pm. Initially this group numbered 12, now we have only 6 regulars. It's not too late to join yet.

In conclusion of my report I would like to express my gratitude to the Parish in general, and to different organizations in particular, namely, the Parish Council, Women's Guild, Building Fund, Altar Servers, the Choir, Shnorhali Bulletin Committee, Sunday School, A.C.Y.O.A., Armenian School Ladies and Bazaar Committee for the fine cooperation that I received during these past eight months, in conducting the Spiritual and Social life of this Parish, to the Greater Glory of God and developing fellowship of ours.

May God Bless us all, and the good works of our minds and hands.

Prayerfully,

Fr. Paren Avedikian

Fr. Paren Avedikian
Pastor

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