



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

March 15, 1993

To the parishioners of St. Leon Armenian Church:

Liturgical reform in the Armenian Church has been a subject of discussion and debate for over a century. Many church leaders (Patriarchs Malachia Ormanian, Yeghishe Tourian, Torkom Koushagian, Catholicos Papken Guleserian of Cilicia, Archbishop Shahe Kasparian, to name a few) have written and spoken about the need to revitalize the liturgical life of the Church and about how to accomplish it.

In 1937, His Holiness Khoren Mouradbegian, Catholicos of All Armenians, issued an Encyclical putting forth the framework in which liturgical reform, as well as other church reforms could be pursued and accomplished. Unfortunately, his untimely death a short time later put a halt to his plans. In 1969, the Bishops' Conference met in Holy Etchmiadzin and set up a new agenda of church reform, including the liturgy. While some positive results were accomplished over the years, the issue of liturgical reform remains one of the most important and urgent needs of the Armenian Church.

The need is somewhat more accented in our Diocese. In an effort to address the situation and to seek solutions, I selected the parish of St. Leon to participate in a pilot project for a period of one year, from October 1991 - December 1992. The project was named **Total Parish Christian Education and Family Worship Divine Liturgy**, developed by The Reverend Father Arshen Aivazian at that time the pastor of the St. Leon Armenian Church and Yeretzgin Sirarpi Aivazian.

The educational segment of the program was implemented at 10:00 a.m. with children in their Sunday School classes and adults attending lectures. At 11:00 a.m. children joined their parents in church and Divine Liturgy was celebrated with the participation of the entire parish employing a revision of an older version of the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church, translated into modern Armenian and English by Father Aivazian himself.

The enclosed questionnaire is intended to assess the impact the pilot project has made. Please respond as soon as you can, and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope. Your comments will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

With prayers,

Atop. K. Barsamian

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate

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