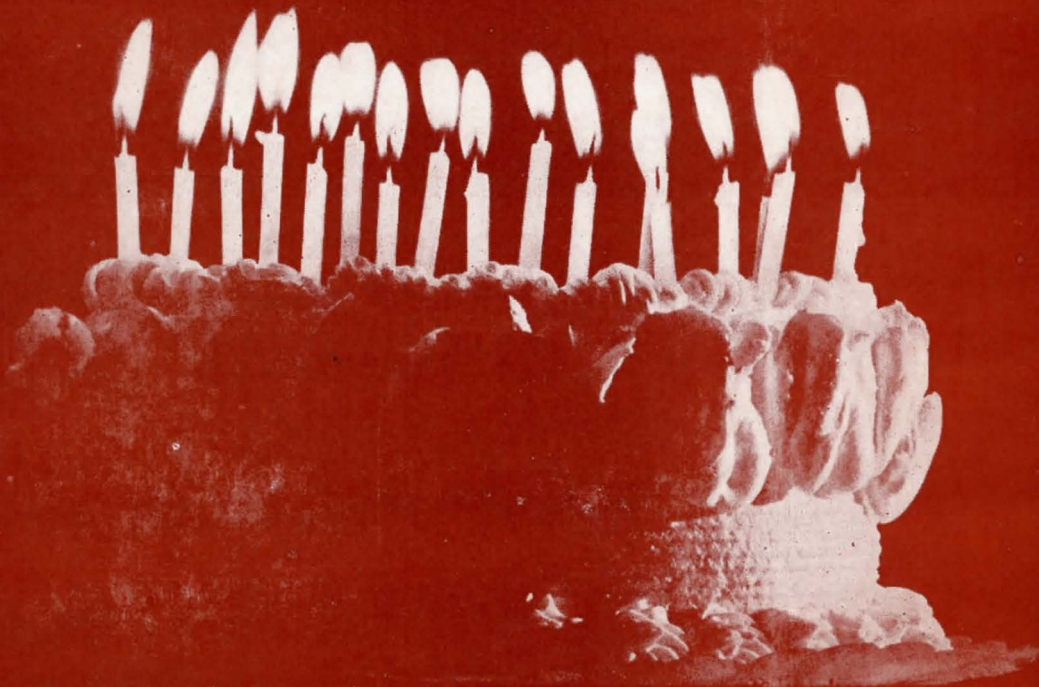


17TH ANNIVERSARY BALL
NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY
CHAPTERS OF THE ACYOA
FEB. 23RD ESSEX HOUSE
CENTRAL PARK S.-N.Y.C.



ARMENIAN CHURCH YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Seventeenth Anniversary Ball Committee and the members of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America Chapters of Bergen County, Holy Cross New York, Long Island, Newark and St. Gregory wish to express their sincere appreciation to Laura Sarraf and Walte. Kaprielian, who designed the booklet cover, and to all those who have made this Souvenir Booklet possible by contributing to its contents and by generously sponsoring its pages.

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THE PRAYER OF A.C.Y.O.A.

O Lord our Saviour Jesus Christ, who art the Way, the Truth and the Life, give us, the youth of thy Church of Armenia, we beseech thee, the wisdom to know, to love and to serve thee, in our personal lives severally and in the corporate life of our Organization.

Thou that leadest men in thy way, lead us, thy children, so that we may be able to serve our Church and people with courage and vision in the faith of our illustrious forefathers. Inspire us, O Lord, so that we may cherish and profit by the heritage which they have left to us. Open our eyes to thy light, so that we may be aware of our responsibility as the citizens of our beloved country of the United States.

Fill us, O Christ our God, with thy Holy Spirit, so that we may be the obedient and unselfish servants of the will of our heavenly Father, to whom, together with thee and the Holy Spirit, is befitting glory, dominion and honor, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

PLEDGE OF A.C.Y.O.A.

I solemnly promise and declare upon my honor that as a member of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, I shall, to the best of my ability, be a faithful son of the Armenian Church, shall be a devoted upholder of the Armenian cultural heritage, shall be a loyal citizen of the United States, and I shall diligently abide by the objects, the policies, and the decisions of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, I shall not strive for personal recognition and pleasure but will serve our Church, our Community and our Country for the greater glory of God.

ACYOA THEME FOR 1962-63

"Faithful to the faith
of our fathers."

This Page Sponsored By
MR. & MRS. DADOUR DADOURIAN

THE MESSAGE FROM OUR PRIMATE

On the occasion of the Seventeenth Anniversary of the ACYOA, we greet our young people with blessings and wish them a year filled with renewed enthusiasm and inspiration.

The ACYOA can retain its usefulness and vitality only when its members fully comprehend the high ideals of the organization and dedicate themselves unreservedly towards their realization. Every ACYOA member should ask himself whether he has been loyal to the ideals of his organization and whether he can sincerely admit that he has done his share to make them effective in his life.

Anniversaries are occasions for auditing our moral and spiritual assets and liabilities, just as it is customary for people to audit their books at the end of each year to see the extent of their profit or loss. An organization likewise must subject its past record to close scrutiny in order to see how successful it has been in serving its members and the community.

Our church needs young men and women with great dedication and zeal who are willing to serve, to love and to sacrifice. We pray that the ACYOA will come forward to meet this need.

We bless all the members and wish them success in the performance of their church-loving deeds.

With paternal blessings,

(Signed) SION ARCHBISHOP
*Primate of the Diocese of
the Armenian Church in America*

This Page Sponsored By
MR. & MRS. HAIK KAVOOKJIAN

Dear ACYOA'ers and Friends:

Seventeen years ago the Armenian Church Youth Organization was born in Providence, Rhode Island. It was created to meet a need. Our Church needed the creative energy and spirit of youth, and our youth, after years of war and turmoil, sought purpose and meaning in life. Thus, on January 12 and 13, 1946, the ACYOA came into being.

These past seventeen years have seen the ACYOA grow into a strong and vigorous organization. Many young men and women have passed from its ranks into positions of responsibility and leadership in their communities. Moreover, the ACYOA has been the place where many young men and women are introduced to the glory and beauty of our cultural and spiritual heritage.

ACYOA, with the enthusiasm and optimism of youth, has actively promoted certain projects which would prove beneficial to the strengthening of our church. No other Armenian American youth organization has contributed as much to our Armenian community in America.

ACYOA has given much and wants so little. It needs more dedicated young men and women to come forward in service to God and our people. The ACYOA theme for this year, "*Faithful to the Faith of Our Fathers*," enunciates the faith of our young people. Let those who will follow such a standard come forward with faith and dedication.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) DEACON MEGERDITCH MOURADIAN,
ACYOA Executive Secretary

This Page Sponsored By
ST. GREGORY ACYOA

Dear Members and Friends of ACYOA:

It gives me great pleasure to send greetings to the New York-New Jersey Anniversary Ball Committee and their guests on this, our 17th Birthday.

In its short seventeen years, the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America has proven that it is an integral part of the Armenian Diocese in North America and of the Armenian-American communities throughout the United States and Canada. ACYOA needs and asks for continued support and confidence in order that the Organization may further implement its religious, cultural, and civic objectives as outlined in its Constitution.

I, on behalf of the entire Central Council of our Organization, thank you each most heartily for the support you have given this national project and welcome the support we are confident that you will continue to give in all future endeavors which will serve to strengthen our Organization.

Wishing you a most successful and enjoyable evening, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

ACYOA CENTRAL COUNCIL

(Signed) (Miss) Sylvia Shahinian

National Chairman for the
Seventeenth Annual Anniversary Balls

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LONG ISLAND ACYOA JRS. & SRS.



The emblem of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, adopted at its inception, is to be interpreted as follows:

Its being a CHURCH organization is shown by a glorious cross. The radiations from the center of the cross symbolize the truths of the Christian religion that shine forth through the centuries.

The symbols under the horizontal bar of the cross are:

- A. (Right hand side.) The double peaks (Great Massis and Little Massis) of the mount of Ararat. It represents the Armenian people and its destiny. Ararat has been the silent witness of the victories as well as the defeat of the Armenians through their existence as a people and nation. No geographical location is more beloved to them. Its representation on the A.C.Y.O.A. emblem means that the members of the Organization make the pledge of standing for the ideals for which the Armenian nation has always stood.
- B. (Left hand side.) The U. S. eagle with its wings widespread and star above each. The eagle looks proudly into far distances and holds, as usual, a batch of arrows. The eagle represents, of course, the United States. Its presence on the A.C.Y.O.A. emblem symbolizes the loyalty of the members of the A.C.Y.O.A. to the Constitution of the United States and to its principles of democracy and freedom.

The chain that encircles the cross on the emblem represents solidarity among the members of the A.C.Y.O.A. in their service to God and to people.

These symbols are designed on a shield which stands for the determination with which the objects of the A.C.Y.O.A. are to be carried out. The shield also stands for defense against dangerous encroachments.

It will be noted that the dominating feature of the emblem is the cross. This indicates the fact that Christ is our Lord and that to Him we owe obedience above all.

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NEWARK ACYOA

THE CALENDAR OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

Rev. Arnak Kasparian

What does the year 1963 mean to you as special dates? Anniversaries of birth and marriage of loved ones, some holidays, your yearly vacation, also Christmas and Easter as religious observations.

Each community, nation or religion also has a special year cycle of treasured memories of significant events or memorable and inspiring personalities. The observances of these special days enriches their corporal life and gives substance to their identity and values.

The same thing is true for the Christian Church. From the beginning of its existence, the Church guided the inclination of the faithful toward the worship of God by determining various days of corporal worship and prayer for the whole Church. On such days all communicants are united and woven into one body, the strong threads of which are their deep elevation to God and their grateful praise of Him.

The early Christians carried over from Judaism the idea of a weekly holy day — the observance of Sunday as a day of worship soon replacing the legal observance of the Sabbath. The arrangements of various Christian Feasts can be traced back to their formation, especially at the beginning of the fourth century when Armenia, followed by Byzantium and Rome, officially accepted the Christian faith and ended the persecutions of the past. Recollections referring to the Lord already had become the heart of the Tradition of the Church both in its belief and in its worship. The main incidents in the life of Jesus Christ, little by little, were celebrated during the Christian year calendar as feasts of the Lord. The reminiscences of the incidents of the Life of Jesus Christ were presented from the Scriptures, both from the Old Testament as a prophecy and promise and in the New Testament as the accomplishment and achievement of the Person of Jesus Christ.

Free prayers and hymns enriched the corporal worship of the early Church. Later a pattern of services was formulated to serve the needs of worship during each day of the year. In this effort the rich Jewish heritage was on hand as an outer shell which the Christian Church filled in with its thoughts and expectations. With time, both the order of services and their content of readings and hymnology were established. The Divine Liturgy is the center of the celebration of every Feast Day.

Truly, the Armenian Church music and rituals are considered as one of the richest and most appealing to the soul. It is up to us to appreciate its meaning to our spiritual life and preserve its beauty for the Church at large. Unfortunately, because of lack of knowledge about the meaning of various services, like the Morning Hour, Jashou Hour, Evening Hour, etc., and also because of lack of knowledge about the significance of the Church Calendar and also because of language difficulties, we have in our minds a stereotype of Armenian Church Services, to which we may attend passively but not understand what it is all about. For most of us every service is the same performance of singing, chanting or reading, as well as every Sunday being the same, except maybe Christmas and Easter.

We should give time to learn about the cycle of our Church year, and see how our liturgical year annually recreates the life of Christ, following the important events in their chronological order. The calendar of the church leads the faithful very closely to the significant events of the life of our Lord through the celebration of the corresponding feasts with periods of preparation and extension. The annual repetition of the liturgical cycle serves to refreshen the faith.

It is gratifying to note that there is a genuine interest on the part of the A.C.Y.O.A. in promoting a better understanding of our Liturgy, Feasts and the Calendar. They have sponsored many seminars in various regions and are sponsoring various publications.

It would be helpful to renumerate a few publications which are available to the public and which will help us to know more about our Church Calendar and understand the Divine Liturgy.

1. *The Armenian Guardian* is a very valuable source. Look at the annual index of the December issue under Church Calendar.
2. Yearbooks of the Association of Armenian Church Choirs of America.
3. *Saints and Sacraments* by Patriarch Shnork Archbishop Kaloustian.
4. *The Divine Liturgy (Pictorial Edition)*.
5. *Armenian Apostolic Church Calendar—1963 A.D.*

This last booklet is sponsored by the Central Council of the A.C.Y.O.A. and compiled by Rev. Arten Ashjian. It is a must in every Armenian Christian home. All the days of 1963 are given with the feasts and names of the saints and with all the Scripture readings of the day. We always try to read the Bible and because of lack of a program we discontinue. Here is an excellent help for reading the Bible as a family. The children also may participate in reading. It will take 5 to 10 minutes a day. This booklet contains also some facts on the Calendar of the Armenian Church.

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ST. GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR CHURCH OF ARMENIA

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MR. & MRS. ISAHAG APRAHAMIAN

THE OBJECTS OF THE ACYOA

1. To cause, help and encourage its members to learn, practice, uphold and propagate the moral, dogmatic and spiritual principles and teachings of the Christian religion according to the doctrine, sacraments, rites, forms of worship, canons, rules, discipline and customs of the Armenian Church.
2. To support and work for the strengthening of the Armenian Church; to promote, among its members and others, the study and appreciation of the Armenian culture and heritage.
3. To deepen and strengthen among its members the knowledge of, and loyalty to, the principles of the Constitution of the United States (or Canada); to uphold the spirit of human freedom, universal justice, brotherhood of men, and devotion to duty as good citizens, dedicated to the service of their God and country.
4. To strengthen the social and spiritual bond among its members, and establish mutual helpfulness, solidarity, and fellowship among them; and to contribute the development of a healthy communal life among Armenians.

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"THE FUNCTION OF THE ACYOA CENTRAL COUNCIL"

Dr. Max Boudakian

Quite often, an ACYOA member will ask, "What is the function of the Central Council?" Such questions reflect a need for improvement in communications between the individual ACYOA member and its national governing body, the Central Council. A brief attempt will be made to describe some of the responsibilities of the Central Council.

The present Central Council consists of nine men and women who are elected by the delegates at the Annual Assembly for a three year term. Many distinguished individuals have served on previous Central Councils. Many noteworthy objectives were accomplished through their efforts. However, the effectiveness of any Central Council is dependent to a large measure on the cooperation provided by the local ACYOA Chapter and pastor. Without their support, any well-conceived program developed by Central Council will seldom realize fruition.

The wide geographical distribution of the ACYOA is reflected by the present composition of the Central Council: Y. Gladys Barsamian (Detroit); Aurora Melikian (Detroit); Virginia Saxenian (Syracuse); Sylvia Snahinian (Providence); Misak Apranmian (Long Island); Max Boudakian (New Britain); Robert Gosugarian (Boston); Leon Hojagian (Bergen County); and Barkev Khojajian (Toronto). These individuals represent a wide variety of professional disciplines: lawyer, junior high school teacher, civil engineer, executive secretary, chemist, department store executive, Air Force officer, and commerce (export-import). In addition to their Central Council duties, these individuals serve the Armenian Church in other capacities. For example, within the present Central Council, one can cite Sunday School teachers, church organist and choirmasters, ACYOA chapter president, parish council member, and even a diocesan delegate. Thus, the Central Council can be considered a training ground to prepare individuals for higher responsibility in the service of the Armenian Church. For example, the ACYOA is very pleased to claim a former Central Council Chairman, Mr. Nubar Dorian, as a member of the Diocesan Council.

The Central Council meets at the Diocesan House in New York City at least four times during the year. The Primate, Archbishop Sion Manogian, and the ACYOA Executive Secretary, Deacon Megerditch Mouradian, lend counsel to the Central Council during their deliberations.

Article 11, Section 9 of the ACYOA constitution states that the responsibility of the Central Council will be: "To direct, supervise and co-ordinate all the activities of the organization." Some of these responsibilities and recent programs initiated by Central Council are presented below:

a. To convene the Annual General Assembly. (To be held in Montreal during Labor Day.) The Central Council submits proposals, amendments to the constitution, the new budget and other matters for approval by the delegates. The budget for the 1962-63 fiscal year is \$12,300.00.

b. To direct, supervise and co-ordinate all activities of the organization: administration of nation-wide programs, such as Anniversary Balls, ACYOA Day, Lenten Offering Program (for the Theological Education Fund), and Youth Camp Program.

c. Organization of Spring and Fall Regional Conferences. During October-November 1962, Regional Conferences were held in the New England (Springfield), Mid-Atlantic (Newark), South Atlantic (Richmond), International (Toronto), and the Mid-West (Evanston) areas.

d. Liaison with specific chapters as advisers. This responsibility includes chapter visitation and considerable correspondence.

e. Responsibility for the administration of *The Armenian Guardian*. The 1962-1963 budget for this worthy publication is \$5,000.00.

f. Dissemination of new religious material. *The Central Council is making available to all ACYOA members free copies of the following publications:* Archbishop Sion Manogian's "The Armenian Church and Her Teachings"; Reverend Arsen Ashjian's "Mesrob Mashtots, The Great Vartabed," and "Armenian Apostolic Church Calendar, 1963 A.D."; Deacon Hagop Nersoyan's "What Language the Armenian Divine Liturgy?"

g. Establishment of a free-grant ACYOA scholarship based on service to the Armenian Church, scholastic achievement and need.

h. Maintenance of fraternal contact with the United Christian Youth Movement, a division of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America. During August 1962, the ACYOA participated in the Ecumenical Youth Study Conference at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

i. Representation at the Diocesan Assembly as non-voting delegates.

The Central Council has inaugurated the following new programs which are in various stages of implementation.

a. Vigorous expansion of the National Religious-Educational Program. At least five religious conferences and/or retreats will be conducted during the Spring of 1963.

b. Greater participation in ecumenical youth movements. The ACYOA plans to be represented at the 1963 New York State Christian Youth Conference at Utica, N. Y. in February 1963, as well as in other regions during 1963.

c. Greater flow of religious and cultural material to the Chapters. The use of audio-visual aids such as religious films and slides are currently being explored. As of January 1963, monthly discussion guides, prepared by the Executive Secretary, will be sent to all Chapters. Slides of Holy Etchmiadzin and Jerusalem are being prepared.

d. Development of closer relations with St. Nersess Armenian Theological School in Evanston, Ill. Miss Aurora Melikian has been appointed ACYOA Coordinator of relations with this institution. The ACYOA should encourage more candidates from its ranks to consider the clergy as a profession. During this past year, Mr. Martin Cholakian, an ACYOA member from Philadelphia, enrolled in the above school.

e. Development of closer relations with sister organizations such as the Association of Armenian Church Choirs of America, e.g. co-sponsorship of the annual Study Seminar. Miss Virginia Saxenian has been appointed ACYOA Coordinator with this organization.

The above represents a brief outline of the functions of the ACYOA Central Council. We hope that these activities will serve to reinforce the image of the ACYOA as a Church related group which is characterized by religious, educational and social activities held in proper balance.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 1963

March

- 3 Holy Cross New York, Business Meeting
Slides on Divine Liturgy by Deacon M. Kehiayan
St. Gregory, ACYOA Day, "Honor Thy Elders" Dinner
- 10 Newark ACYOA DAY
- 15 Long Island, Joint Lenten Supper for Members
- 17 Holy Cross New York Theater Party
- 22 St. Gregory, Dinner-Theater Party in conjunction with Sunday School
- 24 Long Island ACYOA DAY Dinner, Initiation of new members
Speaker: Mr. Onnig Halajian
- 31 Holy Cross New York A.C.Y.O.A. DAY

March and April

St. Gregory, Wednesday evening lectures sponsored by ACYOA

April

- St. Gregory Spring Dance: Watch for details.
- 6 Long Island, Tour of I.T.T. Center, Paramus, N. J.
- 7 Long Island Jrs., Palm Sunday Cake Sale
- 7 Newark, Palm Sunday coffee and cake following church
- 13 Long Island, Easter Eve Havgetakhagh (light supper)
- 19 Long Island, Jr. and Sr. meetings and talk on Armenian Martyrs Day
- 21 Holy Cross New York, Meeting and Bowling Party
- 27 Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference

May

- 4 Long Island Jr. Dance
- 5 Holy Cross New York Panel Discussion: "Pros and Cons of Armenian Dates and Mates"
- 17 Long Island Jr. and Sr. meeting. Talk on Hierarchy of our Church.
- 18 St. Gregory, Picnic at Lake Sebago
- 19 Holy Cross New York, Meeting and Talk on Church Etiquette
- 25 Long Island, PLAY Saturday eve. Watch for details.
- 26 Newark, Bowling Party, 2nd Annual Interchapter activity

June

- 7 Long Island Jr. and Sr. Annual Membership Meeting and Elections
- 9 Long Island, Sunday afternoon MUSICALE
- 9 Holy Cross New York, Annual Membership Meeting
- 15 St. Gregory, Interchapter beach party, Jones Beach at Parking Field 6
- 22 Holy Cross New York, Annual Jr.-Sr. Boat Ride to Bear Mountain

July

- 14 Holy Cross New York Summer Festival Activity
- 28 Holy Cross New York, Jones Beach Party

August

- 10 Holy Cross New York, Weekend Trip
- 10 St. Gregory, Picnic and Beach Party at Lake Sebago

August 30 to September 2 ACYOA Assembly. Montreal, here we come!

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entering into God's presence. This Accession shows that he is now ready to perform his sacred function. He glorifies God by having humility and gladness in both his heart and mind. During the Accession the people in the congregation should be mindful of their humility as well.

Since the Prothesis is about to take place, and what is to happen is again a mystery, the curtain is drawn at this point. Behind the curtain the priest prepares the bread and wine, the elements of the Divine Mystery. First he accepts in the name of God the bread and wine which represent the offerings or the gifts of the faithful. Placing them on the table of Prothesis, he declares the gifts to be offerings to God the Father in remembrance of Christ's offering of His Body and Blood during His passion and on Calvary. Then he makes the sign of the cross over the nusknar (water), saying the words of Prothesis. After making the sign of the cross also over the wine, he pours it crosswise into the chalice with the words "In remembrance of the redeeming economy of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ . . ." Then he says the Prayer of Prothesis and the Psalm of Prothesis (Psalm 93), following which he makes the sign of the cross over the Gifts while saying the Words of Annunciation three times: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the most high shall overshadow thee." This concludes the Preparation and brings us to the second part of the Liturgy.

The Synaxis or Jashou ("Service of the Midday") derives from the earliest known form of Christian communal service. It has the idea of "togetherness" since it was open to both baptized and non-baptized people. It is a service in which "enlightenment of the mind" is to take place, and therefore an attempt is made to teach the people and to open their minds to divine truth. In order to do this, psalms are sung, scriptural passages are read, the Creed is recited, prayers are said, and a sermon given. (At the present time, however, the sermon is given later in the Badarak in accommodation to latecomers.)

It is easy to note the start of the Synaxis. This is when the priest walks down in procession from the altar and censes the congregation in the church while the choir sings the Hymn of Censing. His coming down among the people is significant in that it is symbolic of the period in which Christ assumed manhood and came down among the people to teach them about God and His commandments. As the priest censes the congregation they should cross themselves and say "Remember me before the immortal Lamb of God."

Although the Censing is the first part of the Synaxis, the true beginning of this service comes with the Blessing of the Eucharist which is said after the priest has returned to the altar and bowed three times. He then proclaims God's Kingdom, which began with the Church, which is formed when even two or three come together in the name of Christ and form one body. In the chant called "Monogenes" (a Greek word meaning "only begotten") Christ's incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection are recalled, following which the three prayers of Antiphon are said by the priest.

The Lesser Entrance is also easily distinguished because it is when the Gospel-Book containing the Word of God, is raised high and carried around the altar while the people sing the Trisagion: (Thrice Holy) "Soorp Asdvadz, soorp yev huzor, soorp yev anmah . . ." The Gospel is

thus brought forth to remind the people that the light of truth was made available to them in the Word of God, and that it is up to them to accept it. Prayers are said requesting that God cleanse the minds and souls of the congregation and make them worthy to receive the Holy Word. During the Great Litany of the Synaxis which follows a long prayer is said by the deacon for the peace of the world, for the lives of people in various walks of life, and for the souls of those who "have fallen asleep in Christ." (Since they too are part of the Church.) While this is done, the priest prays in secret with open arms. Thus, with the Lesser Entrance, we see represented the unity of heaven and earth.

The Lessons or lessons, which come next, are readings from the Prophets and the Apostles. They follow an annual cycle using the Church year as a base and thereby ensure coverage of all points important to Christianity as found in the Old and New Testaments. Various verses from the psalms precede the Lessons and introduce the subject of the day's readings. High priority is then given to the Word of God which is chanted from the bema. When the Gospel reading is completed, all the people sing, "Glory to thee O Lord our God" ("Park kez Der Asdvadz mer"), after which they join their hands in prayer position ready to recite the Creed.

The Nicene Creed which is said in full in our church proclaims the elements of our Christian faith, and establishes the divinity of Christ, i.e., that Christ is God. Those who do not believe in the facts as stated in the Creed are anathematized (excommunicated) just before the doxology.

The prayers after the Lessons conclude the prayers of the Synaxis. In the first prayer there is reference to Christ's sufferings, with the implication that Christians must remain steadfast in their faith and accept whatever suffering may come to them in life; the gifts of the Holy Spirit are requested to strengthen the souls of the people in their efforts against evil. In the second prayer, peace is requested for the whole world. After this the priest blesses the people while saying the Dismissal of the Synaxis. Then he removes his crown and slippers in preparation for the Holy Sacrifice.

The Holy Sacrifice, also known as the Eucharist or Anaphora, is the most important part of the Liturgy inasmuch as it reenacts the four actions of Christ when He established the mystery of Holy Communion at the Last Supper: (1) He took bread and then wine; (2) He gave thanks; (3) Broke the bread; (4) And gave them to His Disciples.

The first main subdivision of the Holy Sacrifice, "The Offertory," corresponds to the first action of Christ. As soon as the unbaptized catechumens have been bid to leave the church, the Great Entrance takes place. In bringing the chalice with the bread and wine to the altar, the deacon has taken the individual offerings of the people and made them a corporate offering of the church. As he holds forth the Holy Mystery, the deacon speaks the well-known words, "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, let the everlasting doors be lifted up that the King of glory may come in." And the priest censing the bread and wine asks and replies "Who is the king of glory? The Lord of hosts." Then, taking the Gifts, the priest makes the sign of the cross over the people. With the "Laying of the Gifts" on the altar (showing the laying of Christ on the Cross) he makes the offering of the sacrifice to God, the Father, on behalf of the whole congregation. Having burned incense and once again washed his hands, symbolically, he

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prays with open arms: "... O Lord, to whom we offer these oblations, accept from us this presentation and consummate it to be the mystery of the body and blood of thine Only-begotten and grant this bread and this cup to be to us, that taste of them, a remedy of forgiveness for our sins." Then since all Christians are required to be reconciled and at peace with one another before they may be considered worthy of Holy Communion, the Kiss of Peace is passed among the congregation, beginning at the altar. The Kiss symbolizes the reconciliation of God with His creatures, "the fellowship of the faithful in the Holy Spirit, and the unity of the Church in the love of God." This is expressed fully in the Hymn of the Kiss of Peace.

The Eucharistia (Thanksgiving) or Anaphora (to offer sacrifices) corresponds to the second action of Christ and is the heart of the Divine Liturgy. Seven themes are included in the Eucharistia as indicated in the outline. It is with the first part, the Prologue, however, that the thanksgiving begins to take place. The priest and the congregation "give thanks to the Lord" with their whole hearts for His infinite mercy in promising them eternal life.

The second subdivision of the Eucharistia, the Anamnesis, begins with the "Sanctus" or "Sourp, Sourp" as we know it. While it is sung, the priest in a private prayer recalls all the gifts and blessings of God as related in the Bible, with special emphasis upon the incarnation of the Son for the purpose of saving the world. Then saying Christ's words, "Take, eat, this is my body which is distributed for you . . . for propitiation and for remission of sins," he raises the bread. After he does the same for the wine, the hymn devoted to the First person of the Trinity, the Father, is sung. When, however, the priest lifts the gifts slightly and repeats the words said by Christ at the Last Supper, "And thine of thine own unto thee we offer from all and for all," actually the whole congregation commits itself to God, as Christ committed His soul on the cross to the Father so that we may live eternally.

The Epiclesis is a relatively short section of the Divine Liturgy and yet contains one of the most important elements, that of the transposition or changing (P'okharkel) of the bread and wine into the actual Body and Blood of our Lord. Until this point the bread and wine were but representations of the human body of Christ. While the Hymn to the Son is sung, the priest prays for the gift of the Holy Spirit, then blesses the bread three times, the wine three times, and finally both together three times, saying "Whereby blessing this bread and this wine, make them truly the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, changing them by the Holy Spirit." The nine consecutive blessings accentuate the importance of the moment. At this point, when the Holy Spirit infuses the Gifts, the "symbols" become reality, and are transposed into the living glorified body of Christ. They still look like bread and wine, but now have been empowered with the Holy Spirit. This corresponds to the moment when Christ's crucified earthly body in the tomb was changed into the living glorified body.

The Diptychs (Heeshadagootiun, or Remembrances) begins with the hymn to the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. During this time the deacons lead the people in prayers for all the saints and for all those

who have died in Christ. After the General Intercessions, Special Intercessions are said for those whose Hoki Hankist is being held on that day. There is an emphasis on the fact that "the souls of the dead are part of the living body of Christ, and that they also rise in Christ."

When the Church has become united, i.e., the living and the dead have become one in Christ, the climax of what has taken place till now in the Liturgy is reached. With great joy for the privilege of being the children of the Father, the people join together in singing the Lord's Prayer.

Since pride is the greatest of all sins, and its opposite, humility, the greatest virtue, the priest and the congregation bow low in the Inclination. The priest puts his head lower than the chalice, prays in silence and then aloud. When the Song of Elevation is sung, he lifts the Holy Bread as high as possible and shows it to the people. This is the highest that the Host is ever raised during the Badarak and represents the highest point that the life of the soul can reach as it were. It recalls the Ascension of Christ into heaven and His sitting with the Father. The Doxology is therefore sung as the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer in order to give glory to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (Note the joining together of the three Persons of the Trinity in the Doxology.)

The third main subdivision of the Holy Sacrifice, the Intinction and Fraction, corresponds to the third action of Christ. The priest takes the sacramental Body and dips it whole into the incorruptible Blood, thereby signifying our salvation by His Blood. As the priest prays and immerses the Body, the spiritual baptism of the believer by the Holy Spirit takes place through the washing by His Blood. After he gives the Exhortation for Communion, the Der Voghormia is sung. (The Der Voghormia is not actually an official part of the Badarak; it was added later and is now sung in all Armenian churches.) Then he kisses the *nushkhar* and breaks it in the manner in which the one loaf was broken and distributed among the people at the Last Supper. This is "symbolic of the unity in the Body of Christ . . . of the individual members who form the Church." As he puts it into the chalice he says "The fulfillment of the Holy Spirit."

The Communion corresponds to the fourth action of Christ and is the final act of the Holy Sacrifice. It begins with prayers of joy and gratitude for the privilege of being considered worthy of "communicating with Christ, and . . . being enlightened with divine light." In a private prayer, said by the priest, God is asked to make the communicants worthy of the holy mystery, to cleanse them of their sins and to bestow upon them the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Then the priest makes the sign of the cross and petitions God on behalf of himself and the rest of the people of the world. After asking forgiveness for his enemies, he partakes of the mystical Body and Blood of Christ thereby sacramentally realizing the unity which has taken place in the binding together of the spiritual and bodily life of the Christian. Since the curtain is drawn during this time, the priest cannot be seen during his Communion. After he says the Prayer of Tasting, the curtain is withdrawn and the Bidding is given to the Communicants: "With fear and with faith draw near and communicate in holiness." Those who have prepared themselves in the manner indicated in another article found in this booklet, then go up to receive. Those who receive "well"

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ARMENIAN COINS

Jack Guevrekian

The earliest known coins that were issued by an independent ruler of Armenia seem to be by four Kings whose names are unknown to Armenian chroniclers. It is strange indeed that "Charaspes," "Arsames," "Abdisares" and "Xerxes" are "Armenian Kings" who issued coins from about 250 B.C. to 170 B.C. However, we soon come across our own Tigranes, the Great (Tigranes II, 94-54 B.C.) who issued coins in considerable quantities for his extensive empire.

Tigranes' coins are to be found in Museums and collections throughout the world. The inscriptions on his coins are in Greek, since the Armenian alphabet had not as yet been discovered. The inscription usually reads "Tigranes, King" or "Tigranes, King of Kings." The side carrying the inscription usually shows a seated allegorical figure of the City of Antioch (where most of Tigranes' coins were struck), while the other, or "obverse" side, depicts a crowned profile of Tigranes wearing an Armenian Tiara.

Tigranes' successors also issued coins, but not as prolific in scope. Among these are Ardavasd III (56-34 B.C.), Tigranes III (20-12 B.C.), and Tigranes IV (12 B.C.-1 A.D.). After this the nation utilized coins issued by the many conquerors that it had. There is no record of any more Armenian coins being struck until more than a thousand years later when the Armenian King of Caucasian Albania (Gorice 1046-1082) struck some extremely rare copper coins with Armenian script.

Again there is a lapse of time till we see any more Armenian coins. With the start of the Rupenian dynasty in Cilician Armenia, however, we are happily confronted with many coins struck by the various rulers of this period (1199 A.D.-1375 A.D.). The Kingdom started officially with Levon I as the first Monarch. Some of his predecessors, as "Barons" or "Princes" also issued coins. All of the coins of this period carry Armenian inscriptions. There is however one type of coin issued by Hetoum I which has an Arabic inscription on the reverse, commemorating an alliance between Hetoum and the Seljuk rulers of Iconium (Konya). The inscriptions on these coins usually include the name of the reigning King and the words "King of the Armenians" and also "by the power of God." Quite a few of the coins also carry the name of the city where the coin was struck, such as Sis or Darson. The Rupenians struck coins in silver and copper. There are also some gold specimens available, but these are considered to be medals or commemorative pieces rather than coins to be used in commerce. These are the rulers who struck coins in that period. (The names of the Princes have been omitted since these are extremely rare).

Levon I	1199-1219	Levon IV	1320-1342
Hetoum I	1226-1270	Guy Lusignan (Gosdantin II)	1342-1344
Levon II	1270-1289	Gosdantin III	1344-1363
Hetoum II	1289-1297	Levon the Usurper	1363-1365
Smpad	1296-1298	Gosdantin IV	1365-1373
Gosdantin I	1298-1299	Levon V	1374-1375
Levon III	1301-1307		
Oshin	1308-1320		

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Since there aren't any dates on these coins, they are differentiated from one another by style and design.

There have not been any further coins issued by an independent Armenia since that date. The Armenian Republic of 1920-21 did not issue any coins, only paper money was issued. The present day Armenia S.S.R. uses the coinage of the Soviet Union.

Coins are of interest to Historians, Archeologists, and others interested in the entire culture of a nation. We can see from Armenian coins, when the periods of independence existed, and the degree of contemporary art that was manifested on the coin designs and the care taken in their execution.

Coins are a key to the past, they are an existing proof of past glories and can be of immense value in determining the circumstances of a nation, especially when written documents are absent or scarce.

The coins of Tigranes the Great, for instance, are masterpieces of design and execution. They are merely reflections of the opulence of the period.

Armenian coins can be seen at the major Museums throughout the world, and thus are another reminder to the world's consciousness, of the contribution made by Armenians through the centuries.

Step By Step—Continued From Page 23

become actually incorporated into the Body of Christ. Their sins are remitted, and they receive the power of the Holy Spirit as well as eternal life. The priest then blesses the communicants and the curtain is drawn once more. With the thanksgiving, in which there is a review of the benefit derived from Communion and an expression of thanks for them, the Holy Sacrifice is completed. The priest washes his hands and the chalice, and puts on his slippers and his crown.

During the Prayer of Dismissal the priest and altar servers come down from the altar and the priest says the closing prayer amid the church to spread "the blessings of the Holy Sacrifice over the whole church of Christ and the world." The priest reads from the beginning of the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. The theological foundation of the doctrine of the Sacrament of the Holy Sacrifice is stated in this reading. Finally, the priest again blesses the congregation and sends it out into the world with the grace of the Holy Spirit and with peace. In the Psalm of Dismissal (Psalm 34), many points are made for the congregation to remember. The people then come forward, kiss the Bible, make the sign of the cross, and depart.

At the door "mas," a portion of the Badarak, is distributed among those who have not received Communion. The "mas" may be taken home to those who have been unable to attend church.

The steps to the Divine are many, long and difficult. It is to be hoped that they have been somewhat simplified in this explanation of the Divine Liturgy.

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ARMENIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY MARTYRS

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THE ROLE OF THE DEACON IN THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

Deacons in the Armenian Church have a definite role not only in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other rituals, but also in the administration of the church as assistants to both pastors and bishops. The very name Deacon, originating from the Greek word diakonos, means minister or servant. We learn from the Book of Acts that the original deacons were "seven men of honest repute" (Chapter 6:1-7) who had the function of "serving tables." Stephen was one of the seven deacons who also has the distinction of being the first Christian martyr in recorded history, "a man of faith and of the Holy Spirit."

The chief function of deacons in the early church was to serve as the deputy of the bishop in his secular duties, particularly in distributing the alms of the poor. Inside the church the deacons made public announcements, guided the congregation, preserved order, read the Gospel, handled the Host and the Chalice, and assisted at the administration of baptism. The deacons also assisted in the instruction of the unbaptized people, training to be Christians.

Presently in the Armenian Church there are two kinds of deacons. There are those who are in the process of preparing for the priesthood, and as such in their case the diaconate is a merely transitional phase on the way to priesthood; and those, who may be called lay-deacons, who have been granted this order for the purpose of assisting pastors almost exclusively in the rituals performed in local churches. Occasionally such deacons are also given special permission by the diocesan bishop to perform certain other duties.

In the United States, because of the lack of priests in some parishes, a number of the pastoral and administrative responsibilities of a pastor have been entrusted to trained deacons who are in the process of completing the necessary requirements before they are ordained priests. Such deacons, with the consent and assignment of the Primate, have a very important role to play in keeping the churches open, performing certain worship services and preaching, giving guidance and leadership to various church organizations, performing some administrative duties and even offering counseling and comfort to those who need it. Through all these responsibilities these candidate-deacons can, in general, keep and kindle the faith of the people and teach our spiritual and cultural heritage, while they themselves are advancing their theological training.

In our monasteries, candidates for the priesthood are ordained deacons at the end of their basic four-year training, before they even start their specialized theological curriculum. Up to and including the diaconate there are six orders. The first four orders are known as Minor Orders and they are, namely, Doorkeeper, Reader, Exorcist, and Acolyte. Following these are two orders of deacon, namely, Sub-Deacon or Half-Deacon ("Gisargavak") and Deacon ("Sargavak") with their respective ecclesiastical and ritual duties and responsibilities. (For a clear definition of the respective duties of deacons and sub-deacons see the Question Corner in the Armenian Guardian, October, 1961, by The Very Rev. Mesrob V. Semerjian.)

It should be stated here briefly in passing, that deacons, lay or candidate for the priesthood, should not be called Archdeacons ("Avak Sarga-

A VISIT TO ETCHMIADZIN

The following article was written by Albert Der Tatevasian after an interview with Rev. Father Mampre Kouzouian

Since childhood it has been Rev. Father Mampre Kouzouian's desire to visit the spiritual center of the Armenian Church, Holy Etchmiadzin. Fortunately, during the summer of 1962 he had the great pleasure and honor of going to Holy Etchmiadzin with a group of delegates of the National Council of Churches in the United States. This delegation was invited by the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. After visiting Moscow and some centers of the Christian Church, the delegation arrived in Yerevan on Sunday, September 9, 1962.

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vak") for the purpose of distinguishing them from Sub-Deacons ("Gisargavak") or plain stole-bearer clerks ("Ooraragir Tubir"). The term Archdeacon is misleading, used for a deacon in the Armenian Church.

The archdeacon in the early church, was, as the name implies, the chief of the deacons attached to the bishop's cathedral, his duty being, besides preaching, to supervise the deacons and their work. Both in West and East, the jurisdiction and prestige of the archdeacon grew so considerably, that he enjoyed even some of the privileges and authority of the bishop. One source states that the archdeacon's "jurisdiction had become, in fact, co-ordinate with that of the bishop." In the Anglican Church and in some dioceses of its sister Protestant Episcopal Church presently the office of the archdeacon consists of regional or diocesan supervision of the work of the clergy and church wardens, appointed by the bishop.

There is no such rank or office in the hierarchy of the Armenian Church for deacons.

While we are on the subject, it should also be stated that the rank of the deacon is a part of the hierarchy of the church.

With an Armenian seminary just opened in this country, it will be only a matter of time when special programs will be instituted for the training of lay deacons, so that there will be enhanced uniformity and increased harmony in the singing as well as the performance of other ritualistic responsibilities of the deacons and sub-deacons. As for deacons that are candidates for the priesthood, St. Nersess Armenian Theological School is the institution where more and more theological students will be trained in order to increase the number of clergymen and to administer to the spiritual needs of the people.

Our present situation is not different from our Lord's time, when he said: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (Matt. 9:37-38).

— D. H. K.

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The delegation was met at the airport by Archbishop Sahag Dei Hovhannesian, representing His Holiness Vasken I, many vartabeds as well as the representative of the government. The delegation was first led to the hotel after which cars provided by Etchmiadzin drove them to the Cathedral where His Holiness had arranged to have special Sunday services. At the entrance, the delegation was met and welcomed by other clergy. They were led directly to the headquarters of His Holiness where he welcomed them with very warm affection. As His Holiness led the procession toward the Cathedral, the faithful Armenian worshippers moved toward him and started kissing his hands and robes. This act greatly moved and impressed the delegates. Then the delegation was led into the Cathedral where His Grace, Archbishop Haigazoon Aprahamian was celebrating the Divine Liturgy. The Cathedral's choir was singing Gomidas Vartabed's version of the Badarak. The delegates were so impressed with the singing that they requested to have an audience with the choir and its choirmaster, Mr. Khoren Hagopian. Fr. Mampre will always remember the words of Bishop Richard C. Raines who said to them: "I have been a choir boy since my childhood and have later become choirmaster in a cathedral. I have been in various Christian churches where I loved their music, but to tell the truth I must say I have never heard a choir singing so beautifully a Divine Liturgy. Therefore, I congratulate each one of you from the bottom of my heart." At the official banquet, which was held later, Dr. J. Irving Miller, president of the National Council of Churches of the United States, told His Holiness that the delegation had been in various parts of the world and had heard many choirs. Dr. Miller said: "We will not do justice if we compare one Divine Liturgy with another. However, I should say we have never heard such beautiful music in any other place where we have been."

Following the Divine Liturgy the delegation was led to several parts of the monastery. First, they were led to the new headquarters of The Catholicos, the Hairabedanotz or Veharan, which was built 50 years ago by Mantashoff, the great benefactor. It had never been used by the Catholicos because the building was used by the government as headquarters for the soldiers and later it was used as a hospital. Recently this same building was transferred by the government to His Holiness to be used as his headquarters. The beauty and architecture of this Hairabedanotz is very impressive. An Armenian from any part of the world should feel very proud and happy to see such a building being used as headquarters for the Catholicos. The living quarters of His Holiness, his library, his offices and his museum are in the Hairabedanotz. Various offices of Etchmiadzin are on the first floor, and the reception and banquet halls and meeting rooms are on the second floor.

It is of interest to know that behind the main altar of the Cathedral is a museum. It contains many ancient manuscripts, crosses, chalices, carpets and Armenian coins. It also contains a small part of Noah's Ark. There is also in this museum the spear that was used by the Centurion to pierce Jesus' side when he was on the cross at Calvary. This is one of the great treasures of the museum.

The delegation next went to visit the seminary. They were greeted by the Dean, Archbishop Haigazoon Aprahamian. The seminary has 35 students from 12 to 25 years of age who have come from various parts of Armenia and the Diaspora to study and become the clergy of the Armenian Church. They also have many important professors from Yerevan.

Another point of interest was the printing press which was donated by the faithful Armenians of America. It is a very modern printing press. It is used to print the monthly official publication, Etchmiadzin, as well as religious books.

A banquet in honor of his guests was given by the Catholicos at the Veharan. During this banquet His Holiness recalled his visit to the United States in 1960 and the warm welcome he received by the various churches. His Holiness praised the Christian movement of today. Fr. Mampre recalled the words of one of the delegates who said that he was very glad to see that such an old church as the Armenian Church has a very able, devoted and vigorous young leader as His Holiness Vasken I. During the course of this dinner, Dr. Miller presented to the Catholicos a golden cross as a token of appreciation and brotherly love from the National Council of Churches of the United States. A silver cross was given by Dr. R. H. Edwin Espey, Assistant General Secretary of the NCC, to the Locum Tenens of the Catholicate of Cilicia, His Eminence Archbishop Khat Achabahian. His Holiness in appreciation of this visit presented to each one of the members of this delegation a special silver plate carved with the design of the Cathedral of Etchmiadzin.

The following day some of the members of the delegation visited the monastery of Keghart, as well as the ancient monastery of St. Hripsime and St. Kayane which impressed them very much.

One of the best friends of the Armenian Church, His Grace Bishop Scaife, made the following statement to the American papers: "I went to renew my friendship with the Catholicos of all Armenians, His Holiness Vasken I at Etchmiadzin. He is a tower of spiritual strength and the Armenian Church is fortunate indeed to have him as its spiritual leader."

One who visited Etchmiadzin seven or eight years ago and visits it today will observe the great changes that have taken place during this time. Indeed, the Armenian Church is very fortunate to have as its leader a young, devoted and vigorous Catholicos as His Holiness Vasken I. Recently he has been given the title of "Builder" by the National Ecclesiastical Council. Through his efforts many of our old monasteries have been renewed and restored. You can observe this immediately when you enter the village of Etchmiadzin. The holy shrine of St. Hripsime, St. Kayane, Holy Shoghagat and the church of Oshagan have been restored and renewed. His Holiness has paid special attention to the seminary and he has invited seminarians from all over the world.

NOTE: Photographs of the NCC visit to Etchmiadzin may be seen in the November and December, 1962, issues of *The Armenian Church*, monthly publication of the Diocese.

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PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION AND COMMUNION

*Prepared by Rev. Fr. Vartan Megherian, with condensations from
"Sacraments and Prayers of the Armenian Church,"
revisions and additions*

Penance and Holy Eucharist are two of the four (out of seven) sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Eucharist) which are necessary for the salvation of every Christian. Also known as Confession and Communion, these two sacraments constantly purify and sanctify us by the graces imparted through faith.

Penance

Penance is the sacrament which forgives our sins and is grounded on the words of Jesus Christ, "Truly I say unto you, whatever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18), and "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins ye shall receive they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained." (John 20:21, etc.). In these words Jesus Christ gave to His Apostles, and to their lawful successors (our bishops and priests), the power and authority to absolve from all sin those who sincerely repent of their offenses.

Although Penance may at first sight seem to be a bitter and painful thing, yet, viewed in its fruits and consequences it is full of consolation; and every Christian, as soon as he is conscious that he has fallen into a mortal sin, ought at once to have recourse to this fount of divine mercy.

Examination of Conscience

To prepare for the sacrament of Penance, we should first and foremost meditate on the life of our Lord, and pray for His guidance in cleansing ourselves of our iniquities.

Then, we must make a strict examination of our conscience, recalling, considering and lamenting all the wrong things we have done. We must remember that our only hope for peace of mind and conscience is in the mercy of God, and that our own mercy to ourselves cannot help us. Therefore, we must not try to excuse ourselves for anything, nor to blame anyone else for our sins.

Contrition

The next step in the Sacrament of Penance is to be sorry for the sins we have committed, and to promise not to do them again. It is this admission of guilt openly to God through the priest that we call Confession. When the penitent comes before the priest, he is bid to speak freely, remembering that he is a sinner who has come to be cleansed of his guilt.

After having confessed and received absolution for his sins, the penitent should promise to perform some kind of penance as a punishment for the sins which he has committed, and also as a promise not to commit them again.

Penance

This is the final part of the sacrament, and may be performed in three ways: prayer, abstinence, charity. Prayer strengthens the penitent and increases in him the graces of God. Abstinence is a form of sacrifice, and it means to refrain from eating certain foods, to eliminate certain normal

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enjoyments temporarily, or generally to deny oneself something for a period of time. Charity is self-expiatory; it would be assumed that the charitable contribution would be made as a conscientious offering to the Church, through which this sacrament has been made possible.

Preparation for Communion

The Sacrament of Penance is in itself the spiritual preparation for the Holy Eucharist or Communion. It is a pre-requisite for Communion, as much as Baptism is a pre-requisite for any other sacrament. Whenever we wish to receive Holy Communion, we must see to it that we have attended to the Sacrament of Penance beforehand.

If possible, make an appointment with your priest and have private confession. This will be the most useful to you, as an individual interested in spiritual growth. Do not expect the priest to administer Communion to you if you have not had confession. If you find private confession inconvenient, do notify your priest that you will receive Communion on this or that Sunday, so that group confession prior to Communion is arranged.

Before receiving the Holy Sacrament, we must frequently attend church, ask God's grace, and for the love of Christ, do acts of benevolence to the best of our ability. We must read the Holy Scriptures and try to direct our conversations into spiritual channels.

Furthermore, we must be physically clean, as far as possible, because we are going to receive into our hearts the King of Heaven to Whom we owe the deepest reverence and fear. We should also be as plain as possible as regards our dress (women should refrain from using lipstick on that day).

Before receiving Holy Communion we must without fail seek the pardon of those persons whose hearts we have grieved or against whom we have cherished malice. Since Holy Communion is a sacrament of love and of reconciliation of God with us, anyone who approaches it with an unreconciled heart is not worthy of the love and reconciliation of God.

Communion

When receiving Communion during the Divine Liturgy, be sure to attend as much of the Liturgy as you can. For the Divine Liturgy is the re-presentation of Christ's Sacrifice, which He wanted us to witness in remembrance of Him. Through the Divine Liturgy we are offered to partake of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, which is in the form of bread and wine. Our Lord Himself instituted the sacrament at the Last Supper, when He "took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My Body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:26-28).

Because it is Christ's Body and Blood which we take into us when we receive Communion, we must take it before we have had any food or drink in us. For this reason we fast prior to Communion, and that is the physical preparation we must make. Fasting means eating or drinking *nothing* before Communion. In matters of illness or weakness of body, the priest should be consulted for dispensation. We must not smoke either, and food, not cigarettes, should be the first thing consumed after Communion.

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Holy Communion provides us with the spiritual nourishment we need in order to grow as healthy Christians. Members of the Armenian Church are required to receive Communion at the very minimum of once a year. It is more fitting, however, that Armenian Christians receive Communion on the five great feast days of the Church, or "Daghavars," which are Theophany, Easter, Transfiguration, Assumption, and Exaltation.

It is necessary to approach the Sacrament of Holy Communion in awe and with reverence, in silent prayer and utmost humility, keeping away from our hearts all vanity, forgetting the world, and thinking only of God, Who condescends to come and dwell in our souls without regard to our unworthiness.

Each time we partake in the Holy Eucharist, our souls are filled with a special kind of joy, the joy that comes from receiving nourishment, and that satisfies our thirst and hunger. The earthly food that we eat is transformed into our own bodies, but whenever we receive Christ in us, we are transferred into His Body.

Holy Communion is the only way to have eternal life, as Christ Himself said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53).

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