



St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church

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*Սուրբ Մեսրոպ Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցի
Ռէյսին, Ռիսինսկըն*

Reverend Father Garabed Kochakian, Pastor

Տէր Կարապետ Քահանայ Թոշաբեան — Հովիւ

September 10, 1990

Very Reverend Fr. Khajag Barsamian, Primate
Diocese of The Armenian Church of America
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Dear Hayr Soorp:

Enclosed please find a "working copy" of a job description for a new department at the Diocese. Relative to what we spoke about last month concerning liturgical uniformity and training of altar servers -- this document speaks to these concerns.

Also, this department could be linked to the oecumenical office as well since part of the work may address similar issues. Let me know what you think.

Your obedient servant,

Fr. Garabed

Fr. Garabed Kochakian

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THE DEPARTMENT OF WORSHIP AND VOCATIONS

Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America

**Encumbered within the scope of activity and work of this
Diocesan Department
would be the following:**

- 1. The training of liturgical functionaries, i.e. Deacons,
Sub-Deacons, Clerks, Lectors**

In accordance with the Diocesan guidelines set forth for ordination to both the major and minor orders in the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church by the Primate, a program for the preparation and examination of the candidates throughout the diocese for those aspiring to be liturgical functionaries at worship will be followed. The Director of this department will monitor the candidates' preparation as set forth by the Diocesan Primate through his periodic visitations to the parishes and by other means of communication with the local pastor. All necessary instructional materials will be prepared and sent to the pastors who themselves are responsible for the immediate preparation of the candidates. Liturgical functionaries can be either those who are in 'transition' toward ordination to the Holy Priesthood or those who as laypersons desire a 'permanence' of service to the church .

2. Programs of the Association of Armenian Church Choirs of America.

The Central Council of the AACCA will work with the Director of Worship and Vocations in planning programs of education and training of Choir Directors and Choir members in both established and mission parishes throughout the Diocese. Musical workshops, lectures on the Armenian rites of worship, liturgical procedure and propriety will be the focus of developing better choirs of our diocese. The local choirs are often viewed as the "Worship Committee" of the parish because they not only lead the congregation in their weekly worship at the Badarak but also serve as facilitators to the faithful who may seek personal ways of devotion and worship in canon with the tradition of the Armenian Church's rites. The Director of Worship and Vocations can work with both the pastor and choir director who themselves are the liturgists of the parish, in planning ecumenical services or other special services throughout the year for the spiritual edification of the faithful - e.x. Woman Saints Day, Saint Stephen's Day, Lenten services, Thanksgiving Eve Services, Ascension Day Services, etc. Weekly worship and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy must be an uplifting experience and encounter with Christ in order for our faithful to continue to return and seek more spiritual sustenance and growth through the harmonious expression and execution of the treasure of our Holy Church, our liturgical music.

Also the director of this department will offer assistance to the local choirs, in cooperation with the local Sunday School, offering them guidance in order to organize Junior Choirs in those parishes where it is possible to do so. Proper worship services for Sunday morning assemblies as well as a curriculum to teach the children the hymns of the

Soorp Badarak will be provided by the department head who will work closely with the DRE in this area of Christian Education.

Finally, with the assistance of the AACCA, instruction in the form a day-long seminar/retreat will be offered for Parish Council Members and for local Parish Ushers who are unfamiliar with the propriety of worship at Sunday Badarak and for laypersons serving as lectors or facilitators for non-Armenian visitors who may be attending worship on a given Sunday at an Armenian Church.

3. Ritual and the liturgical practice and renewal of rites and Sacraments

The Director, in consultation with the Primate and an appointed body of Priests who are well versed in the history of liturgics in the Armenian Church will work toward establishing a greater uniformity of the canonical celebrations of the rites and sacraments. Presently the sacraments and sacramentals of our Church are static and isolate the celebrant from the participants. There is need that they become more dialogical in practice whereby calling the faithful to a more actively verbal role during their celebration. Review of the rites presently celebrated particularly The Sacraments of Holy Baptism/Chrismation, the Canon of Holy Crowning and the Rite of Christian Burial will be carried out in a sense renewing the current form in order to invite and include greater congregational participation. Such options to the regular order will give a greater sense of "Faith Experience" to the faithful in those particular parishes where there is a need for a liturgical encounter of this nature.

Cathedral Rites should be model to parishes.

Publications of these renewed rites and of other Special Services will be printed bilingually with appropriate music - such as, Antasdan for Transfiguration, For The Exaltation of the Holy Cross, The Blessing of the Grapes, Vodnl'va (The Washing of The Feet) , Turn'patsek (The Opening of the Doors) etc. Thus the Department will continually provide these printed services as well as those of other special occasions i.e. the renewal of Baptismal vows, the renewal of Marriage vows etc. as a means of keeping alive the richness of our ancient liturgical traditions transforming them into meaningful faith experiences in these modern times.

4. Education and training for congregational participation at worship .

It is here that the greatest strides in recruitment of candidates to the Holy Priesthood can take place. Regularly scheduled visitations to parishes and regions of the Diocese should take place. Again in cooperation with the local and regional parishes educational seminars can be offered to our ACYOA, Women's Guilds, MR & MRS. Groups, Bible Study Groups. The nature of these seminars/workshops will be twofold in that that will be educations/ instructional but also practical and applicaable. Our faith lack the know-how of active/vocal/verbal participation in prayer,during worship. For the most part they remain static, stoic and irresponsive to the "Call to Worship" . Instuctional gatherings will be intended to teach them simply "How to Pray, What to Say and Do" during the various rites celebrated in our Churches. In this way the tradition of the formal and 'structured' order of worship of theArmenian Church will take on for them -the faithful- a more real, more living and accessible experience which for too long has been absent.