

BY HINDA HUMANAKSIAN
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Elise Antreassian, Dir. of Diocese Dept. of Religious Ed., Visits Canada

NEW YORK, N.Y.—The Director of the Department of Religious Education of the Diocese of the Armenian Church, Elise Antreassian, spent four fruitful days visiting parishes in Toronto, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls on February 24-27. Each of the four parishes has different needs, and her efforts were directed towards defining them and providing advice and encouragement for the Christian education of the youngsters of each community.

Her first stop was St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church in St. Catharines, Ontario. An all-day session was held with Superintendents Alice Torossian and Audrey Paroian, and the teachers of the school. Discussion centered on ways to improve the quality and number of programs available, as well as attendance. A recruitment program was worked out to be pursued on a month-by-month basis for both new students and new teachers, as well as a curriculum and program of special activities for the coming months. At the general parish gathering the same evening, a good number of children and young people appeared—a special effort had been made to have them and their families be present. The film, "The Growth of Our Children," was shown, preceded by a brief talk on religious education. Comments by

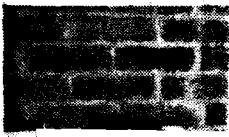
many people after the program indicated several areas of concern that needed special attention: one, that it had been difficult getting the entire parish mobilized to attend and participate in community programs; two, the need for renewed energy of parish auxiliaries; and three, frustration over the lack of full Armenian community participation in church life, especially youth. The gracious host and Pastor, the Very Rev. Fr. Kegham Zakarian, concurred with these concerns.

On the positive side, St. Gregory is a well-established parish, and there is great interest in the religious aspect as well as an active parish life. The difficulties it may have—that can arise in any parish family—will certainly be alleviated by a commitment on the part of the Armenian community to make their devotion to God and the church their number one priority, with all aspects of life flowing from that point. The film was very well received—one comment: "It's nice to know that there is a professionally done film about our Church and our faith." The individual discussion that followed the film was energetic and sometimes impassioned. As one observer pointed out: "We have got to get back to Christianity and make it the center of our lives as Armenians."

The next stop was St. Sarkis

Armenian Church on the New York side of Niagara Falls. Here is an example of a small church with an outstanding Sunday School. The two teachers—the mother and daughter team of Alice and Ani Avdoian—attended last summer's Mardigian Institute, sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mardigian, and held at Diocesan headquarters in New York. Adding the impetus provided by that training to their own talent and dedication, they invested the new year's classes with creativity, imagination and hard work. Their regular students are getting an extraordinary Christian-Armenian education. The D.R.E. film "The Growth of Our Children" was shown to the small group of parishioners, but the highlight of the visit was meeting with the teachers and seeing their fine work. Unfortunately, as is the case of some parishes, there are Armenian families in the vicinity that remain uninvolved in the Church. Arsen Avdoian, the Parish Council Chairman, communicated the hard work and long hours it takes to bring the "unchurched" into the community. Deacon Michael Ohanesian, the youthful and dedicated Visiting Deacon of the parish, lives in Detroit but regularly commutes to the church for a variety of duties. His efforts, among others,

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IN SUPPORT OF C by giving to the AC evident in Dr. and M Director of the Dioc Arzoomanian (right)

Mekhjian Fai

NEW YORK, I believe in the Armer and we believe that vive," said the lovely Mekhjian as she ai band, Dr. Haroutur of Tenafly, N.J., check for \$10,000 t V. Arzoomanian, Director of the Church Endowmen only way it can s continued, "is thro porters. We hope our donation the Church will benef believe deeply in A

COMMEMORATION OF ARCHBISHOP TORKOM MANOOC 20th ANNIVERSARY OF HIS PRIM

April 8, 9 and 10, 1983

FRIDAY, 7:30 P.M.

Ecumenical Service, St. Vartan Cathedral
with Representatives of Eastern Orthodox Churches, and others

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Banquet, 7:30 p
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with a church split for 50 years. We can hardly project a good image under these circumstances."

The panelist cited the film, "Forty Days of Musa Daq," as another example of poor quality, terming it as mediocre "spaghetti Western." As a former foreign service officer, Mr. Haratunian saw many Armenian communities all over the world. "They're no different," he said. "We haven't the quality worthy of projecting." However, he saw as a plus factor in improving our community life "excellence in Armenian scholarship in the U.S."

Ms. Avakian agreed with her fellow-panelist on the responsibility of the ethnic press, but indicated that mediocrity of the media is not limited to Armenians. "One of our biggest problems is lack of money," she said. "The newspapers should be on a sound financial footing."

"A journalist's responsibility is the truth. Unfortunately, readers seek sensationalism and entertainment. A newspaper not only informs, but does muck-raking. If you don't take an objective point of view, the whole thing is invalidated," Ms. Avakian observed.

Mr. Holstein, whose news-gathering service,

Ms. Avakian faulted the non-Armenians for not looking into reasons for the extremist attacks they report. She deplored the fact that Armenians seem to lack leadership, and also a network of journalists to supply facts to the non-Armenian media.

Mr. Holstein noted that "the obligation to present the truth is complex" and also that America "has an interest in playing along with our Turkish allies." Mr. Azadian, the moderator, mentioned here that a letter had gone from the Turkish ambassador to the New York State Dept. of Education, protesting the genocide curriculum under preparation for high school students.

Levon Keshishian, veteran journalist and correspondent at the United Nations, commented on the lack of organization of the Armenian community. He also noted how persistent Turkish efforts had "reduced" the figure of one-and-a-half million Armenian genocide victims to 600,000.

The entire discussion made it clear that a great deal of work lies before us, but as Mr. Haratunian said, "We can't sell anything until we put our house in order."

short biddings. Instruction was the meaning of the vessels and Church. In addition, the program includes daily worship, recreational remains of the I provided enough making a "snow



The student Servers Tra

D.R.E. Visits Canadian and Niagara Falls Parish Schools

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include a plan for creating a clearing center for children and adults.

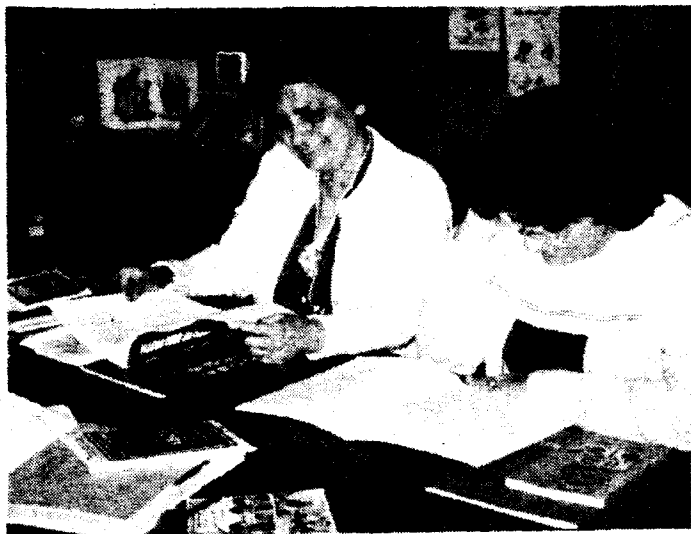
St. Sarkis has a great potential in that there is a good number of Armenian families in the area. As Mr. Avdoian says, "The Armenian Church is such a necessary part of any Armenian's life that it breaks my heart to see so many people uninvolved, people whose lives could be so much more rewarding if they would just reach out and become involved." The other great assets in Niagara Falls are the vitality and commitment of the Avdoian family.

The third stop was the Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Toronto, where the dedication and love of the teachers was very apparent. Unfortunately, parental apathy concerning church life is a problem (as it so often is). There are many families involved in cultural and social activities, but not with the church itself. As part of a larger solution, the Sunday School is considering a step, which the D.R.E. heartily approves: using a bus to bring children and young people to church. In the past, this idea has been discouraged on the grounds that the church is for the entire family. However, at the prospect of losing a new generation because of their parents' lack of commitment, schools are beginning to think in terms of providing transportation.

The vital assets of this parish's Sunday School are the great dedication of Superintendents Kaspar Yardemian and Alis Kuyumjian, the teachers, and the many children whose parents are already active parish members and realize the importance of religious education in the children's lives.

A final stop at the budding parish of the Armenian Church of North York in Toronto provided the exciting opportunity of launching a brand-new Sunday School. Five potential teachers and acting Superintendent Luiz Kassabian had assembled to discuss D.R.E., materials, school

procedure, and scheduling. After the meeting there was a special and lavish Vartanantz program during which a brief presentation was made on religious education. Over 200 persons were present. The parish is intent on being a church in the true sense of the word and is genuinely interested in seeing a Sunday School take root. The very gracious Parish Council Chairman Onnig Torossian has worked very hard along with his council and the entire community to originate "one beautiful church family—not just a social and cultural club—but a church."



WELL PREPARED. Alice and Ani Avdoian, dynamic Sunday School teachers of St. Sarkis.

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