

St. Mary Armenian Church toasts 60th year

By ANNE CORCORAN

The vivid culture and tragic history of ancient Armenia were in the hearts and minds of many who came to the Wayne Manor, Wayne, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of St. Mary Armenian Church of Livingston.

For many of the 200 guests, prayers in the Armenian language and folk tunes played on replicas of ancient instruments served as poignant re-



Deacon Jack Bozian of East Hanover

mindings of a culture without a country.

"We were originally a country surrounded by Turkey, Iran and Russia," said Louise Nakashian of Morris Plains, church secretary. "During the course of events, the people and the country were decimated."

St. Mary church in Livingston, among others, was founded by refugees seeking to keep alive the Armenian culture and religion.

"After the genocide in 1915, when 2 million Armenians were massacred by the Turks, the survivors came to America," said Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, primate of the U.S. eastern diocese of the Armenian Apostolic

faith, a branch of Christianity.

For many, the primate's presence gave stature to the occasion, as did the receipt of a formal message of congratulations from Vazken I, supreme primate of the Armenian church, whose seat is in Soviet Armenia.

The educational programs undertaken by such churches as St. Mary have taught pride to young Armenian-Americans, who no longer feel the need to Anglicize their names, Manoogian said.

"Today there is no more embarrassment," the archbishop said. "This is the contrast between the present generation and the first generation after the genocide."

With some 90 families as members, the church offers such programs as language and religion classes, choir, a women's guild, social groups for married couples and sports teams for teenagers.

"What we are trying to do is gear many of our activities to children so they will understand what their ancestors went through and so they can take advantage of and enjoy today," Nakashian said.

Teams in basketball and volleyball play in leagues with other Armenian churches in the area. Sports weekends are also planned in which young people travel to church groups in the Northeast for tournaments and general recreation.

"We have quite a large youth group for such a small number of parishioners," said Rev. Houssig Bagdasian, St. Mary pastor, who supervises the sports weekends.

A recent weekend in Watervliet, N.Y., spelled success for the St. Mary basketball team and provided time for disco and folk dancing as well. "The one thing that is best about it is you meet a lot of people from the other churches and you make tons of friends," said Armen Zaybekian, 15, of Parsippany.

In another attempt to keep the community closely knit, "The Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey" transmits folk music, bilingual news and interviews with prominent people, such as Garabed (Chuck) Haytaian, majority leader of the state Assembly.

"This program unites people and serves as a cultural vitamin," said Vartan Abdo, the evening's master of ceremonies, who is the host of the radio program, which airs Sundays and Tuesdays over WSOU (89.5 FM).

On the organizing committee for the event were Shoghig Manoukian, Victoria Jamjian, Barbara Nahabedian, Nancy Stepanian and Lillian Badishkanian.



Engaged in conversation during the festivities are, from left: Mr. and Mrs. George Berd of Livingston, and Dr. and Mrs. Robert Setrag of Mendham

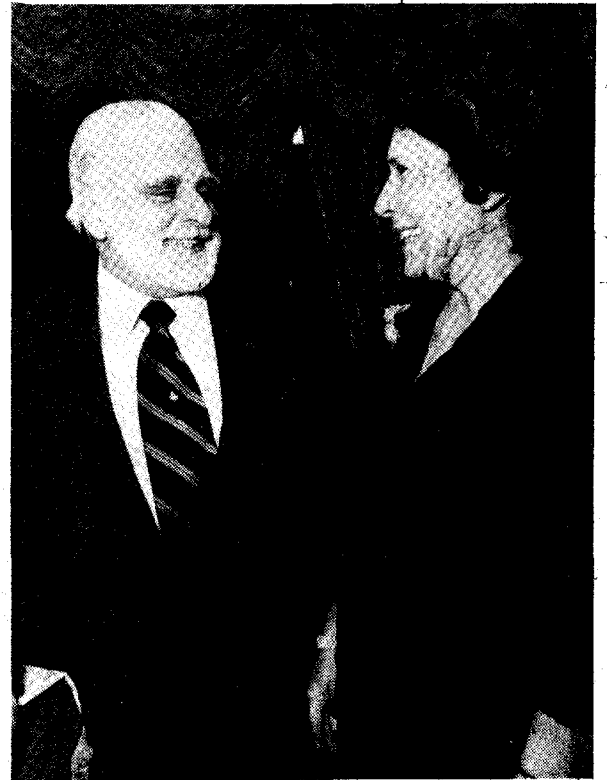


Mr. and Mrs. Leon Ariyan of Basking Ridge check the anniversary publication during the celebration in Wayne



Photos by Joe Gigli

Participating in the anniversary celebration for St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church are Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, left, and Rev. Houssig Bagdasian of Livingston



Dr. and Mrs. Haig Kafafian of Llewellyn Park join in the event

File
Strvington



BIRTHDAY OF THE ARCHBISHOP. . . was celebrated Sunday at St. Mary's Armenian Church, West Orange. Visiting was Archbishop Torkom Manoogian of the Diocese of the Armenian Church in America, center, who received a surprise birthday party. Flanking him, from left, are Mrs. Ann Boyajian, president of the ladies auxiliary; Levon Takvorian of West Orange, chairman of the day and vice chairman of church trustees; priest of the West Orange church, the Rev. H. Bagdasian, and Mr. Boyajian, a diocesan delegate and husband of Mrs. Boyajian. The church will break ground for a new edifice at 627 Mt. Pleasant Ave., in March.

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PASTOR OF ST. MARY'S ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH, the Very Reverend Houssig Bagdasian, stands with Archbishop Tarkom Manoogian, primate of the diocese of the Armenian Church of America and present vice president of the National Council of Churches, who took part in the recent St. Mary's consecration services for the congregation's new building. Robert Setrag Dorian of Livingston (right) was acting Godfather at the celebration in memory of his grandfather, Setrag Berberian.

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Table reservations may be made with Bunny Monteverdi,



Photo by John A. Gibson Jr.

CHURCH CONSECRATED — Archbishop Torcom Manoogian holds the pastoral staff as worshippers file up to kiss the crucifix after a Consecration Mass at St. Mary's Armenian Church in Livingston. At left is the church pastor, Rev. Houssing Bagdasian.

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By **GEORGE Mc**
Los Angeles Times V

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