



from the office of the

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(With Photo)

THE VERY REV. FATHER PAPKEN ANOUSHIAN, ELEVATED TO RANK OF VARTABED, HAS IMPRESSIVE ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

The Very Reverend Papken Anoushian, who was recently elevated to the rank of Vartabed by His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, is a young priest with an impressive academic background. He has degrees in psychology and law and will soon graduate from Yale University with a Masters Degree in the History of Theology.

The elevation ceremony took place last July at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York City. It was a memorable event for Father Anoushian, who is still in his twenties. From childhood he knew he was destined for the priesthood, an avocation supported by his parents who are devoted members of the Church.

In elevating Father Anoushian to the rank of Vartabed, His Eminence Archbishop Manoogian stated that he "eminently fulfilled the required credentials." He noted that Father Anoushian, who took the vow of celibacy upon being ordained a priest in 1978, has "admirably distinguished himself in religious and academic studies and has met all of the requirements to be a preacher and teacher of the Armenian Church."

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Father Anoushian was born in Istanbul, Turkey, on August 7, 1959. His baptismal name is Haroutune. Despite the surrounding environment, he grew up in a world that was profoundly Armenian. His parents, Krikor and Vartouhi, are conservative, and Haroutune and his sister, Jacqueline, were brought up in a traditional Armenian home. Mrs. Anoushian, in particular, is extremely pious. "We could not eat grapes all year until they were blessed on the Feast of the Assumption," Father Anoushian recounts. "We went to church every Sunday, and each day she would read us stories from the Bible. In every way, she is the embodiment of the Armenian Christian mother."

As for his father, a shoe tradesman, Father Anoushian says, "He is a strong, nationalistic Armenian. To him, the Armenian Church and the Armenian nation are inseparably intertwined with our national culture, and the Church is the center of Armenian life. He taught us to be proud and never to forget our language, culture and heritage.

"One could say I inherited my religious avocation from my mother and my strong Armenian identity from my father," he adds.

Armenian was the first and only language in the Anoushian home. Young Haroutune attended St. Mesrob Elementary School in the nearby suburb of Gedeekpasha, where his Armenian roots were further strengthened. A powerful influence in his life was that of his maternal grandmother, Anitza. His grandmother's devotion to her Armenian Christian Faith had an obvious impact on Father Anoushian, a fact he warmly acknowledges.

At age 11, Haroutune was sent to St. Tarkmanchats Elementary School in Jerusalem. After two years, he was transferred to high school at the Armenian Seminary. While there, he also studied piano, but Father Anoushian admits that soccer was more to his liking. An exceptional student, he graduated from high school within three years. He was then admitted to the Theological Division of the Seminary. He was invariably at the the head of his classes, in both religious and academic studies. In 1977, he was ordained a deacon; a year later, upon graduation from the Theological Division, he was ordained a priest of the Armenian Church. The Service for Calling

was conducted by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Yeghishe Derderian, and the ordination was conducted by the late Primate of France, Archbishop Serope Manoogian.

Some seven months later, Father Anoushian was sent to Detroit, Michigan, by the Patriarch of Jerusalem to further his education at Wayne State University, from which he graduated in 1983 with a B.A. degree in psychology. Subsequently, he decided to study law. He applied to and was accepted by a number of law schools. The Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan, was the one he chose. After three years, he graduated with a law degree on the dean's list. He won a scholarship from Yale University and is now in his second year there studying for a Master's Degree in the History of Theology. This past summer, he also took a course in spirituality at Princeton Theological Seminary.

At this writing, Father Anoushian is serving as Acting Vicar General of the Diocese in the absence of the Very Reverend Father Haigazoun Najarian, who is on a trip to the Holy See at Etchmiadzin in Armenia. Father Anoushian's plans for the future are undecided, but he puts his fate in the hands of the Primate whom he greatly respects and admires.

"His Eminence is very demanding in respect to grades and accomplishments, and I am striving to meet the high standards he has set," Father Anoushian says. "I hope to continue my career as a devoted servant of our ancient, glorious and traditionalist Armenian Church, serving God and the Armenian community with faith, dedication and heartfelt commitment."

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