

COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE ARMENIAN ~~PRELACY~~ IN THE UNITED STATES.

Diocese

(1849)
of this year

3 During the ~~preceding~~ months of October and November ~~under~~
the auspices of the Armenian Prelacy in all Eastern big cities
where there are considerable numbers of ~~densely populated by~~ Armenians will be commemorated the fiftieth
anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian ~~Prelacy~~ *Diocese* by the
Encyclical of Catholicos D. Mugurdich, the Supreme Patriarch of
all Armenians.

Under the leadership of the Central Executive Committee
presided by the ~~VERY~~ Rt. Rev. *Bishop* Tiran Nersoyan, ~~as prelate~~, an
Executive Committee has been organized, in various localities
to arrange, lead, and execute this commemoration.

In order that this celebration may be unique and appropriate,
and excellent in the kind, this organized committee with its
seventeen members under the commandership of Mr. Nishan Shahinian
has kept itself busy by numerous meetings and definite programs
to follow.

The purpose of this commemoration will be:

- a. to portray the life of fifty years and the advancement
of the *Diocese* to strengthen the faith of the people
and the Armenians for its present and future existence;
pointing the purpose and the necessity of the Armenian
Church. In the meantime to elevate the value of those
individuals and organizations that have worked willingly
and tireless for a period of half a century.
- b. the second purpose of this celebration will be ^{to} appropriate
a fund, so that, it may be used for such activities as
to prepare theological students, and primarily, to put
the foundation of a theological seminary.

From the opportunity of this fiftieth anniversary of the prelacy in America the following facts and versions should be considered primarily.

1. The Armenian Diocese in America is one portion, or a branch, of the total Armenian Churches which are spread through out the world, from Manchuria to as far west as California, and from the northern countries to South America and Ethiopia.
2. The Prelacy, under the leadership of the prelate, is the representative of the Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians, and of the highest authority of the Armenian Church, and is subject to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Holy See, Echmiadzin.

This prelacy recognizes all the other prelacies of the Armenian Church is, is recognized by them, and in need, cooperates and acts with them on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the Armenian Churches.

The Armenian Prelacy in America, therefore, occupies an important place in the completion of the Armenian Church and nation; and performs her duties by upholding the Armenian faith, and by assisting in the acts of the national cultural advancements.

3. During the history of the Armenian nation, it was the Armenian Church that sent to her children physical and spiritual food to the corners and kept them alive. In those unfortunate and distressing moments, the individual Armenian, in his own church, did not allow his Christian faith ~~to~~ and spirit to be extinguished by any external force.

Distant from their native land, Armenians, even in small communities, have made their prime object to establish their own church, and their school nearby, through which they have obtained inspiration to continue their battle.

The Armenian Church will be the fountain of physical and spiritual existence for the centuries to come. As in the past, so in the future, she also will perform her holy duties and will continue to walk along the path laid by the ancestors of our nation.

4. The Armenian settlement in the United States during the past fifty years had its difficulties and misfortunes, as the reading of its history will show. But in spite of all these, during the fifty years period, it had unsurpassable advancements. By the consequent growth of the number of its settlers, ecclesiastical and cultural organization threw their anchors deep and established themselves firmly.

The Armenian Church and Prelacy, by the grace of God, in this country, have obtained a position equal to the standards of similar establishments and have performed their essential duties for the nation.

Under the leadership of the central executive committee, it is the Armenian Church that has upheld the morals and high ancestral standards of the Armenian nation.

The pious and the religious of this nation would have never found their spiritual satisfaction in any other place except in this church.

In many cities, where there is scattered and unorganized communities, prelacy, as the spiritual authority and guardian center, has created a spiritual tie and has amalgated them in her very own circles.

5. The Prelacy, in the United States, has sponsored many national affairs and has been the backbone of many movements, by contributing generously for their success and evaluating her duty and her name in the means of her own circumstances.

During the past fifty years, in every alternating year, one church has been either bought or built. Many communities who do not have any church have been organized.

6. The Armenian Prelacy in America is not an establishment by herself, nor she is an organization similar to the other organizations. She represents the sturdy and the holy Armenian Church for the past 19 centuries and she considers every Armenian of her own irrespective to what political, benevolent and other faction one may belong.

7. The accomplishments of the Prelacy during the past fifty years is the result of generous contributions and hard labor of many individuals, by means of which the church has been kept erect and sturdy in the grace of God and the Holy Ghost.

Those individuals have surmounted numerous difficulties and have maintained their only national and spiritual authority, and all the other churches under the jurisdiction of this authority, and have brought them to the present state of satisfaction and uncomparable achievement.

This result is a monument of glory and evaluation for all the past and present prelates, priests, central executive committee Ladies Auxiliary, Committee on schools, and for all other subsidiary groups and pious communities.

8. The United States gives to the Armenians valuable opportunity and freedom to keep and to cultivate its church and its national characteristics, its press and schools, its cultural and

benevolent establishments. The American Armenians have been able, and in the future, will be able, to be benefited from this opportunity and maintain their spiritual and national life under the protection of the church and prelacy. They will be able to do this if they adjust their lives to the circumstances of this country without interfering their faith and their essential national prestige.

It is not only the Armenian Church that has assumed this duty and responsibility in this country. There are numerous small and large national and ecclesiastical establishments, like her, who have gathered around their faith and their church and are performing valuable and worthy activities, so that they may maintain and cultivate their own establishments and their own national and spiritual life. Thus, there are found many communities in the same circumstances who have migrated from Eastern Europe and from the Middle East, Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Assyrians and many others.

Their example should be an inspiring point to us and should vanish from our minds all kinds of feature discouragements and versions.

The Armenians in this country have all ready established an elevated economical standard, and it is sufficient that the Armenians and the children of Armenian Church, by the virtue of clear vision, and by moral and financial support, assist the Armenian Church and Prelacy, so that, the future Armenians may assure many fifty anniversaries and the nation may worship God and render aid to humanity.

9. The new American Armenian generation shows more willingness, enthusiasm, love, and assistance toward their church now than it was shown one decade ago. By means of necessary

leadership and education, it is important that the minds of the new generation be enlightened in their faith and feeling in matters of church and nation for the future benefit of our church. In this matter the Prelacy has an important role, if the community and the people assist her.

10. In the United States the future of all other organizations depend upon the destiny of the church. It is only the Armenian Church that may intrust the national love and culture, which is the essence of all the other organizations, in the ~~minds~~ minds of the new comers. For this reason the strength of the Prelacy in America will indirectly ~~aid~~ for the existence of all national establishments and their purpose.

11. The Armenian Church besides having all the national prestige, it is an establishment by Christ, and for this reason she gives her perpetuating advise to the Armenians no matter where, when, and in what circumstance he may be in.

And the Armenians will never stop seeking advise from their mother church, because the Armenian Church by her own righteous faith, excellent mass, national spirit and language is surpassing all the other churches.

12. It is only by the means of the Armenian Church and by the activities of the Prelacy that the Armenian culture may be introduced both to our new generation and to the great minds of the other nations, because the Armenian culture contains matters which represent the value of all humanity in general, and because of that they are important to be directed to the attention of others.

13. Aside from her religious activities, therefore, the Prelacy is essential and may, in this country, perform duties necessary for the advancement of the church and the public in

general.

There is in this country the question of preparing theological students. A question which occupies the primary place on our agenda.

Until we do not find men, who will devote their lives and their entire time for the cultivation of the spiritual destiny of our church, all forms of other trials will be in vain and all opportunities and circumstances will pass needlessly.

For this reason it is important that the Prelacy may have her own theological seminary where may be prepared devoted young students. Being benefitted from the favoritism of the American universities and Seminaries, in the meantime, we may be able to produce Armenian students suitable for priesthood in the Armenian churches.

14. The prelacy must also publish ecclesiastical, religious and cultural publications to enlighten the minds of our young generation by the values of their national knowledge. The prelacy must spread her publications far and wide, by means of which she may be able to introduce herself and the nation to the ones to come, and must use all the opportunities to carry on her purpose.

15. The prelacy yet has to improve the Armenian schools and has to educate the Armenian child in all the possible means.

For activities like these and many others, the prelacy needs the love, devotion, and assistance of her people with their moral and financial support.

When we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the American Armenian Prelacy, we must rejoice that the seeds sown during the past fifty years have given many benefits to the Armenian life in America. We must gaze upon the past and be inspired by it. We must look ahead for the future and we must embrace it with our strong faith and erect position.

We are sure that the American Armenians will understand the value and purpose of this important celebration, and will consider it vital in every respect.

Central Committee of the
fiftieth anniversary.