

## WORKSHOP ON LEADERSHIP

The leadership workshop were facilitated by V. Rev. Fr. Simeon Odabashian. Fr. Simeon started his presentations by stating that today there is a significant lack and shortage of both religious and lay leaders in our communities throughout the United States. He mentioned y that the newly established mission parishes are specially being affected by this shortage of leaders.

Fr. Simeon posed two questions for the participants to reflect upon:

- 1) **What great things can happen if we double the number of students at St. Nersess Seminary?**
- 2) **What would be the effects of doubling the number of leadership seminars?**

Theses are the results of the answers which the participants came up in five separate sub-groups:

- A) There will be more clergy within the Diocese to serve in the Mission parishes.
- B) The seminarians will fill the place of the retiring clergy within the Diocese.
- C) An increase in the number of clergy will give the Church a better sense of mission.
- D) An increase in the number of clergy will result in a more efficient and effective way of operation and eventually more faithful will be brought in.
- E) There are few department within the Diocese which require the presence of a clergy. The graduating seminarians or clergy can serve within those departments.
- F) An increase will give ample time for other clergy for intellectual pursuits, without worrying about being absent from parishes.
- G) Once the Diocese becomes self sufficient in terms of the numbers of clergy, then the possibility of missionary work can be increased either in the United States or in Armenia.

There was also a discussion in one of the groups about the ways and means of realizing this plan. Meaning, How do we attract seminarians and convince them to be clergymen? The following are the responses received from the participants.

- A) The clergy must serve as a model for those who show interest in religious life.
- B) They must see in clergy the joy of Serving God and His Church.
- C) The Youth specially must be challenged.
- D) A good sermon would have a great impact in attracting young people to enter the ministry.
- E) The candidate must have faith and dedication within him/herself.

## COMMUNICATION

It is presumed that the Diocese has about 600,000 people, yet only 40,000 are on its mailing list.

**What would be the possibilities if we double out mailing list.**

- 1) We need to be ready to absorb the expense of the mailing if it is doubled.
- 2) We will also gain in a long run, despite the mailing expense.
- 3) Use Internet for better communication
- 4) More people will read evangelical passages of pastors and may be touched
- 5) Church will be able to reach out to more members of its flock
- 6) We can minister more parishioners through Internet, especially those that are not part of the parish
- 7) Send letter to parishioners asking for addresses of their relatives
- 8) Get computer mailing list and select all those that have "ian" in their name
- 9) Make sure to get e-mail addresses of people
- 10) Sign up sheet during sacraments
- 11) Ask you acolyte or parishioner to look in the White pages for "ian" last names.
- 12) Doubling mailing list is nothing if we donot double our reach to those people
- 13) We need to be able to tell them that we have a message and give something
- 14) Increase attendance
- 15) Initiate personal contacts and go to them in order to bring them back to Church
- 16) Utilize their talents be it politics, missionary endeavors and use them for the mission of the Church. They will feel involved and will therefore be encouraged.
- 17) Send educational materials to their homes, not necessarily expecting them to come to Church. That will be a good basis for a long run.
- 18) Target their children have good programs for them, and therefore bring parents to Church as a result
- 19) Easter Sunday ask Parish council to get information from new visitors
- 20) Come up with educational activities like "Mashtotz" or "Armenian Historians" day and use it towards bringing more people in.
- 21) Use the Media
- 22) Use personal contacts
- 23) Use telephone
- 24) Visitations to their houses
- 25) Be creative in coming up with new ideas

- 26) More potential help and members, volunteers in our auxiliary bodies.
- 27) Will help to form a better choir
- 28) Make sure there are no repetitions of addresses
- 29) We will need assistant pastors
- 30) More people will be informed
- 31) Start a cable TV hour
- 32) Buy mailing list from companies
- 33) Rip the phone book and give different pieces to parishioners
- 34) It will be a good method of Public relations
- 35) Include food in your programs to entice people to attend
- 36) Create a questionnaire as to what parishioners want from the Church
- 37) Use the Armenian Yellow Pages from California

**How Should we go about convincing our delegates on these issues?**

- 1) Make sure to state or make a statement to convene to your delegates right before the Assembly
- 2) We as clergy have to strongly back this appreciate brought up by the diocese and energize your people
- 3) Our Bishop, in the mean time, surely needs our encouragement. He needs us and our support
- 4) The bishop should make effort to establish personal relationship with the priests to inspire them
- 5) Clergy should go and stand behind our bishop during the opening statement of this visionary plan during the Assembly
- 6) When we go back we should deliver a sermon with a strong message on renewal and new beginning for our Diocese
- 7) In order to keep pastors motivated, the bishop needs to make sure an ask account from one clergyman in each region of the Diocese. Those clergy from regions should meet on regular basis and discuss, give account on what they have done.
- 8) Must be accountability on all levels in this process.(Delegates, PC members, Women's Guild)
- 9) Communicate the real intent of the project as far as its spirituality, etc.
- 10) We have to have delegates with right Christian mindset to begin with
- 11) Delegates should be elected for terms and change on regular basis like the Parish council members

**How to get People?**

- 1) Create website for your parish
- 2) Send your Sunday bulletin to parishioners through Internet

- 3) Pastors should have personal touch with parishioners. Visit, understand their difficulties and create better relationship
- 4) Pastoral visitation should also be organized to cover all on systematic basis
- 5) Have a party organized and invite new people and get to know them
- 6) Send a questionnaire to the people to find out who would work in which area
- 7) Have a welcome package in the church vestibule where it also explains what the Armenian Church is

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The participants then were asked to respond to the second question about the doubling of the numbers of leadership seminars. What impact could it have on the life of the communities? The following answers were given during the seminar.

- a) The faithful will have a deeper understanding of Christ and Christianity.
- b) The possibility of having lay deacons, deaconesses and missionaries will increase.
- c) It will lighten the burden of the clergy if we have more educated leaders in our communities.
- d) A well educated lay leader can assist the clergy more effectively in reaching out to people.
- e) It will help bring focus and deeper sense of mission to the parishes.
- f) Seminars would enhance the sensitivity for the preparation of elite.
- g) It was also suggested that it would be desirable to have 4-5 Armenian Church academies within the Diocese which would greatly spread the teachings and beliefs of the Armenian Church.

Also the issue of the qualifications of an effective leader was a topic of discussion in each group and here are the answers which were given to this question.

- a) A good leader has to be educated
- b) Has to have sufficient training and experience.
- c) Has to be humble
- d) Must possess administrative skills
- e) Must be committed and dedicated
- f) Has to have a vision
- g) Has to be able to delegate
- h) Must be pious and tolerant
- i) Has to have a good judgment
- j) Must be slow to anger
- k) Must be compassionate