

December 11, 1979

Original mailed to  
Mirror-Spectator 12/11/79

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

File Holy Cross

The Holy Cross Church of Armenia of New York celebrated its 50th anniversary at a dinner-dance on Saturday evening, December 8, in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium. About 300 parishioners and friends of Holy Cross were present.

After the invocation by the Primate, H.E. Abp. Torkom Manougian, the master of ceremonies, John P. Tembeck (carrying out a familiar role smoothly) read a list of distinguished persons who had sent congratulatory messages by wire or letter.

These were: President Jimmy Carter, Vice-President Walter F. Mondale, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, Governor Hugh L. Carey, Attorney General Robert Abrams, Robert F. Wagner, former Mayor of New York, Comptroller Harrison J. Goldin, <sup>Manhattan Boro President Andrew J. Stein,</sup> Sen. Franz S. Leichter, <sup>Frank Doyle,</sup> director of the Retired Detectives of the NYC Police Dept. John White, chairman of the Democratic National Committee also sent a message to Roxy Gardner Mirjanian, a member of the DNC's Nationalities Division for many years; indeed, it was <sup>mainly</sup> through her efforts that many of the above distinguished persons were heard from.

Mrs. Alice Kavookjian, chairman of the Golden Anniversary Committee, thanked the members, Rev. Vartan Megherian, pastor of the church, and Sam Chapootian, parish council chairman, for their work. She introduced the master of ceremonies, <sup>John Tembeck,</sup> formally, noting his many ~~services~~ services to Holy Cross and to the Diocese.

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Mr. Tembeck recalled the names of some deceased members who had "contributed greatly to the development" of Holy Cross: Mr. Haik Kavookjian, Harry Tatosian, Aram Jaboolian, George Bashian, Sumpad Vartabedian, and Jirair Minassian.

The audience rose to hear an eloquent encyclical from H.H. Vazken I, Catholicos of All Armenians, giving the church his felicitations and blessings. It was read by the pastor, Fr. Vartan.

The Hon. Vincent Gurahian, recently elected ~~to Justice~~ of the New York State Supreme Court, brought his wife, Martha, who once taught Sunday School at Holy Cross. Mrs. Eileen Sweeney, uptown Democratic District leader and "a great help to our church," also took a bow. ~~City~~ City Councilman Stanley Michaels, who represents the Washington Heights area, ~~said~~ said in a touching speech that since there were no Armenians among the City Council members, he hoped our people would look upon him as their representative. His pretty wife, Molly, and he (and their children) are fourth generation residents in Washington Heights.

Sam Chapeotian, Holy Cross parish council chairman, who, Mr. Tembeck said, has "the strong will needed for the tough job," ranged over the five decades of the church's history and its crises: the depression, the 1933 tragedy and the need for expansion...and how the crises were met. He noted how the late Bp. Yeghishe Simonian, during his 33 years as pastor, had the foresight and leadership to gather up the youth and train them. "Many of you here are the product of that training," Mr. Chapeotian said.

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The role of women members of Holy Cross was mentioned <sup>gratefully</sup> by ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> speakers. Seated on the dais were Mrs. Marie Norarevian, chairman of the Ladies' Auxiliary, and Marion Barsamian, president of the Holy Cross League for nine years. Mrs. Ann Norehad took a bow: she and Mrs. Anahid Dagavarian were among the first women parish council members in the Armenian Church.

Mrs. Aghavni Tatosian had flown up from Florida to be present: she related the rather amusing story of how she and her late husband, Harry Tatosian, came to join Holy Cross in 1933. Mr. Tembeck introduced past p.c. chairmen in the audience: Ardash Hampar, Edward Bashian, David Davidian, Dr. Zaven Daderian, Shah Arslan, Joseph Kalemkerian, and others.

The Hon. Sam Azadian read a proclamation from Mayor Edward I. Koch of New York, <sup>naming</sup> ~~issued~~ December 8, 1979, as "Holy Cross Church of Armenia <sup>th</sup> 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Day."

Abp. Tiran Nerseyan urged the members of Holy Cross who are apprehensive about its future, not to worry, "if we perform our responsibilities today." He saw as a duty of the members the "gathering up of our new people into the churches."

Joseph Kalemkerian received third-hand the burdensome task of producing the fascinating and informative program booklet. But he modestly disclaimed the credit given by Mr. Tembeck, saying it belonged to the late Aram Jabeolian, who had done much of the preparation.

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"If you ask Holy Cross today 'where are your children?' the answer would be Bayside, Yorktown, Tenafly and Westchester," said Abp. Torkom in his address. He said the diminution of membership should not be a discouraging factor, and that Holy Cross would continue its spiritual accomplishment. "Generations will bless you for clinging to Holy Cross and maintaining it."

After the benediction by the Primate and the singing of "Hayr Mer," by the audience, the evening was turned over to Steven Scott and his orchestra for a variety of very danceable melodies.