

PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1970

Dear Parishioners,

One of the duties of the parish priest according to the By-Laws is to present annually a report of his activities to the parish assembly and to the Ordinary of the Diocese. For the past many years, I have given a comprehensive annual report which has covered the major areas of my pastoral activities.

After much thought, this year I have planned to deviate from this procedure. On one hand I intend to present a resume of my pastoral activities so that everyone will be aware of the scope of my church work. In addition I would like to submit orally my evaluation, recommendations and a message.

With the close of 1970 I completed 13 years in the service of Christ as the Pastor of this Great Metropolitan Church.

The Church properly filled its role as a sacramental body and exercised its historic role of leadership in the Armenian community of Metropolitan Detroit. We are all happy that FR. PAREN VARTABED AVEDIKIAN who was transferred to our parish last year for one year, rearranged his plans so that he could remain with us, with the approval of the Primate. Fr. Paren assumed the post of Superintendent of the Church School and became the Director of youth activities. In addition to his full-time job with the church school and youth, he alternates Sunday Badarak and sermon and assists in the performances of church ceremonies, sacraments and rites whenever there is a need. With these duties and with plans for resuming his studies, Fr. Paren will be unable to give much attention to pastoral duties. However his stay in our parish fulfills, for the time being, the need of a second clergyman.

We are also fortunate to have in our midst ARCHBISHOP SION MANOOGIAN, as Bishop in Residence, whose help is invaluable. He preaches monthly and officiates on major feast days with solemn High Mass. He attends Church for Sunday worship, presides at special ceremonies and other

gatherings. His presence enhances the prestige of our Church functions.

We are also indebted to DEACON LEVON N. ZENIAN for his willing contribution as preacher. His dynamic monthly sermons both in Armenian and English on Sundays and sometimes on other occasions are greatly appreciated. By his own wish he does not receive compensation for his service. He does this for the love of God and it may be considered truly a labor of love.

In connection with the Sunday worship services, mention should be made of our own KOMITAS CHOIR, their CHOIRMASTER DEACON ARA HAIG and ORGANIST, and DEACONS who performed their duties. By doing so they have beautified our Liturgy.

In connection with sacraments and rites DEACON HARRY EKIZIAN'S services are invaluable.

Another phase of our parish work is the operation of our Calouste Gulbenkian Armenian School. We are much indebted to MR. ZAREH MELKONIAN who helped the normal operation of Saturday and Sunday classes of the Armenian School, following the resignation of MR. NURHAN AKARAKJIAN as principal of the School. After the re-organization of the School with concerned parents as members of the Board of Administration, MR. SOURENSHOVROGHIAN was appointed to the post of principal of the School. The school is operating smoothly. Also in connection with Armenian language teaching, it is important to mention that Mr. Zareh Melkonian offers Armenian adult classes throughout the week.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

Throughout the year most of the phases of the pastoral activities are covered through the medium of the *Torch Bearer* as they occur.

Herewith, I submit to our Parish Assembly for review a summation of some phases of our pastoral activities, in an overall manner, which should be a part of any Annual Report.

Pastoral work covers varied and multiple phases. For convenience, I have categorized them.

A. WORSHIP AND CEREMONIES

Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Sunday without exception. Divine Liturgy and various church ceremonies were also conducted on special occasions according to the liturgical season and to the requirements of our liturgical tradition and rubrics of our church calendar. The directives of our Diocese were also closely adhered to.

Mention should be made of Armenian Christmas which was celebrated on its canonical day, January 6, with the participation of CSAI (Bolsetzies cultural group) who sang in four part harmony in the Gomidasian version of Badarak.

During the Lenten period, besides the closed

Divine Liturgy, Sunrise Services were performed on Sunday mornings, (during the five Sundays of Lent) and **Vigil Services** were conducted on Wednesday nights (during the six week Lenten period).

"Trunpatzek" Ceremony on **Palm Sunday**, this year was performed immediately after Badarak rather than in the evening as it usually was.

Holy Week was observed with all the proper services and ceremonies.

Commemoration of the "Last Supper" at noon services on **Maundy Thursday**, which we began in recent years as a Holy Communion day for our Ladies' Auxiliary worked out very successfully again this year.

Feet-washing ceremony remains one of our most popular ceremonies. Twelve boys from our Church School participate in this. They later submit an essay to the Church School and awards are given for the best papers. For this purpose this year the Flora Thomasian Memorial Fund was established by Mr. Khoren Thomasian in loving memory of his wife.

Tre-ore service on **Good Friday** noon, completely in English, has been established as a youth oriented service with their participation.

Holy Communion services on **Christmas** and **Easter** for our parish children are administered with Communion breakfast following.

Theophany Eve and **Easter Eve** celebrations with evening ceremonies and Badarak were conducted ceremoniously.

"**Madagh**" was blessed on **Armenian Martyrs' Day** following Badarak and was distributed to the faithful, in tribute to the 55th Anniversary of the Massacre. The ceremony of **Madagh Blessing** took place in the Cultural Building.

Christmas Eve Service was again conducted entirely in English, as a youth oriented service, with a throng of youth in attendance and with their participation.

In the Church we have performed all the special ceremonies whenever the occasion called for it. These ceremonies are **Blessing of Water** on **Armenian Christmas** in commemoration of Christ's **Baptism** **Blessing of Grapes** on the **Feast of Assumption**, "**Antasdan**" on **Five Major Feast Days**, **Festive Processional Antasdan** on the **Feast of Exaltation of the Holy Cross**, **Pontifical Prayer Service** (**Hayrabadagan Maghtank**) on the first Sunday of **New Year**, **Name Day of the Catholicos**, **Feast of Holy Etchmiadzin**, and the **Anniversary of the Consecration of His Holiness the Catholicos**.

Hokehankist (Requiem Service) was performed almost every Sunday as requested by parishioners and also special Hokehankist was conducted on special occasions.

Noon church services were also conducted on every monthly meeting day of the Ladies' Auxiliary

(the first Wednesday of each month).

Outside the church, **Memorial services** were conducted on **Memorial Day** at **Woodlawn Cemetery (Armenian Section)** and **blessing of graves** in satisfaction of faithful on fortieth day and first anniversary of the blessing of their loved ones and also on **Memorial Day**.

All of these ceremonies are successful through the planning and coordination of the Pastor and the organizations involved.

B. CHURCH PULPIT

Sermons were delivered to worshippers in both **Armenian and English** every Sunday of the year. Our clergy with regular guest preachers, and on occasions guest clergy, fulfilled this need of the church.

C. SACRAMENTS AND RITES

The sacraments and rites are performed with detail and conscientiously since they are intended as services for the individual needs of the families involved.

The following services have been duly recorded in our **Parish Registry** during the year 1970.

Baptisms and **confirmations**, including adult baptisms and sometimes only confirmations, totaled 65. **Weddings** totaled 28; **betrothals** 8; and **funerals** 75.

The performance of these 176 services were occasions for the pastor to counsel and teach and each performance of any sacrament and rite took considerable time. The **Burial Services** were always accompanied by a eulogy and the **matrimonial services** with interpretative sermons.

An honest appraisal of these performances which were carried out with utmost care will reveal that only this phase of pastoral work is enough to keep any one busy full time; and yet, in our church, that is only one small phase of the total gigantic picture.

D. PASTORAL CALLS AND COUNSELING

The pastoral calls include sick calls in hospitals, consolation visits to bereaved families, **Christian fellowship visitations** to families, family counseling in case of request and spiritual guidance and pastoral counseling to young couples before marriage. Some of the counseling conferences obviously were conducted in relation with performance of sacraments and rites, especially funerals and weddings.

Although we lacked home visitations on a regular basis, such as home blessings during **Christmastide** and **Eastertide** and regular calls, somewhat, these visitations were given in most cases were given in most cases in connection with sacraments and rites. Besides, requests for special visits were fulfilled. Whenever the clergy were notified, the hospitalized were called upon without fail. **Emergency cases** were met at any hour during day or night.

Also visitations were given to shut-ins, at the Michigan Home for the Armenian Aged, Eloise, Northville and other nursing homes.

E. CHURCH CARE

Church care for the proper upkeep of vestments and vessels, altar care, candles, cleaning of the church, is somewhat carried by help of Church custodians, Altar Guild, and the SACRISTAN MR. HAYRABED MIKAELIAN. However because of existing circumstances, thought should be given to train another sacristan to assist the clergy in the performance of their religious duties, thereby relieving them of preparatory matters.

F. ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

Administrative duties encompasses particularly the Church office management related with the management of our entire complex. Because of the lack of an administrator or a general manager or an executive director, the responsibility of this phase of our operation also is left on the shoulders of the pastor, particularly the part which is strictly church related.

In view of the immensity of the administrative responsibilities of a church this size which is at least five times the size of an average church, thought should be given to the acquisition of an administrator.

G. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The clergy presided over the numerous meetings of the Parish Council and Church affiliated auxiliary organizations, including some executive body meetings, standing committees and special project meetings. They closely supervised their activities, offered prayers and gave their help, advice and guidance whenever needed. The clergy attended their annual functions and other performances.

H. EDUCATION - CULTURAL

Our community life became undoubtedly richer with varied Cultural and Educational programs which were presented throughout the year. Pastors actively engaged in the promotion of Armenian arts and culture in our community life. They presented lectures and addresses, and on occasions took part in the formation of programs. Public lectures, international festivals, commemorative "Hantes", observances of festive days are all part of our educational and cultural endeavors. They are all covered in our **Torch Bearer**.

I. CHURCH PUBLICATIONS

Jahagir

"Jahagir" **Torch Bearer** publication is our official parish paper and was published with combined

issues under most trying circumstances. Unfortunately, due to pressing duties of the pastor it was virtually impossible to publish it on a monthly basis contrary to our desire. It was further delayed because of the discussions concerning it being carried on by the Parish Council. However with the three volumes published in 1970. all the noteworthy and newsworthy events of our parish are recorded for posterity and nothing worthwhile is overlooked. Our history can be found only in this publication. In connection with the **Torch Bearer** publication, I must acknowledge the tremendous help of my wife YER-ETZGIN ROSALIE who for almost twenty years has helped in its publication.

The **Torch Bearer** is mailed to 1800 addresses (including the Armenian Churches in our Diocese) and we believe that this publication alone enhanced greatly the prestige and image of our Church. It is the only link of communication between the Church and the Armenian Community of Greater Detroit.

Sunday Church Bulletins

The Sunday Church Bulletin is another service rendered to our faithful. It is prepared and distributed to church comers each Sunday and keeps everyone informed of important announcements for Hokehankist, etc.

Annual Reports Booklet

The Annual Reports Booklet was prepared for the last ten years. It is regrettable that this year by Parish Council decision we did not print these reports in a convenient booklet form.

Program and Souvenir Booklets

The Program and Souvenir Booklets were prepared on special occasions. Christmas and Easter Bulletins with the schedule of church services were also prepared. Numerous fliers, advertisements with artistic designs, announcements for the Armenian Radio Hour both in Armenian and English were accomplished. In view of this tremendous work, the need of secretarial help is obvious.

J. CIVIC AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

We worked very hard in promoting Armenian neighborly relations within the community where our church is located. On many occasions we were recognized by Detroit and Southfield municipal authorities and other civic groups. Clergy sometimes were called upon to give invocations on memorable occasions. Area newspapers carried our publicity in article and picture forms. Due to these activities our church stands in the community with considerable respect and prestige. Some of our church auxiliary groups are to be commended for their promotion of public relations.

K. INTERCHURCH ACTIVITIES

Our church is an official member of MDCC (Metropolitan Detroit Council of Churches.) The pastor was elected to the Board of Administrators and attended meetings in this capacity. MRS. ZABEL ATESIAN was appointed by the pastor as our representative and attended the meetings of the Executive Board. Also MR. ARDAVAZTEKIZIAN served on TV-Radio Department of the MDCC. We are happy that our Women's Guild shows interest in the activities of Church Women United which is another arm of MDCC.

The pastor is also a member of the Detroit Pastors' Union and Southfield Clergy Association. Pastor participated in some of the meetings and inter-denominational liturgical services, inter-faith actions, in which St. John's was represented most of the time by the active participation of the pastor in the spirit of true ecumenism. Whenever the opportunity was presented the pastor introduced the Armenian Church. These activities are represented in the Torch Bearer and with a glance through its pages, one may see the magnitude of the work.

L. SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

Clergy were on hand whenever invited for social functions such as wedding anniversary celebrations and offered prayers, blessings and gave messages.

M. PARISH PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

Clergy actively were engaged in all the projects and programs that the church undertook. In most cases, pastors themselves were the promoters of such programs.

N. CHURCH TOURS

Our church continued to attract many groups throughout the year because of its unusual Armenian architectural style. From the Detroit Metropolitan area various organized groups from different churches and civic organizations visited the church in large or small groups and, on most occasions, the clergy gave these groups a comprehensive church tour lecturing on the Armenian Church in all its aspects. These groups are recorded in the Torch Bearer in chronological order.

O. CONFERENCES

Clergy attended conferences and assemblies both in our town and on occasions out-of-town. The clergy while out-of-town, besides attending meetings, also at times conducted church services.

P. VISITING CLERGY AND DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

This year we were again privileged by the visi-

tation of Armenian clergymen throughout the Diocese and, on occasions from different parts of the world. In addition we were visited by distinguished Armenian dignitaries. Pastors gave considerable time to them particularly the visiting clergy: their names may be found in the Torch Bearer.

Q. OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Official correspondence of the church both in Armenian and English was carried by the pastor. Numerous letters were written or answered. Paper work and desk work connected with the sacraments and rites such as certificates, entry in the records book, letters of recommendation, etc. were written. Here also the need of additional secretarial help is obvious.

NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND MEMORABLE EVENTS

A. CHURCH BAZAAR

Our two-day Bazaar in September was an outstanding and memorable success, under the chairmanship of MR. JACK KAZANJIAN with the wholehearted cooperation of all church affiliated organizations. The full and rich program that assured something of interest for all those who visited the Bazaar was accounted by all as being one of the most exciting undertakings of the Church in many years.

Two other Church Bazaars have preceded this one. One in connection with the opening of our new Cultural Building and the other in connection with the dedication of our new Church. The former two Bazaars were done for us under MRS. ALEX MANOOGIAN'S leadership. Actually this was the first Bazaar ever undertaken by the initiation of Parish Council and this achievement was marvelous. It totaled a sum of \$20,000 and the magnificent spirit of cooperation which permeated throughout was incalculable. The clergy were personally involved in every phase of it and insured its success. This success shows that the Bazaar is a venture that should be undertaken every year or at least every other year under the leadership of the Parish Council.

B. PATRIARCH SHNORK'S VISITATION TO OUR COMMUNITY

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Constantinople, ARCHBISHOP SHNORK KALOUSTIAN, accompanied by ARSHEN VARTABED AYVAZIAN as his staff bearer and MR. YERVANT SEVAN, his secretary, arrived in Detroit in mid-November for a one week stay with us to raise funds to assist destitute Armenians who are still in the interiors of Turkey.

The active week may be regarded as a memorable event in the history of St. John's.

The Sunday activities of November 22nd, with Patriarchal Solemn High Mass in the morning and the Banquet given in honor of His Beatitude in the evening was the crowning climax of an entire week's busy schedule. Patriarch's humanitarian mission was successfully brought to a conclusion with the realization of contributions totaling \$20,000 from the Detroit Armenian Community.

This was the Patriarch's second visit to our community. The first one, a fund-raising mission again, was for Holy Cross Seminary in Istanbul and occurred 5 years ago, which was also successful. But, this was the first opportunity for the Patriarch to celebrate Holy Badarak in our new Church. Five years ago our Church was not completed and he performed Badarak in our Cultural Building on the Altar of Holy Resurrection.

During this second visit our parishioners once again demonstrated their generosity towards a most worthy cause and are to be commended. The clergy did the utmost in their capacity to insure the success of the Patriarch's mission in the overall project, demonstrating their role of leadership.

C. ORGAN DEDICATION

The dedication of our newly installed pipe organ in memory of church benefactor, the late ARAM ABGARIAN, will undoubtedly go down as another noteworthy milestone in our church history. Though this happened the weekend of January 22, 1971, the project began early in September. This auspicious occasion was made truly memorable by the presence of HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP TORKOM MANOOGIAN, Primate of our Diocese and MR. BERJ ZAMKOCHIAN the renowned organist from Boston. The religious ceremony of the Blessing of the organ and the Dedicatory Organ Recital in the presence of 700 people was truly inspiring.

Solemn High Mass on Sunday, January 24th, and the Special Memorial Requiem Service for the repose of the soul of Aram Abgarian was officiated by the Primate also presided by him at the Banquet on the same evening. On this occasion the Souvenir Program Booklet, prepared by the pastor, was a fitting tribute to the eventful and glorious weekend.

The Clergy gave their full support to the project and involved in the implementation and the execution of the minutest details of its many facets.

The organ concert opened the possibility of new avenues of religious expression in our Armenian Church. Annual organ concerts of a religious nature will certainly bring about the full utilization of our new pipe organ. Future Parish Councils should look into this and promote musical programs in our church as an inspiring innovation.

D. AGBU VAHAKN DANCE ENSEMBLE

AGBU dance ensemble which began in March, is a promising vigorous movement and certainly fills a gap in the life of a metropolitan community such as ours. We all look forward with eagerness to its Debut in May 1971 on the stage of the Ford Auditorium. We wish well to this group which invigorates the life of our youth in our community. The clergy encourages this movement within our parish and demonstrate their interest by often attending their rehearsals.

COMING EVENTS

1971 marks the Tenth Anniversary of our existence in Southfield. Incidentally, it coincides with the Fifth Anniversary of the Consecration of our New Church.


1971 furthermore marks the Fiftieth Golden Anniversary of our Ladies' Auxiliary who have proven many times over that they are the backbone of our church.

Both anniversaries should not pass unnoticed and should be observed in a dignified manner. Committees for careful planning should be appointed at once.

As we embark upon the second decade of our existence in Southfield, I ask your help, prayers and encouragement, so that your humble servant, with the Grace of God, may satisfactorily perform his tremendous tasks for the highest good of our Church and for the greater glory of God.

May the blessings of God the Father and the guidance of God the Son and the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit be with you and with me now and evermore.

(Signed)



Rev. Fr. Diran Papazian, Pastor

