

PRIMATE'S MESSAGE

It is with great joy that we celebrate with you the elevation of the Very Reverend Father Haigazoun Melkonian to the rank of Dzayrakooyn Vartabed and the achievement this rank reflects.

Ordained service in the Holy Church cannot be measured in terms of hours and years. When a life is consecrated to God, when one's entire being and vocation are given over to the Lord's service, how can we chart its course as we might an ordinary job? What constitutes the reward for a pastor when a soul is saved, a broken heart healed, a child welcomed into the church in baptism? What comfort bestowed for the long hours that a priest gifts his flock, for the pain of inevitable failures, for the solitude of scholarly work? What honor for a job well done?

Father Haigazoun has been blessed with many gifts and he has given them freely to his church. He has served ably on important committees. He has translated and written church reference materials. He has lectured at religious education programs and has devoted himself selflessly to the many demands of parish ministry. There is no way nor even need to thank a priest for returning to God the gifts that God Himself bestowed. But the Church does indeed acknowledge a priest's accomplishments by conferring honorary titles and, with them, the heart-felt thanks of a grateful community.

God bless your exemplary pastor and may this moment empower and inspire him all the more in his service to God, the Church of Armenia, and you all.

With prayers,

Bishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate

July 12, 1991
New York City