

PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

1972

Dear Parishioners:

With the grace of God another year is completed in the life of our church. The reports of our various Church Auxiliary Organizations will tell you about the measure of accomplishments realized during the year of 1972.

Pastoral Change - With the year of 1972 I was completing my 15th year of service of the great metropolitan Armenian Church of St. John's of Detroit, Michigan when by September I was appointed by the Diocesan Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, as the Pastor of St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church of Cleveland, replacing Fr. Arshag Vartabed Khatchadourian, who was pastor of the church for the last 5 years.

Fr. Arshag, after a farewell dinner given in his honor: ~~at~~ ~~September 24~~ and his farewell liturgy (on September 10), was already transferred to South Milwaukee, Wisconsin to be the pastor of Holy Resurrection Armenian Church.

Unfortunately it was not possible for me to assume my duties immediately after Fr. Arshag vacated his position here.

Officially I assumed the responsibility of my pastoral office beginning with Sunday, October 29th, which was the feast day of the Discovery of Holy Cross. Therefore, the parish was without a priest for almost two months (September 10 - October 29). However, twice I was able to pay visit to Cleveland, during this period, with overnight stay, to celebrate Divine Liturgy. On the Feast of

Holy Cross I came and celebrated Divine Liturgy, preached on the significance of Holy Cross in both Armenian and English languages and performed the special ceremony of festive Antasdan which is only performed once a year on the feast of the Exaltation of Holy Cross (September 17). My second visit was in early October which coincided with the 17th anniversary of Enthronement of our ^{His Holiness L. L. Vasken I} Catholicos; again I celebrated Divine Liturgy, preached in both languages and performed the special ceremony of Prayer Service for Pontiff in honor of our Vehapar (October 8, actual date October 2). Also hokehankist was performed to fulfill a request.

Before assuming my duties officially, it is worth mentioning also that during this period that Annual Assembly of the Association of Choirs took place in Cleveland and that our choir played host for this Assembly (October 20, 21, 22). In connection with this Assembly there were many out-of-towner choristers and guests who made our choir for that particular Sunday under the direction of Deacon Ara Haig, choirmaster of St. John's Armenian Church of Detroit. The guest celebrant was Fr. Jirair Vartabed Tashjian, Pastor of Toronto Armenian Church. Fr. Arshag was back in his former parish to take part in this Assembly which was partly through his instrumentality that came to Cleveland. In addition to them, Fr. Michael Butero, Pastor of North Philadelphia Armenian Church was the third guest clergyman during this particular weekend who participated in this Assembly as the Chairman of the Central Council of the Choirs Association.

I concluded my first 3 months service with the inclusion of January 1973. Ordinarily an annual report should cover from January 1st through December 31st, within a given year. However, due to the unusual circumstances I would like to review the year's activities in two consecutive parts. The first part will consist of the activities during Fr. Arshag's tenure of office and second part of the activities during my 3 months pastorate, covering the period of November, December 1972 and January 1973 up to the annual membership meeting. As for the information of the activities during Fr. Arshag's time, my ~~only~~^{chief} source was the church paper, "PAROS", therefore my summary is based_{primarily} on the information that I could gather from "PAROS".

PART I

A. DEDICATION OF NEW CULTURAL BUILDING

The most noteworthy accomplishment and the most memorable event in the parish life during the year was, of course, the completion of the construction of a brand new cultural building and the opening dedication ceremonies. The Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian was invited who celebrated Divine Liturgy and gave the sermon in the morning and then made the formal opening of the new cultural building and the classrooms of the church school and Armenian language school and presided over the banquet which followed the day's activities. Guests of honor were: Mayor Richard St. John of Richmond Heights, Rev. Fr. Nerses Jebejian, a former deacon-in-charge for religious administration of our parish and Rev. Paul Rohrbaugh, Minister of Faith United Church of Christ, a neighborhood church (April 9).

B. WORSHIP AND RITUALS

Badarak was celebrated and sermon was given on Sundays with the exception of May 7th when Diocesan Convention took place in Troy, New York and the Sunday which fell during Fr. Arshag's annual vacation (August 14-26).

Our church deacons, Garbis Balderian and Dr. Kegham Goekjian, have conducted morning service during those Sundays when pastor was away and also during Sundays prior to my establishment when parish remained without priest.

Special ceremonies and rituals were performed whenever the occasion called for.

Armenian Theophany Eve Badarak (Jan. 5); Theophany Badarak and Blessing of Water Ceremony (Sun. Jan. 9). Lenten Vigil Services on Wednesday nights during the six week Lenten period (Feb. 13 - March 26) with sermon by the ministers of neighborhood churches; Sunrise Services during Lenten Sundays; Palm Sunday Service with the special ceremony of the "Opening of Altar Curtain" (March 26); during Holy Week Maundy Thursday with "Feet Washing Ceremony" with the participation of church school children (March 30); Easter Eve Badarak (Sat. April 1); and Easter celebration (April 2). I presume the major feasts of Transfiguration (July 9) and Assumption of St. Mary (August 13) were celebrated with traditional rituals.

C. SACRAMENTS AND RITES

No weddings and ^{1 (One)} baptisms (Sept. 5) recorded in the Records Book during 1972. ^{Two} ~~One~~ funerals ^{were} conducted by Fr. Arshag, the deceased ^{persons} ~~was~~ ^{were} Hampar Chobanian (January 10) and Mesrop Seropian, Pittsburg, Penna. (Sept. 2).

D. PARISH AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS AND SCHOOLS

Annual membership meeting for the year 1971 took place on January 30, 1972 with election results and reports given. Annual Report booklet was sent to parishioners prior to the meeting.

Both of our Women's Auxiliary Organizations (Seniors and Young Ladies) have rendered their valuable services to the church and community.

Senior Women's organization have prepared the food for church functions and hokejash, beside having their own monthly luncheon meetings.

Young Ladies presented their annual affair with social and financial success. Also they have organized public lectures with notable speakers. They have visited some of the neighborhood houses of worship to learn about other faiths too.

Coffee Hours were instituted after church services which were followed by various church organizations and they proved to be occasions for enjoyable fellowship.

On the occasion of Great Barekentan Carnival Day, a Khunjouyk was jointly sponsored by the two ladies organizations (Feb. 6; the actual date was Feb. 13).

ACYOA Anniversary Ball with Detroit took place in Cleveland in our new cultural hall (Sat. May 30).

The Annual 4th of July Weekend church picnic sponsored by the Parish Council and with the help of church organizations was given with successful turnout (July 2).

The Annual Mother-Daughter Banquet was presented by Ladies with a guest speaker (May 17).

Choir have organized social and spiritual group outings, one of which was attendance at Billy Graham Cleveland Crusade (July 18).

Church Sunday School moved to the new cultural building as soon as the construction was completed on March 21, and their classroom activities began on Sunday, March 26. The number of the pupils totaled about 40. The hours of class on Sundays 11 AM to 12 Noon.

A new Armenian Language School was organized in the new Cultural Building under the supervision of AGBU local chapter and directed by AGBU Mid-west District, Detroit. The registration began Saturday, March 4 and classes formally began on Saturday, March 11 with about 30 children. The hours are Saturday 9:30 AM to 12 Noon, with half an hour recess.

Efforts were made to open a Nursery School named Antranik in the new cultural building with proposed opening date in September, two days a week, on Wednesday and Thursday 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM; however, the response for pre-schoolers by the Armenian parents not being encouraging enough, the project was dropped for the present time; when need is felt in the future, the school will be opened.

E. CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND OBSERVANCES

The Feast of Vartanatz has been observed under the sponsorship of Parish Council and with participation of AGBU and Knights of Vartan (Feb. 20, the actual date was Feb. 10).

The 57th annual Commemoration of Armenian Martyrs' Day was observed both with religious ceremonies at the Martyrs' shrine and as well as popular program in the new Cultural Building with guest speaker, Mr. Richard Norsigian, the principal of the Alex Manoogian Armenian Day School in Detroit, who was invited as a guest speaker (April 23). Also a proclamation was issued from the Cleveland Mayor's Office declaring April 23 as Armenian Martyrs' Day.

A Testimonial Banquet was tendered in honor of Mr. Alex Manoogian on the occasion of his election as International President of AGBU for life. The banquet was community-wide project and was sponsored by local branch of AGBU with full cooperation of Parish Council (June 4).

F. INTER-CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Fr. Arshag has cultivated good relations with the clergy of neighborhood churches. He was a member of Hillcrest Ministers' Fellowship. He was a member also of Richmond Heights Kiwanis Club and attended their monthly and weekly gatherings.

A Prayer Service for Christian Unity was held in our church with participation of neighborhood ministers and presence of some of their congregations; following this service, the youth of St. Paschal Roman Catholic Church played on guitar in the church hall (March 5); (the designated period for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was January 18-25).

PART II

The second part of this report covers 3 months period from the time I assume my duties as Pastor until today. (Oct. 29, 1972 - January 28, 1973).

A. PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Since my family lives in Detroit, Michigan and since presently a move is not foreseeable in the near future, therefore a plan was devised so that I can spend enough time in the parish and also meanwhile not neglect my family.

Accordingly each fortnight (two weeks period or half a month) I spend 8 days here in this parish from Sunday through Sunday and 5 days at home from Monday through Friday, and one day is spent for commuting which totals 14 days or two weeks. This schedule insures my presence in the parish every Sunday and also a full week for every fortnight. For emergency cases, of course, the necessary will be done.

B. WORSHIP AND CEREMONIES

(1) Holy Badarak and Sermons - Every Sunday Holy Badarak was celebrated and sermon was delivered in both Armenian and English languages, with appropriate themes according to the meaning of the day. During this period this totals 14 Badaraks and 14 sermons (October 29, 1972 - January 28, 1973).

(2) Special Ceremonies - On the occasion of the major feast of Holy Theophany, special ceremonies were conducted in the church. In the morning before Badarak the services of "Gloria in Excelsis" (Park-ee-Partzouns) and Antasdan were performed and during Holy

Badarak, the special ceremony of Prayer Service for Pontiff (Hayrabadagan Maghtank) was performed. Following Badarak the Baptism of Jesus was commemorated with the traditional Ceremony of Blessing of Water with a Godfather of the Cross who was this year John Mirakian, 6 years old, pupil of church school, son of Mr. Nazar Mirakian and the late Mary Mirakian. Before delivering the sermon, congratulatory messages of Vahapar and Arachnort were read both in Armenian and English. A great number of worshipers and all the Sunday school children and staff members received Holy Communion after their general confession.

(3) Hokehankist (Requiem Service) - Requiem services were held for the rest of those souls for whom special requests were made by parishioners. Also special hokehankist was conducted per order of the Diocese for Rev. Fr. Mampre Biberian on the occasion of his recent passing in December and for all Armenian deceased on Christmas Memorial Day (Jan. 14).

(4) Sacraments and Rites - During this period I've conducted two funerals with everything related, such as night before prayer service at the funeral home, funeral service in the church or funeral home with appropriate eulogy, interment in the cemetery and attendance at hokejash. The first one was Mary Mirakian, a young mother and an active parishioner (Nov. 20); this totals ~~two~~ three funerals from our church for the year 1972. The other one was Harry Atoulikian, an elderly parishioner (Jan. 10, 1973). This was the first funeral for the year 1973. During this period no baptism and wedding performed, however, we have already lined up four weddings for the year 1973.

C. WITH PARISH COUNCIL, CHURCH AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS
AND PARISH SCHOOLS

(1) Meetings - Parish Council meetings are being held every other week on Mondays. One special meeting was held on a Thursday to accommodate me which was my first meeting with Parish Council (Nov. 16).

With Auxiliary organizations and school boards so far I've attended several meetings. We are trying to coordinate my schedule and their calendar so that I may be able to attend all the meetings both executive boards and membership and also committees, as well as their affairs. During this period I have attended altogether about 20 meetings, big or small.

(2) Mid-West Diocesan Regional Meeting - ~~This was~~ held at St. John's Church in Detroit. ^{Two meetings were during the year.} We were represented by Parish Council member ^{and Mr. Sam Mirakjian} Mr. Noubar Abdalian ^(Oct. 29) ~~(Oct. 29)~~ (March 19) and by Noubar Abdalian.

(3) Church Sunday School - Church School began new year in September with 43 registered pupils. The dedication was held with a special service, group confession and reception of Holy Communion (Nov. 19). A Teacher-Training Workshop was conducted by Miss Valerie Goekjian, a Cleveland and presently student at St. Vladimir Seminary in New York (Nov. 18). A Christmas Pageant was presented (Dec. 17).

(4) Armenian Language School - The Armenian Language School sponsored by AGBU is functioning regularly on Saturdays 9:30 AM to 12:15 PM. Whenever I am in town, I have made a point to visit the classrooms and meet teachers to show an active appreciation and

support for the wonderful work being done. For the future, I would like to be more helpful with lectures and proper guidance.

D. SPECIAL PARISH PROGRAMS

(1) Armenian Cultural Month Celebration - Armenian Cultural Month was observed with dinner and appropriate program under the sponsorship of Parish Council and with the cooperation of the Ladies organizations. The two speakers on the program were Mr. George Sakian in English and Fr. Diran in Armenian; the occasion being Fr. Diran's official beginning as Pastor, a cake in his honor was presented (Oct. 29).

(2) "Fashions for Followers" - A religious pageant was presented of the Biblical women entitled "Fashions for Followers" by the Women's Society of Christian Service of Lakewood United Methodist Church. A fellowship hour was held in the Cultural Hall after the pageant. This pageant was sponsored by the Ladies Auxiliary (Dec. 3).

(3) Annual Christmas Tree Sale - This sale is a Parish Council annual project which is held during Christmas holiday season two-week period preceeding Christmas; this year's sale was highly successful.

(4) Annual New Year's Eve Dinner-Dance - The Annual New Year's Eve Dinner-Dance was sponsored by Women's Guild. Many of our parishioners, as well as, Non-Armenian guests enjoyed a traditional Armenian New Year's merry-making in the new Cultural Building (Dec. 31).

E. CHURCH PUBLICATION - PAROS

The PAROS, our official parish paper is 5½ x 8½ in size and its average pages is 24 mimeographed pages and it is published monthly. During 1972 it was published in 8 issues only by Fr. Arshag, January - August and later two more issues, October and December were published under the Parish Council. Therefore, altogether 10 issues were published and sent to some 500 people on our mailing list.

Present PAROS is being reorganized with a new editorial staff. Mr. George Sakian has been appointed as editor of PAROS by the approval of the Pastor and Parish Council. We hope that PAROS will resume its publication soon in a more efficient way.

F. SPECIAL GUESTS IN OUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Mrs. Louise Yardumian, accompanied with her husband, Dr. Haig Yardumian, and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Sarkissian, from Michigan visited and attended our church on the Feast of the Discovery of Holy Cross. Louise is an accomplished pianist and is the organist of St. John's Armenian Church of Detroit. She accompanied us on the organ during Badarak (Oct. 29).

Dikran Bedrosian - former World Champion of Chess, from the Soviet Union, was in town Dec. 13 and Dec. 14 invited by the Chess Players Association of Cleveland for demonstration of chess match. He visited the chess section of the Cleveland Public Library which is claimed to be the most complete in the world. I was happy to be able to go and greet him in the name of our community and was able to be of some help as interpreter.

Deacon Michael Ohanessian - recent graduate from St. Vladimir Seminary was our guest for several days and served at the altar (Jan. 14). Michael is being sent abroad (Cyprus, Jerusalem, Holy Etchmiadzin) by our Diocese for a year of study in Armenian language and liturgy. He is planning to be ordained as a priest and serve the Armenian Church in our Diocese.

On two different occasion we had the pleasure of visit in our town of two Vartabeds; Fr. Arshag Vartabed stayed overnight en route to New York for a clergy session at the Diocese (Nov. 12 & 13), and Fr. Arshen Vartabed Ayvazian, the Pastor of New York Holy Cross Church and also a student at St. Vladimir Seminary in advanced theological studies. Fr. Arshen was guest at the Goekjian's home during the Christmas holiday season (Dec. 25 - Dec. 30).

G. PASTORAL CARE

(1) Sick Calls - I made two emergency calls in two separate hospitals. Also made some other sick calls at hospitals and at homes, and visited others who were recuperating at home from recent illness. A total of 7 sick calls were made during this period.

(2) Counseling and Conferences - Counseling was extended to persons who sought this service from the pastor. Also conferences were conducted with engaged couples for preparation of their future marriages. Altogether 5 such conferences were conducted; at present, 4 weddings are lined up already for 1973.

(3) Home Visitations and Home Blessings - So far I have had the good fortune of enjoying the hospitality of parishioners and community members. At the homes of 10 different families, I met 16 other couples who were invited at the same time so that I could meet them.

Between Christmas and New Year I was accompanied with my family and we thankfully enjoyed the hospitality of 11 families during the 7 day holiday period.

Presently I am engaged in Christmas Home Blessings. Already I have visited 10 homes and will continue my visitations until the Lenten period starts. I hope by then I will be able to cover a considerable number of our people.

H. INTER-CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Christian Women's United World Community Day at St. Barthelomew Episcopal Church. Service and social hour. Mr. Florence Goekjian represented our Ladies Auxiliary (Nov. 3).

I attended a clergy seminar with coffee hour and luncheon sponsored by the Greater Cleveland Ministerial Association (an arm of the Council of Churches of Christ of Greater Cleveland) at Antioch Baptist Church in Cleveland (Nov. 29).

I. ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

The administrative work of the church carried by the Pastor and Parish Council Chairman, Mr. Jack Hacherian.

The church office work is carried with the help of volunteers for typing, stenciling and mimeographing, etc. The rental arrangement for the church hall and general maintenance of the parish house

is being done by Mr. Zaven Keoshegerian, a student at a college in Cleveland. He is also teaching at the Armenian School and sings in the choir. Zaven stays at the parish house. The Parish Council has filed a petition with the United States Immigration Department for Zaven to stay here to be benefited from his valuable service which he renders to the church in various capacities.

J. FUTURE PROJECTS

(1) The publication of PAROS will be put on a more efficient basis. The procedural methods have already been reviewed and we hope soon to greet the monthly publication of PAROS.

(2) Our choir needs to be strengthened. It is essential that we have a qualified choir director and an organist. We are very grateful for the few faithful members of the choir who are coming to fulfill their function every Sunday.

(3) A Bible Study Session will be resumed soon with a group of women under the sponsorship of the Church. During the spring of 1972 such a group was in existence under the leadership of Mrs. Florence Goekjian, in the capacity as Regional Director of Religious Education; a post which was assigned to her by the Primate. These study sessions continued through the summer months, however, stopped by fall.

(4) Renovation of Parish House. The Parish House needs to be renovated in its entirety. Already some work has been done in the Pastor's living quarters on the second floor by carpeting and fixing several rooms. However, still much to be done by furnishing a living room and bedroom, as well as, fixing a kitchenette.

The Pastor's Study on the first floor needs a great deal of attention to make it both functional and attractive.

Beside the office on the first floor, there is sufficient space for office machine work, such as stenciling, mimeographing, and also a library and lounge for group activities and youth meetings, etc.

A master-plan for the entire needs is being worked upon for the entire building; the Parish Council during the year 1973 should start some of the most important phases according to priorities indicated.

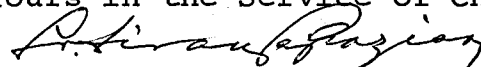
Epilogue

As we embark into the 9th year of our existence in Richmond Heights, may God pour his rich blessings upon this community and may St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church continue her mission of living Armenian Christianity with vigor and apostolic zeal.

The Pastor extends his heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all of our faithful parishioners, church organizations and volunteer workers for their devotion and sincere efforts towards the further development and strengthening our Church and community life.

May God always spread the wings of his Divine Providence over His little and precious flock.

Prayerfully and with Blessings
Yours in the Service of Christ



Rev. Fr. Diran Papazian, Pastor

January 26, 1973

Richmond Heights, Ohio