

To: **Archbishop Khajag Barsamian**  
From: **Fr. Krikor**

Speech: Palos Heights - April 18, 1993

Dear Parishioners,

This day will always be remembered by the parishioners of the Sts. Joachim and Anne Armenian Apostolic Church as an important occasion in the annals of this community. Witnessing the consecration of churches, altars and holy pictures is a unique experience for all those who participate in such ceremonies. It is unique in more ways than one. First of all, such events do not take place frequently; there are many faithful in

our Diocese who have never had the opportunity to see these rites. Secondly, each time you pray before one of the three altars or the holy pictures, you will relive the spirituality you experienced today.

This day will have a meaning for the future generations. Your children and grandchildren and their generations will derive their inspiration and their spiritual experiences from the same source as you. The Virgin Mary, Sts. Joachim and Anne, St. Gregory the Illuminator, whose intercession they will seek before God, will not be mere names for

them but figures known to them from the holy pictures. They will envision the throne of God having the form of the altar in their parish church. And as they enter the premises of this sanctuary, they will bless their forefathers for building this church and everything in it. This is what Armenians did and still do when they visit the ancient churches in Armenia, as they marvel at the wonderful architectural achievements of their forefathers and at the decorative sculpture carved on the walls. There is no reason why generations

raised by us in our noble tradition should react any differently.

On the walls of our ancient churches and monasteries, we encounter inscriptions which remind the visitor about faithful donors of past times who contributed to build, rebuild or repair various sacred structures. Occasionally they also give names of clergymen as the ones who conceived the idea of building or restoring a church, an altar, and other parts of churches. In this parish, one person, Mr. Greg Srabian, has been both the benefactor and the conceiver of the present

project. The desire to see his parish church with suitable altars was not a sudden whim with him but an old dream. A man who began serving his church as an altar boy at the age of eight and remained in the fold as a clerk, choirmaster, director of the junior choir, and as a parish council member, a founder of the West Allis Church could not be expected to have a dream other than Mr. Srabian's. The Armenian school in Rumania, where Mr. Srabian had our beloved Vehapar Vasken I as his teacher, his Armenian family environment and his immediate circle of friends

fostered deep feelings in him toward the Armenian Church and the Armenian people.

We want to see our young generation grow up with the same values that preserved in Mr. Srabian a strong Armenian identity, despite the vicissitudes of times that made him migrate from country to country and city to city in his youth, until he settled down in the Chicago area. His exposure to different cultures and traditions did not deter him from his course. Why? Because the human and Armenian foundation in his character was as strong as a rock. That kind of a foundation

can only be built in an impressionable age. What the young ones learn until the beginning of their teen years serves as a foundation to their lives. As long as the foundation is solid, nothing will drive them away from the right path. They will become exemplary human beings, good Christians and faithful children of the Armenian Church. Churches, altars and pictures we build today are for them. All of this, however, will not yield any results, unless we begin to teach them today so that they appreciate their Christian heritage. Mr. Srabian has taken the right step in this area as well.

His effort to train a junior choir is a very noble project. Each one of you in this parish should take upon himself or herself a similar project to help the youth to be acquainted with our tradition. The Armenian Church must not be a closed book to our youth.

At this time, I as the Primate of this Diocese confer on Mr. Srabian the St. Vartan Medal for fifty years of service to the Armenian Church and the Armenian people and for his dedication to the Sts. Joachim and Anne church of Palos Heights.



May God increase the number of people like Mr. Srabian in all of our parishes and may He bless him, his wife and two children and all of you so that you continue to work hand in hand to keep the doors of this holy sanctuary open and keep on prospering in your faith and in your community life.