

ST. GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR ARMENIAN CHURCH

Semi-Annual Report

October 25, 1998

Rev. Dn. Aren Jebejian - Deacon-in Charge

It has been some ten months now since my arrival here in Chicago. The prospect of building up a parish is one which can only be done through the grace of God.

At first glance many goals and priorities were set. Nothing can happen overnight and I have tried to keep a clear perspective on what the immediate needs are of the parish and what the long-term goals should be.

The past ten months have sometimes been an emotional rollercoaster and a deep spiritual challenge. It is my belief that we have seen forward and positive progress in all aspects of our community.

The first and most important aspect has been the worship services. Priority has been given to enhancing the liturgical services by giving sermons in two languages, offering services in two languages, seeking greater participation from the choir, training of altar servers and the training of John Paklaian for ordination to the sub-diaconate (October 3rd).

We have had the celebration of Divine Liturgy at least once a month. Effort has been given to see that out-of-town visiting clergy can be used for other services as well (sacraments, lectures etc...).

The most important aspect during the past ten months has been the regular celebration of church services nearly every Sunday.

The formation of the St. Gregory 2001 Committee has offered some new and interesting perspectives on the worshipping community. The work continues. Without delving into too much detail, the following areas have been given attention or are projects which have begun or have occurred:

- Bible Study (Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday evenings)
- Altar Servers Training (Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday evenings)
- Choir Practice
- Visitation of people in the hospital
- Home visitations
- Counseling
- Help to refugees and "newcomers"
- Establishment of A.C.Y.O.A Jr. group
- Religious classes taught at "Hye-Camp"
- Assistant Director - St. Nersess Deacon's Training Program

- Hosted Women's Saints Day
- Hosted Midwest clergy and attended all Midwest clergy meetings
- Begun to establish ecumenical and political ties in Chicago
- Pre marital counseling
- Pre baptismal counseling
- The proper instruction and execution of sacraments and funerals
- Attendance at the Diocesan Clergy Conference
- Attendance at 1998 Diocesan Assembly
- Attendance at 1998 ACYOA Sports Weekend
- Attendance at Clergy Continuing Education Liturgical Seminar
- New Pastor's Office project
- Re-opening of Sunday School
- Women's Guild meetings
- Choir meetings
- Diocesan Centennial Celebrations (Midwest)
- Formation of parish standard fees
- Publication of the Loosavorich
- Hosted a regional Sunday School Seminar
- Parish Council Training

This listing by no means is complete or comprehensive enough for this mid-year assembly, however it gives an indication of the new health our worshipping community sees.

There are still many challenges ahead of us. We must face these challenges together as a family.

Some goals for the upcoming year include but are not limited to:

- More timely publication of the Loosavorich on a quarterly basis
- Completion of pastor's office
- Attracting new and younger members of the community
- More educational programs focusing on the liturgy and our faith
- The contracting out of our Church Hall.

Our first concern must be to build God's House. When we concentrate on building God's house and not our egos or self-fulfillment, God himself will continue to bless our community tenfold and thirty fold and a hundred fold.