

PASTOR'S REPORT

Dear Parishioners,

I started my pastorate at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church of Chicago as of August 1, 1994. I am grateful to God for the opportunity to serve St. Gregory.

Since Sunday, August 7, I have celebrated the Holy Badarak every Sunday and delivered mostly English Sermons.

During 1994 the following Sacraments and Rites were officiated at St. Gregory by myself, Fr. Haik Donikian, Visiting Priests and Fr. Varoujan Kabaradjian, the Pastor of St. James of Evanston; Baptism and Confirmation of infants and adults, 7: Holy Matrimony, 3: Funeral Services, 4.

Since assuming my responsibility as Pastor of St. Gregory, I have visited Hospitals and Nursing Homes as I was made aware of the need for the visits. I have also visited the homes of Parishioners for various purposes or occasions.

I have attended to my responsibilities at the Church office daily and spent as much time as needed to accomplish the task or the project at hand. I have also been teaching an Adult Armenian Conversational Class on Mondays. With much delay, at the end of October we opened St. Gregory's doors for the children of the community in the form of Sunday Church School, with 15 students and a staff of 5 regular and 3 substitute teachers. Thanks to the dedication of our staff we have a wonderful Church School.

It is with deep gratitude I come to acknowledge the services of each and every Choir member, who are in Church regularly to help me and our congregation to sing and to offer praises to God. I would like to also extend my thanks to Charles Babikian who has served on the Altar every Sunday and also to the other Deacons and Altar Servers who have participated in our worship services.

The contributions of the Ladies Auxiliary to St. Gregory are a real source of pride, especially when we note the advanced age and the diminished number of the participants. The Ladies Auxiliary throughout the year made Kharpet Kufte and Lemajoun and through these sources of meager income were able to donate \$4,000 to St. Gregory in 1994. Their work is exemplary and their dedication is boundless. We express deep gratitude to them.

I take this opportunity to thank the Women's Guild of St. Gregory for their dedicated services to our Church and Congregation since my first Sunday at St. Gregory and each Sunday ever since. The environment of fellowship which is created after Church Services is a credit to their organization and a tribute to their dedication.

I extend my thanks to the Co-Chairman of the Armenian Fest, Arnold Koresian and George Nahabedian, and to Raffle Chairman, Craig Koresian, to the Women's Guild and the Ladies Auxiliary members, as well as to individual parishioners for their hard work and effort in making the Armenian Fest a huge success socially and financially.

The Celebration Banquet of 30th Anniversary of the Consecration of St. Gregory will remain a memorable event in my mind for a long time, because of the dedication of the Committee and especially the Co-chairman, Zabelle Abezetian and Annette Frankian. The celebration was my first formal introduction to the Parish and the community, and I note with great satisfaction and pride, that the Committee had left no detail in neglect, thus providing us the opportunity of a jubilant fellowship and a successful fund raising event.

The Exhibition and Sale of Anatoli Avetian's art work at St. Gregory with the total income being distributed between the Artist and PYUNIC, the Handicap Sports Association of Armenia, was a credit to our parishioners for supporting and subsidizing the event.

I extend my thanks to Mary Dadian, Violet Koresian and Dolores Tootooian for collecting, editing and mailing the Bi-Monthly, Loosavorich, to the members of St. Gregory and to her friends in the Greater Chicago Area.

The Christmas Party of St. Gregory's was a fun filled evening enjoyed by the members and friends who attended it. I express my thanks to the Committee, Agnes Pedian, Nancy Weiss and Rose Tootooian.

I would like to also extend my thanks to Nishan Babikian for giving a hand on Sundays, on a weekly basis, to the Parish Council in performance of their duties, and to Mary Battle for preparing the "Mahs" every Sunday without fail.

A look over the past

I have been at St. Gregory for six months now. I think I know a little bit about the Parish. The numbers are not a problem. I know we are few, but the participation is a problem. The presence of others on a regular basis is both an encouragement to participate and an endorsement of the event at hand. Attendance of Church Services, attendance and participation on a regular basis in the Choir, the Church School, the Women's Guild and the Ladies Auxiliary are both encouragement to others and endorsement of the event, the program, or the organization. St. Gregory is lacking in this area. The numerical disadvantage, combined with irregular attendance or participation, is a source of discouragement for those who still retain the zeal of attending, supporting and participating in the total life of the Parish. It should be the obligation of each member to analyze their involvement and to commit to be a trend-setter, in attendance and participation, in the worshipping and fellowship life of the Parish.

A look into the future

Growth and strength ought to be the key words for St. Gregory's Parish in 1995. Growth in the membership of the Church is a must. We all have family members who are potential members of the Church. We need to bring them and make them members of our Parish and encourage their attendance and participation in the life of the Parish. The Church School, the Choir, the Women's Guild and the Ladies Auxiliary all need to grow and become stronger. There is an area within the Church for each one of us to enter, and combing our forces with others, strengthen that Organization and through her, the Parish. A strong Parish without Youth is a Parish without future. While our existing Organizations need to grow and become strong, we ought to remember that our future strength will depend on the number of young people involved in the life of our Parish today. We need to encourage, we need to make it a must, for our young people to be and to feel part of the Parish. Are we unhappy of our belonging or association with the Armenian Church, that we are holding back our children from associating with same? The future life and vitality of our Parish depends upon the present association and sense of belonging our youth feel toward our Parish now. We need to encourage the formation of a youth organization within the Parish.

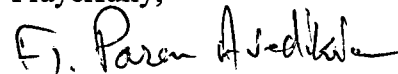
Conclusion

I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the Parish Council of St. Gregory and its Chairperson, Agnes Pedian, for their sacrifices and dedication in coordinating the life and activities of St. Gregory. I also thank Violet Koresian for her unlimited time, energy and effort for the well being of St. Gregory Parish.

Finally, I extend my appreciation to all the faithful parishioners of St. Gregory, who during the past year, gave unselfishly of their time and financial resources for the life, the vitality and the improvement of our Church for the Glory of God

I pray that the Lord God bless each and every one of us abundantly.

Prayerfully,



Fr. Paren Avedikian, Pastor