

On June 30, 1964 I was appointed by the Primate to serve the Parish of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church of Chicago. With my first official letter addressed to the congregation of this Church, I promised to do my best and to bring my humble share for the prosperity and progress of this church. Today after six months, I am happy to state that the past has been full of achievements and has been a period of progress for this church.

This will be a short report of the work that I have done in the past 6 months.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES.....During the last six months, religious services were performed every Sunday, the word of God and the Gospel was preached from the Altar. Besides on Sundays, we had services on Thanksgiving Eve, the days preceding American Christmas, December 24, and Armenian Christmas, January 9. We have put forth every effort so that our religious services would be done without any mistake and done with dignity and seriousness. Besides myself, Deacon Kasparian occasionally gave the sermon. On this occasion, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Deacons of this church who very devotedly bring their share and participation in our religious services.

SACRAMENTS.....During the past six months, we had 6 baptisms, 3 weddings and 6 funerals.

VISITATIONS.....I have strived to make my visits on time. I have made visits of condolences, visits to hospitals and to homes. I have visited 5 hospitals, 25 times; made 20 condolence calls; 5 for family problems; and 30 to 35 visits on festive and other occasions. All of these visitations sum up to 110.

MEETINGS.....In the last six months, I have presided over 45 meetings with different organizations of this church. I met 15 times with the Parish Council.

PARISH BULLETIN.....Starting with the month of November, we have published the Parish Bulletin "Loosavorich". We have changed its cover. We have done everything and are continuing to strive to make it an interesting newsletter of the church life, by printing ecclesiastical, religious and national articles in it. We have strived to put in it news that would interest our congregation and at the sametime we have used it as a means of reaching our congregation by printing all the different activities taking place in the church.

On occasions where there is news concerning the church and the congregation and the people should be aware of them before the Bulletin is published, we have published "Special Bulletins" for distributions on Sundays. By this, we have eliminated making announcements from the Altar during the sermon.

On this occasion I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation and my blessing to Rose Zinakorjian who with great enthusiasm, devotion and loyal service, has been useful in the preparation and publication of this Bulletin. At the same time my sincere thanks goes to the reporters of this Bulletin and to the workers.

SUNDAY SCHOOL.....I have given special consideration and attention to the work in the Sunday School because I believe that this is the right time and perhaps the only time when we should put the love of God in the minds and spirits of the children. We have 40 students who are divided into 4 separate classes. I have established a worship hour for them before the instruction classes start. Special books consisting of the Armenian prayers and songs have been prepared for their use. On the day preceding Armenian Christmas, I brought them to the Altar of God and gave them communion.

On Armenian Christmas Day, they gave a very beautiful and organized play with participation of all the children. I have had several meetings with the Sunday School Asst. Superintendent, Rose Paloian, and the teachers and given my directions about the work to be done in the classes.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation of the marvelous job that the Sunday School teachers have done in the last three months, the fruits of which you saw on Christmas Day. My thanks go to Rose Paloian, Asst. Superintendent, and the teachers, Suzanne Zakarian, Dolores Tootooian, Beatrice Erkiletian and Richard Avakian, all of whom are doing their best to achieve our goals.

ARMENIAN SCHOOL.....Our work in the Armenian School has proceeded very satisfactorily. We have 35 to 40 students and they are divided into 4 classes. During the last 3 months I have taught the ACYOA Junior group. Besides teaching the Armenian language, I have strived to teach Armenian prayers as part of the course. As the Sunday School students, the Armenian School students also took communion on the day preceding Armenian Christmas.

My sincere thanks to Mrs. Lucy Karegian for the wonderful job she is doing in the school and to the devoted teachers, Mrs. Helen Klujian and Mr. Manoug Yilmazian.

ACOLYTES' CLASS.....We have formed a special class of Acolytes and I have instructed and taught them the ways of assisting the celebrant during the Mass on the Altar. By now you have seen all the boys that were in this class and how efficient they are in helping me during Mass by the various duties they perform on the Altar. This class consisted of the boys from the ACYOA Juniors. All these boys, Armen Zakarian, Michael Shahinian, Garo Dadian and Edward Klujian, are to be praised for the sense of responsibility

they have shown in their duties. In the future I am thinking of elevating these boys to the rank of "tubeers" by the permission of His Grace, Archbishop Sion Manoogian.

DEACON'S CLASS.....This class consists of two boys from the ACYOA Juniors namely, Garo Dadian and Michael Shahinian. On Wednesdays and other occasions during the week, they are being instructed by me to learn the parts of a Deacon in the Divine Liturgy. The progress is slow but it is there. If we continue with the pace that we have proceeded with until now, in a year or 18 months, these boys should be ready to be ordained "ouraragirs". I am sure by now you have heard these boys singing the parts they know in the Divine Liturgy.

At this point I would like to make a recommendation St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church of Chicago without a doubt needs boys who will be prepared to serve and assist the pastor or celebrant on the Altar and those boys preferrably must be from the congregation itself so that their help might be available anytime that it is needed and that is our purpose and reason of establishing an Acolyte and Deacon's Class and instructing these boys.

CHOIR.....Since November, I have appointed Mark Nahabedian as leader of the choir of our church. I have had choir rehearsals every Wednesday. I have plans to establish a Junior Choir consisting of young boys and girls between the ages of 13 to 18. On this occasion I would like to praise Mark Nahabedian for the good and devoted services he is performing as choir leader of our Church. On this occasion, I can't forget to express my sincere thanks, appreciation and gratitude for the help and assistance Deacon Kasparian has given me and the choir by being present during services on Sundays and week-days. I also wish to thank the members of the choir and the organist for their loyal service to our Church.

ACYOA SENIOR CHAPTER.....Since becoming Parish Priest of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church I have attended all the ACYOA meetings and offered assistance and guidance. The Chicago ACYOA had the honor of hosting the 18th Annual ACYOA Assembly this past Labor Day Week-end. The Assembly was a success and the honor of the success goes to the Chicago Chapter for their devoted participation in planning and achieving their goals for the Assembly. The services that Deacon Kasparian rendered while he was the religious administrator of this Parish is greatly appreciated. The ACYOA has already started their Cultural Programs and we are planning to have a Vartanantz Program and movie about Vartanantz which was shown on NBC TV.

ACYOA JUNIOR CHAPTER.....The Junior group participates in the activities of our church performing various duties. The group has formed an Armenian Class. The boys are in the Acolytes' and Deacon's Class.

YOUNG WOMEN'S GUILD and LADIES' AUXILIARY.....I have presided over their meetings and given my instructions and directions.

WEEKLY DONATION ENVELOPE SYSTEM.....I have already started the weekly envelope system in our church in order to make each contribution systematically to support the mission of this church. Every individual who wants and wishes to support this church should get a box of 52 envelopes for the whole year and make his contribution every Sunday whether or not he or she comes to church. This is a more effective way to meet the expenses that this divine but at the sametime, material institution has. At the sametime I feel contribution according to this system while being held during Mass, is more systematic with less disturbance. I urge you to adopt this system and be urgent and responsible to your weekly donation.

I have appointed Violet Koresian as Chairman of the weekly donation envelope system and anyone interested in obtaining a box of envelopes should contact her. I thank Violet Koresian and Helen Paloian for the work they have done in this matter. *x new members during @ 14 new members.*

PLANS FOR AN AMERICAN FLAG IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH.....We are Armenians but we are Americans; we are Americans but we are Armenians. The church, our cultural, our spiritual heritage shows our being Armenians but to show our loyalty and devotion to the American Government as Armenian-Americans, enjoying the hospitality of this country, I feel we should have an American Flag in front of the church. More information will follow on this in the Parish Bulletin and elsewhere for donations. There will be a 50¢ or \$1.00 drive from each person in the congregation.

CHURCH ARTICLES AND DECORATIONS.....For the purchase of the church articles I went to New York and ordered them. They are being made and the last letter I received from the company stated they would arrive here by Monday, January 25th. We are also working on the paintings for the church. They are in the process of being done and one is already finished. The baptismal font is in the process of being made. We hope to have all of the decorations in the church ready for consecration before Easter. We thank you for your patience but ask you to bear with us for a little while longer.

PARISH COUNCIL.....The work of the Parish Council and the Parish Priest has one goal, to see that the church may function properly and carry out its religious, cultural and social functions. To the same goal are directed efforts of all subsidiary organizations who are responsible to the Parish Council and are members of the parish family. To mention them by their names, the Women's Auxiliary, the Young Women's Guild, Choir, Senior and Junior Chapters of the ACYOA, Armenian School and its board and teachers, the Sunday School

with its teachers. Each of these bodies is governed by a definite By-Laws and rules which are in accordance with the Diocesan By-Laws and the financial statement of the Parish Council and the basic principles of the Armenian Apostolic Church. All subsidiary organizations have contributed financially and otherwise to maintain the high level on which the St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church has persevered and a brighter future for this parish is the challenge of today.

In our Parish there is still much to be done, correcting certain shortcomings and to complete some projects. These require time and financial resources. The essential need is the sincere spirit of Christian charity and devotion, without which the apparent well being and prosperity of any institution will be of short duration. I pray that God may fill the minds and hearts of our congregation with the faith and grace of our forefathers to preserve our beloved church and make her life brighter and more secure.

Starting February 4th, I intend to go back to school. My office hours starting February 4th, will be from 4 PM to 8 PM on weekdays; Saturdays from 10 AM to 5 PM. For anything urgent any member of the congregation may contact me at this number.....283-6875.

Respectfully submitted,

Father Vahrij Kazandjian
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January 24, 1965