



# St. Gregory The Illuminator Armenian Church

6700 W. DIVERSEY AVENUE  
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December 26, 1974

## Pastoral Yearly Report for the Year of 1974

My pastoral duties at St. Gregory's Armenian Church commenced on January 23, 1974. Being my first parish, it proved to be a time of both test and growing faith. Being new and without experience, my duties here involved growth and occasional failure. There were three basic areas in which I attempted to improve myself:

1. Relationship with the flock--I do not pretend to say that I succeeded with everyone, but I do feel that my overall relationship was one of improvement with the people. My most spontaneous growth of positive relationship was with the youth. However, in the coming year, as I assume my duties at the St. George parish of Waukegan, I will attempt to develop my pastoral relationship with the adults of that parish.
2. Ability to bring forth growth in the religious attitude of the flock--This was one area of great frustration for me. Although I did bring about some change in the attitude of many, such as the altar servers, I feel that I was unable to reach many within the church walls as well as without. Religious feeling is a slow and painful process of development, and St. Gregory's is in desperate need of it.
3. Administrative leadership--When I first came to St. Gregory's, I knew next to nothing about real leadership. It was painfully difficult for me to develop those skills as well as working through others. I have begun but have a great deal of growth to undergo yet. My faith and determination have been all that I have had to keep me going.

In conclusion, I regard my past year as one of endurance and growth. Through God's will, I will continue.

As for the parish, I have attempted to bring forth beneficial change to the best of my ability.

1. I have handled a great deal of correspondence with the Diocese and clergy and various people throughout the year.
2. I have made 160 family visits, plus I have performed 7 home blessings and administered communion to the sick and bed-ridden. I performed 9 funerals and 4 baptisms with Very Rev. Varoujan Kabardjian. I performed 1 funeral on my own.
3. I have been present and performed at all Sunday services except 3 during the year due to illness and other commitments.
4. In the area of ecumenism, I have visited the Greek Church on Diversey on several occasions. I participated in a joint conference of churches at the Holiday Inn when Billy Graham came to Chicago. Also,



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I have been in contact with other clergy to exchange ideas about church life. I have worked with 30 youth at St. Williams Catholic Church throughout the year. All of this was with the intention of making the name of St. Gregory's known to the community at large.

5. Work with groups of the parish:

- a. Y.W.G.--I have attended all but one of the Young Women's Guild meetings throughout the year. I have attempted to keep them aware of the activities of the community and to aid them in decisions as to the nature and when they should hold the functions that they did. My advice to them would be to somehow spiritualize their activities more in the future and to reap some of the benefits of their labor rather than simply function to raise money for the church.
- b. Ladies' Auxiliary--With this group I attempted to bring about more intellectualism in their discussions. They have had a lecturer during the past year, but it would behoove them to be more involved in such activities.
- c. Parish Council--The parish council during this past year has done its best in the face of turmoil. However, in spite of other obligations, it is requested that they take a more firm stand on issues and people of the parish. Their strength as the back-bone of the parish is in desperate need of reinforcement.
- d. Choir--The choir started out very well at the beginning of the year with full cooperation and regular attendance. I have held 26 choir practices and have taught them all of the Jashou Sharagans as well as many of the processional hymns. However, due to the conflicts within the group, members began to fall away. It became virtually impossible to ever hold practices due to the lack of interest as well as remarks by individuals as to the abilities of their peers. Such careless comments must be terminated by those people. I suggest that no awards be given this year, for they would have no meaning. A very unified group is needed, and it should be under the direction of a qualified choir director.
- e. Sunday School--The Sunday School has been run fairly well under the direction of the new Superintendent. Due to her new appointment, it has required time for her to pick up experience. However, I feel she will improve with the full cooperation of her teachers. In my initiating the action of bringing Aram Kazanjian back to teach, the staff has been increased by one teacher again.
- f. Armenian School--This was a very frustrating area for me. I had next to no cooperation by the people, in spite of my calling a meeting twice during the summer. However, if I had stayed on into January, I was planning on starting a Language Lab for



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- young adults.
- g. A.C.Y.O.A.--The Seniors have been very lax in their efforts to organize. There are authority conflicts as to whom should be the chairman, etc. Also, actions by me were taken to be efforts at controlling the group. Thus, their growth and unity will take a great deal of time. The Juniors, however, have grown into quite a healthy group. Their members increased to 15 in a matter of three months from September of this year when I encouraged and aided them to organize. They have a healthy group attitude.
  - h. Sports programs--Tuesdays (originally Thursdays) were Teen night. I was always present to have the doors open for the children, and I brought in youth who did not or do not belong even to our church. Under George Nahabedian's direction, this was expanded to three nights of activity for all ages.
  - i. Altar Fund--I, with the aid of Bob Kalenian, brought forth some change to the appearance of the altar: a new cross-stone plus two new flabellums have been installed. My future plans were to have a new Armenian style cross installed over the altar.
  - j. Stewardship and Endowment--These are two new Diocesan funds. I have asked Mr. Peter Bedrosian to be responsible for them and have also written to the Diocese to explain that he is the chairman in charge of those funds. I feel that he is most capable due to his warm personality and good relationship with people.
  - k. I have attempted to establish a public relations department. Under this would come: Sunday Bulletin, Monthly Bulletin, flyers, correspondence, ecumenical affairs. However, due to lack of interest or persistence and my ability to convince anyone of its need, I had to handle those matters myself without a lay person assisting. I have published 4 issues of the church paper plus 12 copies of the Sunday Bulletin. Little has been done with regard to the ecumenical aspect of this department due to lack of interest.
  - l. Other--Future activities to think about are Bingo (which I have strived to bring into existence) and a Cultural Committee.

Due to the many problems that existed, I have been transferred to another parish. However, I feel that I have accomplished a great deal this past year, and I look upon it as a firm success in spite of the many criticisms expressed. Time will tell who was right, if it already has not as this is being read. May God protect you all and care for you. My pastoral blessings upon you all. Amen.

In loving greetings,

*Deacon Michael Ohanesian*  
Deacon Michael Ohanesian

Former Deacon-in-charge

*with prayer and love*