

PASTOR'S REPORT - 1987

Greetings to all of you in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is with great satisfaction and contentment that I present this report of my activities for 1987. The progress made and the goals accomplished through the various activities and programs presented in this report reflect the dedication, the zeal and the cooperation of our parish members. Our parish life is rich and our activities are diverse. Accordingly, I would like to present them under four major categories as follows: (a) Educational projects; (b) Liturgical and Sacramental Life; (c) Pastoral ministries; and (d) Administration.

EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

Education nurtures growth and maturity in all phases of our lives, including the spiritual. Consequently, I have tried to impliment as many educational programs as feasible to facilitate and to respond to the needs of our parishioners. Our two major programs for the education of our children, namely the Armenian Language School and the Sunday Church School, are functioning very well under the able leadership of their respective staffs and faculties. Our Church School is currently implimenting the new curriculum published by the Diocesan Department of Religious Education and so far the response is generally very favorable. I personally continue to teach the students of the high school grades (10th, 11th and 12th), with a specially designed course. This special curriculum includes basic courses on Holy Scripture, Armenian Church Doctrine, Liturgy, Sacraments, contemporary moral issues and Church history. The Adult Education Programs continued to be offered for those who wish to learn more about the teachings and practices of the Armenian Church. In the Fall a five-week course was offered on the Divine Liturgy with eight parishioners regularly attending. It is my hope that more people will take advantage of these course offerings. The Pre-Cana Sessions instituted in 1986 was offered again last year in an improved format. They have helped our young people to better understand the christian dimension of the Sacrament of Marriage and thus build stronger foundations for their married lives. It is my intention to continue these programs and improve and expand them where necessary. I also intend to continue the publication of the weekly Sunday Bulletin and the parish newsletter "Lradoo", using them as effective tools to provide concise information on our Armenian-Christian faith and heritage.

On a more personal note, as you all know, I am enrolled in the PH.D program in Theology at Fordham University, NYC. Currently, I have completed the required courses and I am preparing for my comprehensive examinations which I plan to take, God willing, in the fall of this year.

LITURGICAL AND SACRAMENTAL LIFE

The Liturgy of our Church is the center of our spiritual life. It is with great satisfaction that I note the active participation of our parishioners in the liturgical and Sacramental life of our Church.

During the course of 1987 the following sacraments and sacramentals were administered. 10 baptisms, 2 adult chrismations, 13 weddings and 18 funerals. In addition, in my capacity as the Pastor of St. Leon's, I have participated in 6 weddings and 5 funerals held in other area Churches. Moreover, sacramental liturgies were administered on 32 separate occasions. It is very gratifying for me as a priest to witness the increasing number of people who seek the sacraments of the Church in the various stations of their lives. The regular partaking by many of the faithful in the Eucharistic Liturgy is a clear indication that the church is playing a central role in our lives. With a view to further encourage this development, I have tried to pay as much care and attention as possible to the Sunday homilies. My effort is always to draw from the Scripture a lesson that applies the teachings of the Church to our contemporary lives. Ultimately, our lives must reflect the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ and accordingly, special attention was paid to the liturgies of special feasts and seasons. In their commemoration and celebration of our Lord's life the special liturgies of Christmas, Lent, Holy Week and the major feasts of the liturgical year helps us to further focus our attention on our own lives as Christians. Our liturgies not only reflect our Christian values, but also they embody many of the traditions that express our faith and the faith of our forebears.

At this time, allow me to offer my thanks and appreciation to our Choir Director George Paroonagian, Organist Sirvart Galstian, Chairman Dr. Berdj Feredjian and all our deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, and our choir members for their dedicated participation in our liturgies throughout the year. Thanks also are due to Mrs. Grace Pinajian and Mrs. Nevart Boyajian and the group of volunteers who help them, for their time in the preparation of "Mahs".

PASTORAL MINISTRIES

One of the most important facets of Church life is pastoral ministries. According to the teachings of our Church, our chief pastor is Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is represented to us in the person of our Diocesan Bishop, and the priests who are assigned by him as pastors of local parishes. Thus, in my capacity as pastor I tried to reach out and be present whenever the need arose. In this respect, I continued family visitations on a regular basis, as well as visitations to the sick and the grieved whether at home or in the hospital. I have made myself available to all those who have sought my pastoral support and counseling for various situations in their personal lives, on 92 separate occasions. In addition, I continue to provide baptismal, wedding, marital, family and individual counseling to members of our parish on 58 occasions.

ADMINISTRATIVE

As Parish Priest, my responsibilities include the day to day administration of our parish. In this capacity I supervised the work of the church office and the physical maintenance of our parish facilities. As ex-officio president of the various church organizations and as a representative of St. Leon's parish I attended various Diocesan, parish and community events on 97 separate occasions.

Before closing this report, I would like to offer my thanks to the Chairman of the Parish Council Arthur Ohnikian for his able leadership and to all the members of the Parish Council for their dedicated work. Thanks also to our Diocesan delegates, the chairpersons and executive committee members of all our parish organizations and committees. Special thanks to our secretary Mrs. Natalie Merten who has been of great assistance to me in my administrative work.

Lastly, my heartfelt thanks to all our parishioners for their dedication and commitment. Without your support and cooperation the above mentioned activities and accomplishments could not have been realized.

I look forward to the coming year, to grow together with God's blessings.

Fr. Arshen Aivazian

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Arshen Aivazian". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.