

SAINT GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR, BINGHAMTON
PASTOR'S REPORT

JANUARY 1, 1976 - DECEMBER 31, 1976

The following sacraments were administered during the year:

Baptism and Chrismation (0)

None

Chrismation only (4).

Grace Anna May Sognalian, April 11th
William Raymond House, April 11th
Joyce Edna Sarkisian, August 8th
Ronald James Staschak, August 8th

Marriage (0)

None

Ordination (0)

None

Consecration (1)

Icon of the Last Supper, December 5th

Other sacramental and non-sacramental services:

January 6th, "Blessing of Water - Choor Orhnek" Godfather, Armen Dekmejian

April 15th, "Washing of the Feet - Vodenlva" with 12 area clergy.
(See Ecumenical Services p. 3 and Comments p. 6 .)

May 27th, Ascension, Badarak celebrated.

August 15th, "Blessing of Grapes"

Funeral (3)

Bedros (Peter) A. Rejebian, January 3rd
Azniv Bogdasarian, January 10th
Yeranoohi Menasian (Syracuse), February 17th

Visiting Clergy (1)

His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, met with the Parish Council members and executive members of all church organizations, celebrated Badarak, preached the sermon, consecrated the Icon of "The Last Supper" and met with the South-side clergy and their wives on December 4th - 5th.

Other services:

March 8th - Special Women's Saints Day Service held at St. Paul Church, Syracuse.

March 21st - "Lent and Penance Service" for Youth Group.

May 16th - invited to celebrate the Eucharist and preach the sermon at St. Mary Church, Washington, D.C.

May 23rd - Special Church School Graduation Service in Church.

June 13th - Badarak celebrated with Gomidas Choir participating.

June 20th - Combined Church choirs, deacons and congregations for Badarak at St. Paul Church, Syracuse - Syracuse picnic followed.

December 24th - Feast of St. Stephen, the Proto-deacon and First Martyr of the Church, plus special Christmas Eve Vespers.

Religious services rendered for non-Armenian community:

March 7th - Susquehanna Valley Home, Worship Service

April 11th - Same

April 25th - Same

May 26th - House of the Good Shepherd (aged), "Arrevakal - Sunrise Service"

June 6th - Susquehanna Valley Home, Worship Service

June 23rd - House of the Good Shepherd (aged), "Arrevakal - Sunrise Service"

August 29th - Susquehanna Valley Home, Worship Service

September 26th - Same

October 6th - House of the Good Shepherd (aged), "Arrevakal - Sunrise Service"

October 21st - Susquehanna Valley Home, Worship Service

November 7th - Same

November 12th - House of the Good Shepherd (aged), "Arrevakal - Sunrise Service"

December 19th - Susquehanna Valley Home, Worship Service

December 26th - Same

Ecumenical Worship Services:

February 22nd - Bicentennial Celebration and Worship with South-side Churches - at St. Andrew Roman Catholic Church.

April 15th - "Vodenlva - Washing of the Feet" 12 area Clergy were invited and participated in this service which took place in our church.

November 24th - Thanksgiving Worship Service with South-side Churches at Church of the Good Shepherd. I preached the sermon.

Lectures I gave:

March 25th - "Liturgy of the Armenian Orthodox Church, Part I" for the Ecumenical Study Group, Vestal.

May 27th - Same, Part II

October 20th - "Sacrament of Chrismation" for adult class of the Greek Church of the Annunciation, Vestal.

November 2nd - "Sacrament of Marriage" for The Office of Religious Education's series of lectures on The Life of the Church; given at St. Anne School, Binghamton.

Other Pastoral and Church activities:

March, 14th - Lenten Worship with South-side Churches at Conklin Avenue First Baptist Church.

September 16th - Adult Christian Education Class.

October 2nd - Took 10 of our Youth Group to St. Vladimir's Seminary for Orthodox Education Day.

October 13th - Adult Christian Education Class.

November 23rd - Parish participated in a Thanksgiving Food Basket for a needy family. The "basket" was given to the Chuck Tateosian family, Kirkwood.

I helped to situate two families from Beirut, Najarian and Kaloussian families, with the help of other church members.

Items donated/given to the Church:

Two 100 lb. bags of calcium, heating wires, a lawn mower and a gas can

Nishan Ketchoyian

Items donated/given to the Church. Continued:

"Gonk and Parch"	In memory of Krikor Misakyan by M/M Ared Yerganian
Tableclothes	John Bogdasarian
Slide projector	Mike Medzigian
Five Altar Servers' Robes	Vahé Garabedian Nishan Ketchoyian Mike Medzigian George Rejebian Edward Seraydarian
One pair of "Kshotz"	In memory of Anna Sarkisian
Easter Eggs	Harry Sarkisian Naim Slilaty
Grapes for Grape Blessing	George and Marion Rejebian
Gospel Kragal for Church and lecturn for Church Hall	Edward Seraydarian
Icon of the Last Supper	In memory of Daniel Vartan Sognalian
Gold Gospel Cover	In memory of Araxie (Ketchoyan) Turekian and Ovsanna Ketchoyan
Repair services of copier for 1976	Frank Whitney Jr.
Repair services on church car for 1976	Charles Seraydarian
"Tserakordz Cover"	Alice Boyajian

COMMENTS

The Church School decided to implement a tri-mester system this year, starting in september, 1976. The tri-mesters are 10, nine and seven weeks respectively. we decided on this system to maximize attendance and give us a chance to rehearse our Christmas Play without interfering with calss activities. This also enables

our teachers to take a well deserved break. Teachers were harder to come by this year than last year because we only had one graduate. We usually encourage our graduates to become associate teachers, thus training them to take over the class the following year. The teacher shortage was so critical that it became necessary for me to take over the Senior Class which is composed of 15 students. After a lengthy discussion we settled on having the class on Sunday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Our average attendance was 10 students per class. This also enabled the Seniors to conduct the assembly portion of our Church School, an experiment which worked out quite well. It also freed the students to join the choir or to serve at the Altar.

Church School, Youth Group and Choir are beginning to feel the effects of our older youngsters going off to college. It is now more difficult to find teachers for Church School, as I already mentioned, and members for the Youth Group. In the next few years there will be an exodus of about nine to 14 youngsters to college. Should they attend a college away from the area and if families with teenagers do not move into the area, the Church will lose its many servers at the altar, in the choir and for church dinners.

From September through December, the Youth Group seemed to me a bit lax in holding meetings once a month, but be that as it may, the Group fulfilled its obligations to the Church in service and in concern for our Senior Citizens. Perhaps as the new year begins the Group will once again become consistent in its gatherings.

Our Altar Servers and choir have shown growth in their service to the Church. The choir has increased slightly in number and has also improved qualitatively. Two of the servers, Hagop Injajigian and Raymond Seraydarian are increasing their knowledge of our Church Services by learning Arravodyan Jham as well. Our choir was fortunate to find Michael Findikyan to play the organ, as both Pauline House and Kevin Mc Dermott left the area. Paul Ketchoyian, our director, has diligently catalogued all the music that is used throughout the year. He has been punctual for services, and has given freely of his time whenever called upon for extra choir work. This includes major feast days, ecumenical services and especially for the outstanding job the choir did for the "Washing of the Feet."

Vasken Alexanian has been heading our Armenian School for the past two years and has done very well. He has begun an Adult Conversational Armenian Class that has developed into a permanent class. This years Saturday Morning Student Class began strong, but after a couple of weeks attendance was poor. Vasken is assisted by Deacon Hrair Dekmejian and myself. A second semester is planned in January, '77.

Our parish has gotten involved with our neighboring South-side Parishes in a number of Ecumenical Services. This has enabled us to appreciate other religions and faiths, as well as for others to taste of our tradition. It has enabled both pastors and congregations to enjoy each others' fellowship through prayer and social hours. perhaps the highlight of these services was during Holy Week. On Maundy Thursday, I invited 12 area clergymen to participate in the

service of the "Washing of the Feet." Their congregations were invited as well. As the service progressed, one could feel the electrifying effect permeating the air. Both clergy and congregation were awed by the service as was attested to by the many remarks made afterward in the hall over coffee and desert. The Guild, as usual put out a spread that was happily savored by all. It was a night that will live in our people's hearts for a long time to come.

Women's Guild has continued to be strong and active, despite its reliance on a handful of women to plan and execute its activities. This group needs more participation by its dues-paying members.

Again this year a series of Adult Christian Education lectures were planned and executed. But alas, due to NO participation, this series was dropped. I will not attempt to plan such a series in the future unless asked by the parishoners.

The increase in church attendance for the summer months continued this past year with an average of 40 faithful in attendance on summer Sundays.

This year the Finance Committee, composed of Dr. George Rejobian, John Bogdasarian and Harry Kradjian hit upon a successful formula for collecting pledges. A cocktail hour and dinner were given for church members, who were later asked to make pledges to the Church. After the smoked cleared, a total of \$14,000 was pledged and by the end of '76 almost all of that total was realized. Both committee and Council were pleased. Perhaps something similar will be done in '77.

Taking a positive step, Syracuse and Binghamton Parishes co-ordinated picnic and dance activities this year. Members of both

congregations supported the other's functions. We hope this trend continues.

Respectfully submitted this twenty-third day of January, 1977.

Kevork Kahana Arakelian

Kevork Kahana Arakelian,
Pastor