

SAINT GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR, BINGHAMTON
PASTOR'S REPORT

JANUARY 1, 1974-DECEMBER 31, 1974

The following sacraments were performed during the past year:

Baptism and Chrismation (4)

Karni Noelle Kachadourian, January 20th
Alicia Adrienne Kachadourian, January 20th
Garabed David Kachadourian, January 20th
Sacha Susan Seraydarian, December 1st

Chrismation only (4)

Robert Aram Jigarjian, July 29th
Richard Caro Jigarjian, July 29th
Judith Ann Jigarjian, July 29th
James Brian Jigarjian, July 29th

Marriage (2)

Harry John Mahakian to Mary Babich, June 29th
Peter Stansbury Haydon to Barbara Jean Bogdasarian, July 27th

Other sacramental and non-sacramental services:

January 6th, "Choor Orhnek" - Godfather, Michael Medzigian

Received into the Church (1)

Rose Mastrogiovanni, November 24th

Funeral (3)

Daniel Vertan Sognalian, September 7th
Araxie Kazanjian (Syracuse), December 5th
Andrew C. Shahinian, December 28th

Clergy exchange (1)

February 3rd, Fr. Nersess Jebajian, from Springfield, Massachusetts was guest celebrant and preacher, and I celebrated in Springfield.

Visitation by Bishops (2)

July 27th-28th, Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, celebrated the Eucharist and preached.

November 16th-17th, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Regional Meeting, Pastoral visitation; celebrated the Eucharist and preached the sermon.

Other

August 3rd, I was invited to Camp Nubar to celebrate the Eucharist and preach.

August 18th, I was invited back to Camp Nubar for Grape Blessing.

Other Church related programs:

February 24th, Fr. Karekin Kasparian (then Deacon Hovhannes) was invited as guest speaker for Vartanantz.

April 21st, Mr Vartkes Babolghian performed at our Martyr's Day Program.

In May, I became one of the Volunteer Chaplains at Susquehanna Valley Home.

May 12th, special Mother's Day Dinner.

May 19th, I participated in the ordination of Deacon Hovhannes Kasparian to the priesthood. No services held in Binghamton.

May 23rd, Thursday, Ascension Eucharist celebrated.

June 1st, Seminarians' Visit was well received; people would like more of this type program.

June 9th, Women's Guild Day

June 21st-22nd, Youth Group Retreat, organized by Marion Rejebian, led by Regina Ohanian and myself. First retreat our youth have experienced. They requested another and are looking forward to sharing it with another youth group.

November 4th, Sandra and I were invited to speak at Cornell University about "Woman in the Armenian Church."

November 27th, entire parish participated in a Thanksgiving Food Basket for a needy family. Basket was given to Mrs. Grace Messina and family, Binghamton.

December 24th, Feast of Saint Stephen the Proto-deacon and First Martyr of the Church, was celebrated. After the celebration, Christmas carols were sung by all present in the Church.

COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

This year has been, on the whole, a year of growth for the parish. In breaking down the growth, we can see a definite development in the Church School. By May, 1974, the Church School had declined sharply in both attendance and its program. So far this year, team teaching, an improved curriculum and good attendance have bolstered our school. This was only possible because of the zeal of Adrienne Kachadourian, Pauline House, Anoush Dekmejian and Sandra Arakelian who, along with myself, met on many occasions during the summer planning and preparing. The fruits of the planning have been seen and are encouraging.

The Armenian School Committee, was led by Mike Ketchoyian. Deacon Hrair Dekmejian came up with the idea of a seven week, two hour program composed of language, history, dance and song. This format proved to be very effective and was well received by those who participated. Team teaching was used here as well and proved very effective. Perhaps another program of this type will be implemented in 1975.

The Youth Group remains strong. The youth continue to serve the Church by serving at the altar, singing in the choir, serving at monthly dinners and once again having a "Christmas Tea" for our Senior Citizens. This year they were introduced to the experience

of a "Retreat" which they enjoyed, and they are now looking forward to another. They also continue to have their various social activities. In September, for example, they hosted members of the Troy youth who came to our annual dance. Both Syracuse and Troy youth have been invited to participate in coming events. Our Youth Group was represented at the Youth Conference in Philadelphia on December 13, 14 and 15, 1974.

The choir had a seasonal slump in September, October and November, but after some minor re-adjustments, specifically having choir practice for 30 minutes immediately following services on Sunday, seems to be running smoothly. Over all the choir has greatly improved over the past two years. We have seen Paul Ketchoyian, our director, mature in his knowledge of the Eucharist and other services, thus enabling the choir to develop as well.

The Women's Guild is still experiencing difficulties in persuading women to attend the meetings. However, I must say that this has not hampered our women in holding affairs. It is difficult, though, with only six to eight members present at a meeting to plan any event on a large-scale.

Parish Council has had difficulty in thinking of ways to raise funds for the Church. Those ideas that have been thought of are more often than not "tabled," mainly because of viewpoints. Another hindrance to fund-raising is a notion that we cannot go out beyond our own Church Community. However, if we are to raise funds we must be both more liberal in our thinking and also approach

the community at large in our fund-raising efforts.

Another area which needs development is visitation by members of the Parish Council to members of our Church Community. Perhaps I have not stressed this at our meetings. I believe that if parish members are visited by the members of the Parish Council, it might be the spark that our community needs. Such visitation would hopefully encourage members to participate in services and activities.

The Council has expressed a desire for our parish to become a member of the Broome County Council of Churches. This is currently being investigated.

I began a Christian Education Class for adults, but it was very poorly attended: five attended the first session and none, the second. However, I received suggestions from some adults to have a class on "Death and Dying." Thus, I am preparing for such in early 1975. Also another instructed Divine Liturgy will be presented in 1975. The last one was well received over a year ago.

Mr. Kerovp Ketchoyan was not pleased with the Icons that were painted for the Church. Thus, the monies received have been set aside for something else to be purchased for the Church. The Icons in question are Saint Gregory the Illuminator, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kalem in memory of Ovsanna Ketchoyan; Saints Thaddeus and Bartholomew, donated by Steve and Ronald Turekian in memory of their mother, Araxie Turekian. In addition, the Icon of Christ's Baptism was never obtained; thus the money for this Icon will be applied to another item.

Items donated/given to the Church:

Candle holders

Made and donated by:
Mr. Sarkis Tateosian

Paper and replenisher for copier

Anonymous

Gummed address labels

Dr. George Rejebian

Table for Nursery

Mr. John Bogdasarian

Repair services on copier
for 1974

Mr. Frank Whitney Jr.

Cost of pledge letters,
envelopes and cards

Dr. Vahe Garabedian

Flower vases, pitcher and
bowlIn memory of
Daniel Vartan Sognalian

Small chairs for Nursery

Catholic School District,
Binghamton

Respectfully submitted this nineteenth day of January, 1975.

*Father George (Kevork) Arakelian*Father George (Kevork) Arakelian,
Pastor