

PASTOR'S 1974 REPORT

ARMENIAN CHURCH OF WESTCHESTER

At the beginning of 1974, the Primate, the Most Rev. Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, appointed me as deacon-in-charge of the newly formed Armenian Church of Westchester. I was ordained a priest in May and became the pastor of the Church on a half-time basis.

WORSHIP, SACRAMENTALS AND VISITATIONS We have finally found a temporary home for our regular worship services. As of September 22, 1974, regular weekly worship services have been held and sermons given at the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Yonkers, N.Y. The St. Nersess seminarians have met with me regularly for training and preparation to assist in these services, both in the choir and at the altar.

The seminarians have also conducted a special Jashoo Service in the place of Divine Liturgy on two occasions, when I was invited to celebrate Badarak at St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, Chicago, my former parish, on the occasion of its 10th Anniversary and when I celebrated the Divine Liturgy in Yorktown Heights, N.Y.

On October 27, 1974, I performed my first baptism in the parish: Susan Arpine, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Aiken of Katonah, N.Y.'

Pastoral visits have been made by me to individuals and families in physical ailment and other personal crisis, in homes and in hospitals.

During November and December, a series of narrations were presented in English during the Badarak service on Sundays, explaining the symbolic and theological meaning of the Liturgy. Those present found this program of interpretation enlightening and helpful in their understanding of the Badarak. A similar program will be conducted during Lent.

ADMINISTRATIVE As ex-officio president of all church organizations, I have attended and presided over all the meetings of the Parish Council and most meetings of the Mr., Mrs., and Ms. Club, the ACYOA (Armenian Church Youth Organization of America), the St. Nersess Armenian-Church School committee, and the Building Committee.

On September 10, 1974, we arranged a special meeting in Yorktown Heights with representatives of the Northern Westchester Armenian parish to discuss mutual relationships and cooperation in our common endeavors. This meeting proved to be mutually enlightening and helpful. Since then I attended another meeting at the home of the parish council chairman of that community, Mr. Mark Kapikian, and discussed possible ways of offering our assistance to their Church School and youth.

In November of 1974, we started publishing a parish newsletter consisting of parish news and interesting educational tidbits. After three experimental issues, we have started publishing the newsletter monthly, with the name HOPE, signifying the basic and driving attitude of our community in "becoming and building a church".

After my first pastoral letter in the Fall, 500 copies of a survey form were mailed in the hope of gathering information about the families and the extent of their anticipated assistance to our newly formed church. It must be stated regretfully that the number of the responses was extremely limited.

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Recently we prepared a small pamphlet setting forth some basic considerations and essential reasons why an Armenian Church in Westchester is a necessity that should not be procrastinated.

We thank God for the results attained so far. Without having our own church edifice and center we have been able to initiate and carry on our responsibilities as a parish church, in terms of our worship services, educational programs and community activities, all of which, have helped in enhancing our community life, ethnic awareness and religious obligations. We are aware of the additional growth needed to make this community a vital and dynamic parish. It certainly has the potential of becoming so and it is our conviction, that having gone through a period of search for identity and role, we are now ready to move forward and closer to becoming truly a church.

My only recommendation is that each of us give our best in time, talent, treasure and put our heart into what we can offer in making this young community a strong church. Let us continue our mission with the traditional indomitable faith of our forefathers and the enlightened determination of their worthy successors in keeping the torch of the faith, hope and love alive.

My thanks and gratitude to all who so far have given of themselves unstintingly and have become part of the trying yet exciting "phase one" of our growing parish. Thank God for all and God bless you all.

Fr. Karekin Kasparian
Pastor

December 31, 1974