

## PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT - 1976

1976 can be characterized as a year of growth for our parish which also caused growing restlessness at not having our own permanent church facilities. Nevertheless, we are appreciative of the accommodations here at St. Andrew's Church, and thank God for His grace and guidance for our church. It has been a privilege and a challenge for me to be affiliated with the Armenian Church of Westchester, although my status as half-time pastor has placed certain limitations on the extent and intensity of the work in the Lord's vineyard.

In the achievement of some of the results in the parish, the St. Nersess seminarians have had a significant share with their participation and assistance in the activities of various church organizations as part of their field-work training program, particularly in the choir and altar service, the Church School, Armenian School and the youth group.

We have greeted with joy the inception of our senior ACYOA chapter at the beginning of the year. We have great expectations and hope in the ACYOA becoming a valuable and dynamic arm of the Church.

This year was also special because of the Bi-Centennial Thanksgiving Drive which brought to the Church close to a \$50,000 financial boost. We will continue to depend upon the good will and support of the community to build or to buy our permanent home this year.

### WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS

Divine Liturgy and the preaching of the Word of God has been conducted regularly, except for a few Sundays in the summer. Occasionally, some seminarians were asked to give spiritual meditations.

During Lent, we held regular worship services on Wednesdays followed by a series of talks on the theme of "Christian Family Living". The Primate presided over one of these lenten devotional programs.

I have conducted twelve (12) sacraments of baptism (including 3 adults), two (2) weddings in our church and participated in two (2) others with fellow clergymen in other churches. We have had two (2) funeral services conducted in our church and I have participated in four (4) others in another parish.

### PASTORAL VISITS

Aside from many "televisits" (telephone visitations), I have paid visits to homes and hospitals. There have been many occasions for personal and family counseling, including pre-marital consultations. I would like to urge our parishioners to notify the pastor without delay about illness or any other situation of burden for it is the duty of the pastor to be where he can bring the healing ministry of the Gospel.

It has been my duty to be part of the planning of various educational programs with the various church organization. I have also had the pleasure of giving talks at their meetings.

A class in conversational Armenian and another one in the basic teachings of the Armenian Church were conducted from February to April,

where seminarians also took part. Having our own facilities will make it possible for us to initiate other educational programs.

Four young people from our parish participated in the Summer Religious Study Conference of St. Nersess School in Crestwood and learned a great deal about our spiritual and cultural heritage.

We initiated a new educational program on the basic teachings of the Armenian Church designed primarily for three pupils who are in the Sunday Church School graduating class.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE

We have kept regular communication with the Diocesan Office and our church organizations, and sent letters of thanks and appreciation to individuals and organizations for various services rendered to the church. A good deal of the Church office responsibilities have been borne by Mrs. Elma Davidian, who has spent countless hours in doing them.

As the presiding officer, it has been my pleasure to attend both executive and membership meetings of all church organizations and offer assistance and guidance where needed.

I have met weekly with those seminarians who have been charged with the responsibility of administering and have assisted in guiding the Church School (Miss Sirarpi Feredjian and Miss Nancy Basmajian), the choir (Deacon Vazken Asadourian), the ACYOA (Deacon Arthur Sabounjian), and the Armenian School (Deacon Bedros Sarkissian and Mr. Onnig Terzian). Our parish feels fortunate and grateful to have the service of the seminarians who have contributed considerably in the areas of responsibility undertaken by them.

#### INTER-CHURCH PARTICIPATION

As delegate, I attended the Diocesan Assembly in Philadelphia, the first weekend in May and the Annual Assembly of the ACYOA, the last weekend of August in Newton, Mass.

We have invited Father Lattimore as guest preacher on a Sunday in Lent, as I have had the privilege of preaching at a Sunday service at St. Andrew's. In addition, as one of the churches in Hartsdale, we were invited to participate in a special ecumenical service on Good Friday at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, across the street.

It was my privilege to have been invited as celebrant and preacher at our sister churches in Chicago in June, Chelmsford, Mass. in August and Toronto in December. I was also given the responsibility by the Primate to represent our Diocese at a special ecumenical service for the archbishop of Canterbury held at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on September 20.

Periodically, I have met with the deacon-in-charge of the Armenian Community of Northern Westchester, Deacon Arthur Sabounjian, who is administering capably the worship, educational, and organizational life of the community.

## COMMUNICATIONS

We have continued the publication of our monthly newsletter, HOPE, and have tried to bring news of community interest as well as educational articles to about 500 readers on our mailing list. Throughout the year, we have sent flyers, bulletins, and leaflets to our community on many occasions, especially that of the Bi-Centennial Thanksgiving Drive and Dinner. We also printed a monthly Sunday bulletin to inform church comers of planned activities and the celebration of feasts.

On different occasions, articles were placed in some of the Gannet papers about our church, particularly a major one about our looking for a church or property to buy.

In closing, while we rejoice and thank God for the progress registered in our parish, yet we are aware of our limitations and feel the need for augmented effort and increased participation to make this a more dynamic parish church.

Let us commit ourselves to doing better this year in our participation, fellowship and giving. Above all, in attending church services more regularly.

I acknowledge gratefully the support and the cooperation of the Parish Council and all church organizations: the school committee, the choir, the ACYOA (Senior and Junior), the Mr. & Mrs. & Miss Club, the Ladies' Guild, as well as the Building Fund Committee, and the Nominating and Auditing Committees.

May we always be guided by the Holy Spirit and may God bless our efforts.

Fr. Karekin Kasparian