

EULOGY FOR MGRDITCH DEMIRJIAN

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Who can understand the ways of the Lord? asked the Biblical prophet. “For His designs are great, and we cannot comprehend them.” That question echoes with us today, as we pay our final respects to a departed friend. We live in a world where petty men, with small souls and wicked hearts, seem to live on and on; yet a decent man like Mgrditch Demirjian—a man with a pious soul, a generous heart, and a great deal to live for—has been taken from us, and taken much before his time. God’s ways are mysterious indeed.

Yet it would be a disservice to his memory if we did not recall that, during his lifetime, Mgrditch Demirjian dedicated his heart and soul to the service of God—in spite of God’s mysterious nature, in spite of our human inability to understand His ways. At the center of Mgrditch’s life was a deep and abiding faith in the goodness of God, and in the hope offered to all mankind through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are the things he would want us to focus upon in this time of grief: not the darkness and confusion of his untimely death, but the brightness and goodness of his life.

That life began in the city of Dikranagert—a city with a rich heritage of Armenian faith. Like many promising

young men growing up in Armenian families in the interior of Turkey, Mgrditch was enrolled as a student in the Holy Cross Seminary in Istanbul. In studying at the Tbrivank, Mgrditch was following a family tradition; indeed, I first came to know the fine qualities of the Demirjian family through Mgrditch's older brother, who was a classmate of mine when I was student at the seminary.

Mgrditch came to America as a young man, seeking opportunity and a better life. He found both, through hard work, honesty and dedication. He married Joan Boudoukian—the daughter of Dr. Paul Zareh Boudoukian—and their union was blessed with a son,

Michael. Together with his brothers and sister, Mgrditch was part of a lively and respected family. Above all, in addition to the worldly success they achieved in America, the Demirjians never forgot their roots: they became active participants in the local Armenian community, and beloved members of the St. James parish.

Mgrditch was a successful businessman, and was loved and respected by his colleagues and his customers, as well as by his relatives and friends. His professional achievements were important to Mgrditch, and a great source of pride in his life. Yet there was an area of his life which seemed to hold even deeper meaning for him: his dedication to God, and his love of the Armenian Church.

As a man of faith, Mgrditch was active in many aspects of the life of the St. James parish. He was greatly inspired by the prospect of building a new Armenian sanctuary here in Westchester, and dedicated all his talent and enthusiasm to planning and fund-raising for the new church. As the construction project came closer and closer to becoming a reality, Mgrditch was looking forward to the consecration day for the St. James Church. Needless to say, when that day does come in the near future, Mgrditch's physical presence will be sorely missed. I know, however, that Mgrditch Demirjian's spiritual presence will always be a part of the St. James church and community.

To his wife, Joan; his son, Michael; his mother, Vergine; his brothers, Torkom, Zaven and Vasken; and his sister Jeanette, there is little to say by way of consolation. In Mgrditch, you shared your lives with a rare and noble soul. Even while he was with us on this earth, his heart lived in another place—a better place than our troubled and confusing world.

Now, Mgrditch has been called home. For those of us who admired him, who loved him, who were looking forward to his continued presence in our lives and in the life of our community, this departure has come much too early.

I can only add that his passing is a loss for our entire Church as well. We cannot afford to lose men like Mgrditch. But it is the teaching of the Church that such individuals are never truly lost. Christ has promised us that one day, we will be reunited with our loved ones. On that day, all things will be known, and we will finally understand why all things had to be. Amen.

END

[Opening quotation from Job 37:5]