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# St. James Armenian Church

VERY REV. FR. OSHAGAN GULGULIAN  
PASTOR

834 Pepper Avenue Richmond, Virginia 23226 - 804-282-3818

## 1992 PASTOR'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY Feb. 28, 1993

Once again, by the grace of God, we were able to complete another productive, difficult but successful year at St. James Armenian Church of Richmond, Virginia. To the best of my knowledge and recollection, I present my annual report to the members at this general membership meeting.

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity and thank God for giving me strength and courage, with reasonably good health and motivation to bear witness to God's living word. During the year, I was able to bring God's healing ministry to the ill, the solace of the Holy Spirit to the bereaved families, hope to the despaired, and peace and comfort to the despondent and restless.

### GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Parish Council:- I would like to thank all Parish Council members especially to those who throughout the entire year made great sacrifices to attend the Parish Council meetings, organize successful activities and wisely appropriated the church funds for the glory of God and for the betterment of our church and community. My special thanks to Linda Sharigian, Chairman of the Parish Council, who with great patience and wisdom was able to govern the Parish Council meetings, and along with her colleagues contributed to the success of our church.

Altar helpers:- My special thanks to Sub-deacon Krikor Garabedian, who assisted me in performing all the holy sacraments of the Armenian Apostolic Church and in all the services that we had in our church on special occasions and feast days throughout the entire year. Thank you to our altar boys especially to Christopher & Raffi Thomas and Garo Garabedian who devotedly served at the Holy Altar of God. A word of appreciation to their parents who faithfully and without hesitation brought their young ones to church.

Church Choir:- My special thanks to our Choir Director, Robert Thomas, for conducting the church choir. I highly commend the devotion of the Choir members for their service in the House of God.

I hope those choir members who can't quite make it to be in church from the beginning would made a special effort in this coming year to be on time. I am proud to say that the Choir Convention will be held in Richmond in 1994.

Also, special thanks to all those who were in charge of the Altar flowers and the preparation of the mass before Badarak.

Church Organizations:- My special thanks to all church organizations, namely, the Women's Guild, ACYOA, Armenian School and Choir for their input, cooperation and hard work. In reviewing their annual activities and financial reports, one can only congratulate them and admire their dedication to the church. May the good Lord bless you all and give you much strength and good health for the coming year. Almost all educational programs held by the Women's Guild were done with my participation and through the church office.

Altar Beautification:- My thanks to Lilly Thomas and others those who regularly washed and ironed the white robes that I wear for Badarak.

Secretarial:- My gratitude to Virginia Greene, my secretary who worked hard and long hours relentlessly handling all church publications, letters, periodicals and announcements and kept me aware of my appointments and my calendar.

## SACRAMENTS

Badarak: During 1992, I was able to celebrate Divine Liturgy almost every Sunday of the year except on a few occasions when I was away.

Special Services: I must remind you that as Armenians we have a different church calendar than other church denominations, therefore, in order to preserve our identity and learn more about our faith, church and culture, we must keep our heritage alive and make an extra effort to attend services especially on these special days. We also celebrated the service of the Presentation of The Lord to the Temple .(Diarentarach).

I am optimistic that in the coming year we will improve in this area.

Baptisms:- During 1992, I have performed five (5) baptisms and Chrismation. One being in Washington, DC at St. Mary's Armenian Church and one in Philadelphia at Holy Trinity Armenian Church and three in Richmond.

Weddings:- During 1992, I performed one (1) wedding.

Funerals:- During 1992, I performed one (1) funeral service.

To my report is attached all the names of the above services.

## MEETING AND INITIATIVES

Board Meetings:- For the records, I would like to state that during the past year, I presided over 12 Parish Council meetings; four special call meeting with the Parish Council, and also a special called general membership meeting, numerous Women's Guild Executive and General Meetings, ACYOA meetings, Armenian School meetings and 35th Anniversary Planning Committee meetings.

Home Visitation:- During the past year, I managed to make some home visitations, some repeated visitations and some first-time visitations, some at special occasions and family gatherings and sometimes just informal socializing. Most of my visitations were prearranged by the families that I visited. I would like to continue to keep it in that way. I would appreciate it if you would get in touch with me and make arrangements that would help me keep some order in my everyday schedule.

Home and Cemetery Blessings:- During the past Christmas and Easter I have blessed several homes. I will be happy if you will let me know ahead of time if you want to have your home or your loved ones graves blessed.

Hospital Visitation:- I ask you to let me know as soon as possible if you hear of anyone who is in the hospital, so that I may be able to bring God's healing ministry to the sick. Bringing God's healing ministry to the ill and to patients is one of my most cherished Pastoral duties. During the last year I have done numerous hospital visitations. I also made several visitations to a prison in the Petersburg and Norfolk areas.

## ORGANIZING

Since acquiring the computer and a new copy machine we have been fortunate enough to be able to produce our own flyers. We have also purchased a new program for the computer and are now able to design professional type flyers. At the present time we have been handling a great majority of the printing in our church office instead of sending it elsewhere to be printed.

Updated information from our homeland was being periodically received by the Diocese and in order to keep in close touch since a FAX machine was of great importance. The Parish Council approved this purchase and thanks to a concerned parishioner we were fortunate to have a FAX machine donated.

## REGIONAL, DIOCESAN and ECUMENICAL FORUM

As the Pastor of St. James Armenian Apostolic Church of Richmond, Virginia, and member of the Eastern Diocesan Clergy, I was invited to participate in the Diocesan, Regional and Ecumenical programs, but I was not able to attend most of the Diocesan activities because of the distance to the NY area.

I attended two clergy meetings in Livingston, NJ

Planned a show of Armenian Stone Art by Hovhanness Karabekian. Mr. Karabekian is from Armenia on an exchange program and now residing in Newport News and affiliated with the Electronic Institute.

In February we celebrated the 35th Anniversary of the consecration of St. James Armenian Church in Richmond, VA. Unfortunately, His Eminence Bishop Khajag Barsamian was unable to attend but was represented by his Vicar-General, V. Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian. Also present was Der Levon Arakelian of San Diego, CA who, I understand was instrumental in the establishment of the Richmond church. Der Arsen Barsamian was also invited but circumstances prevented his being present.

In February I travelled to Canada on personal matters and at the same time I was invited to participate in the Khevontiantz Day Clergy meeting which was held at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Toronto. I also participated in Montreal at the ordination of a deacon from Holy Etchmiadzin who was elevated to the rank of Der Hayr.

I served as assistant coordinator for the DFAR project for the USDA Humanitarian Aid and participated in the distribution of milk along with the Utah farmers who had donated a substantial amount of milk. During this time I visited the needy hospitalized children in Spitak and personally distributed money that the Parish Council and some parishioners had allotted to them.

In April 28-May 3, I attended the Diocesan Clergy Meeting in Florida and also the Diocesan Assembly held in Boca Ratan, FL

We hosted the visitation of Father Soukias Derderian of Armenia of the Araratian Diocese of Yerevan who also gave a lecture on The Revival of Religion in Armenia and reconstructional work of the Diocese. A reception was held in his honor in the church hall.

In May we hosted the ACYOA Archbishop Torkom Manoogian Invitational Tournament. During that time in attendance were Bishop Khajag Barsamian, V. Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian, Vicar-General of the Diocese; V. Rev. Fr. Soukias Derderian of Armenia; Rev. Fr. Mardiros Chevian, Youth Director of the Diocese; & Deacon Gary Alexander.

In June we hosted a concert by two Armenian artists, Babin Boghosian and Konstantin Petrosian of Armenia who were visiting the US from Armenia and who are part of the Yerevan Choral Society.

A visitation was made to NY for the presentation of the Ellis Island Medal to Suren Fesjian at the Diocesan complex.

Bishop Khajag Barsamian visited Richmond on Father's Day and celebrated the Divine Liturgy and delivered the Sermon. Following the services, a luncheon was served in his honor in the social hall.

In June I went to Toronto and Montreal to attend an ACYOC Convention and Sports weekend and celebrated Badarak at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Toronto.

I participated in a Clergy Retreat Conference in Westchester, NY. Coincidentally, I attended the celebration of the acceptance of Armenia into the UN and also witnessed the raising of the Armenian flag in the UN.

We were instrumental in sending Steven Barsamian to attend the Deacons Training Sessions at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary. Others were also asked but were unable to attend.

In September I attended the Ambassadorial reception for the first anniversary of the Independence of Armenia in Washington, DC

We hosted the visitation of V. Rev. Fr. Serovpe Isakhanian of the Armenian church of Moldava. Father Serovpe presented an informative lecture on the religious uprising in Moldava and also spoke on the conditions in Moldava in general. A reception was held in his honor.

I attended several meetings of the Association of Armenian Church Choirs of America as a member of Central Council.

Attended and participated in CROP Walk planning Committee and during these meetings the Parish was also represented by Linda Sharigian.

Participated in the joint Thanksgiving Day services held at Grace Baptist Church.

Held a meeting in Richmond Hill in Church Hill on the issue of crime.

Attended several meetings at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral for the Aid to Iraqi children project. During this meeting Bedros Bandazian and Lilly Thomas were representing the St. James Armenian community.

Met with Ed Briggs, religious editor of the Richmond Times-Dispatch and supplied him with religious materials and an Armenian Church calendar. As you have probably noticed, he is now publishing a listing of our Holy Days in the Religious Section of the Saturday newspaper.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Preparing bulletins for special religious holidays.

During 1992, we had several guest celebrants, Bishop Khajag Barsamian; V. Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian, Vicar-General; V. Rev. Fr. Seropve Isakhanian of Moldava; V. Rev. Fr. Soukias Derderian of Armenia; Rev. Fr. Garen Gdanian of Troy, NY and Rev. Fr. Arten Ashjian of the Diocese.

Participated in the planning of the ACYOA Halloween Party and also in the planning of the ACYOA Dance.

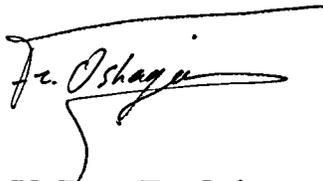
Served on the planning committee for the New Year's Eve dance sponsored by the Women's Guild.

### OTHER

We need your help and cooperation and I ask God to give me strength, health and wisdom to make all of our dreams a reality with His blessings.

Thank you for listening to me and I am now ready to hear your questions and comments.

Prayerfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Oshagan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

V. Rev. Fr. Oshagan Gulgulian  
Acting Pastor

**1992 SACRAMENTS**

**BAPTISMS**  
Karine Grigorian  
Ellen Evranian  
John Hutcheson

**WEDDINGS**  
Charles & Ellen Evranian

**FUNERALS**  
Azniv Euksuzian