

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
1998-99

Pastor's Report

Once again, I thank God for giving us this special opportunity to reflect on the year 1998.

The year 1998 was a year of Centennial Celebration of the founding of the Armenian Church in America. The Diocese celebrated many events to remember the founders of the Armenian Church in America. On this occasion, His Holiness Karekin I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, presided the centennial celebrations in New York.

As for our parish, we have an interesting and successful year. All the organizations of the Church partook in different activities of the Church.

My recent accomplishment was the creation of the new Junior Choir. Currently, we have 15 children learning and singing the Divine Liturgy. I practice with them every Friday. The Junior Choir created enthusiasm among the parents and the community members.

As for the adult choir, we need dedicated members who can commit themselves to come and sing every Sunday. Currently, there are only 6 committed and dedicated choir members. We do not have enough people to sing our beautiful ancient hymns. This is a serious concern of mine.

I cannot forget to mention the dedication of our altar servers, who diligently come to church every Sunday to sing on the altar. Presently, we have 7 altar servers: Gagik Suleymanian, Diran Arslanian, Anthony Deese, Michael Amirkhanian, Christopher Thomas, Jad Babik, and Mihran Ozbalik. Soon, I will be accepting two new candidates for the altar. During the year 1998, two of our altar servers were sent to St. Nersses Armenian Seminary Summer Conference. We were able to send them by using the Vranian Youth Fund and the Educational Fund. In July, 1998, the group took an unforgettable trip to Montreal, Canada. Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the Primate of Canada, welcomed us and he spend some time with our youth. They also served at the Holy Martyr's Church in Bayside, NY.

The ACYOA Jrs. had some activities in our parish. This year, I appointed Aline Garabedian to be the Advisor of the Junior ACYOA. I will be creating senior ACYOA next month.

The Armenian School continues its program. Last year, I appointed Surpouhi Voskanian as the superintendent of the Armenian School. This year, I appointed Nune Karapetian as the new Superintendent of the Armenian School.

Besides the Armenian School for children, we have Armenian Language classes for adults. I have beginners I, beginners II, and Advance I.

Our Senior's Group met only a few times. Victoria Jamgochian organized a few events for us. We will continue to meet again this year. Currently, I am planning a trip to the Armenian Embassy in Washington, D.C.

My sincere appreciation goes to the Parish Council members. They are a great team to work with. They always support my vision, and they work hard for the welfare for our community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them again for the beautiful banquet they organized in my honor, on the day of my graduation.

The women's Guild continued its programs and activities under the leadership of Arax Michele, who is currently the chairperson. Two weeks ago, I appointed Sirvart Zurnacian, and Laura Klanian to serve on the Executive Board.

Our Sunday School continues its classes. There are almost 25 students who attend the Sunday School. Thanks to all the teachers for their dedication and commitment. Sona Pomfret is the Superintendent.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few individuals who made a major contribution for the year 1998. Mr. William Darhanian made \$20,000 for the Richmond ACYOA Chapter. Mrs. Isabelle Vranian made donation of \$8,000, for the Vranian Fund, and Mrs. Ann Markarian made \$5000.00 for the use of the Armenian School and for the altar servers' social activities.

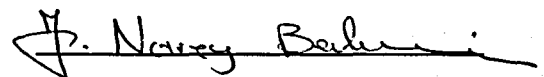
I am hoping that in 1999 we will continue to have other generous individuals who will continue to support our Church financially to accomplish many programs and activities.

Fortunately, our members are realizing that our community cannot live with the income of the Annual Food Festival. There are many expenses and needs. In our days, everything is expensive. We live in a computerized society and the Church grows with the changing environment.

Special thanks to all those who always support St. James. Fortunately, we have no poor among our members. The sense of responsibility and belonging in our Community is growing. The future looks promising. We are embracing new members. Our community is thriving.

May God bless our community. May His Spirit help us to become stronger community in 1999. May His Divine presence enables me to continue His Holy and Sacred mission.

Very Rev. Dr. Nareg Berberian



Pastor
St. James Armenian Church