

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT - 1975

We record with sorrow the deaths of Mr. Mihran Mesrobian, architect of our church, Mr. Michael Melkisetian, Mrs. Hngaper Arkoian, Mrs. Louise Hewatt (née Maranian), and Mrs. Artemis Bogosian.

During 1975 the Parish Council held 18 meetings. There were in our church six weddings, including one performed by the Assyrian Bishop for an Assyrian couple; three baptisms, one confirmation, 40 requiem services, and a memorial service on April 17th commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Armenian Martyrdom. On this day His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian offered the opening prayer in the U.S. Senate. A Martyrs Day Mass was offered on April 24th, and an Explanatory Mass held with English narration in September.

Visiting Clergy

Following the resignation of Bishop Papken, effective November 1st, St. Mary's had Divine Liturgy every Sunday, beginning November 16th, with several visiting clergymen officiating.

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

Delegates attending this year were Bishop Papken, Mr. Abraham Bodurian, Mr. Ashod Krikorian (substituting for Col. Juskalian), and Dr. S. A. Essefian ex-officio. The Diocesan Delegate's report, prepared by Mr. Bodurian, is attached.

Cultural Programs

- Exhibition of amateur artists;
- Vartanants Day program, sponsored by the Knights of Vartan;
- Professional Artists outdoor show, sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association;
- Komitas Mass presented by the Jamgochian Chorale.

Special Events

- Reception in honor of Bishop Arsen Berberian of Etchmiadzin and Metropolitan Elias of Georgia, who were visiting in the U.S.A. as guests of the National Council of Churches;
- A Memorial Service on the 60th anniversary of the Armenian Martyrdom, attended by distinguished clergymen and representatives of government and the diplomatic corps, followed by a banquet honoring His Eminence Archbishop Torkom;
- Theological Education Sunday was observed, a special collection yielding \$52.00 was sent to the Diocese.

Two events planned for October were cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. Mr. Edward Sourian was invited to give a talk on Armenian humor but his unexpected heart attack changed our plans. Also the film showing by the Ambassador of Cyprus had to be cancelled due to events which coincided with the date set for the showing.

27th Annual Bazaar

Under the able chairmanship of Mr. Jerry Hekimian, assisted by a host of highly skilled men and women, the bazaar was a signal success. We netted \$9,200, of which half went to the Building Fund and will be reflected in its 1976 statement.

Church Membership

Membership again showed an increase over last year. As of today (Jan. 16, 1976) we have 125 fully paid-up members plus 17 regular members who have not yet paid up. A few others have joined recently and made small payments.

DIOCESAN ASSESSMENTS

In 1975 the assessment was \$3,875.00, it will soon increase again, the percentage has not been decided yet. Our Assessment is reduced by \$100 for each St. Vartan steward from our Parish. In 1975 we were credited for only three stewards, as against ten the previous year.

Clergy Stipends

Effective January 1, 1976, these stipends will be increased. (The new schedule was published in the January issue of Shnorhali). This will call for an increase in pledges and a membership drive.

Clergymen's Licenses for D. C.

D. C. laws require that clergymen performing marriages in this city be duly licensed (fee \$5.00) by the Dept. of Justice, Marriage License Bureau. Accordingly we arranged to have the Rev. Father Arsen Barsamian of Richmond, Va., registered, also His Eminence Archbishop Torkom, who in turn may empower other clergymen to perform valid marriages in the District of Columbia.

Building Improvements

The round window in the Baptismal Room and a window in the Parish Council room were vandalized. These were repaired. The old canopy over the 42nd Street entrance was torn down and a new one built. Repairs were made in the electrical wiring, in the boiler room, on plumbing, in the washrooms, and a broken door. One Sunday School classroom was carpeted, locks were replaced.

Flooding

Several times the auditorium was flooded following heavy rainstorms. Some of this is unavoidable but specialists consulted suggested possible remedies, such as excavating along the foundations and waterproofing, etc.

Rental of Hall and Parking Space

Income from these sources amounted to \$1,262.50, or double that of 1974. Hall rentals were efficiently managed by Miss Ann Kavookian.

Purchases

Six tables, a new microphone, and books for our Book Stall were purchased.

Inventory

Inventories were taken of all church possessions, except kitchenware and the books which were in the pastor's study but are no longer there. Cloth labels, marked "St. Mary's Armenian Church", were ordered. These will be sewn on vestments, garments, altar cloths, and embroidered items.

Listing of Gifts in a Permanent Record

The chairman is continuing to identify gifts made to our church since the 1950s. These are being recorded on index cards, which will later be entered in a permanent record, stating name of the donor, in memory of whom, and if possible date of the gift. Parishioners who have made such (non-monetary) gifts may please inform the church office so that these gifts may be identified and properly recorded.

Problem of Sunday School Classrooms

Serious consideration was given to the imperative need for additional classrooms. A committee was formed to look into various possibilities: (a) building a 50'x12' balcony (over the main entrance of the church) for four classrooms. With two stairwells added, the cost would be about \$18,000; (b) excavating the ground next to the church, building a foundation suitable to support a future two or three-story edifice, with a roof over this foundation. This would afford plenty of space for classrooms and other church needs at a cost of about \$60,000 plus.

ACYOA Juniors

Most of the senior members of the ACYOA have gone away to college and elsewhere, leaving almost exclusively Juniors aged 14 to 17. They are hampered by the fact that the new ACYOA Constitution adopted in 1975 makes no provision for Juniors or offers any guidelines, other than that they are to operate under the supervision of the Parish Council. Meanwhile our Juniors have shown responsible leadership in

their diversified and enthusiastic activities. They have been helpful in many phases of church activity. On Palm Sunday ACYOA members distributed the palms, they worked hard during the bazaar, donated \$100.00 and a Christmas tree to the Church.

Church Bulletin

The Shnorhali is sent to a mailing list of about 400. Except for two months this year the Chairman of the Parish Council again took charge of the bulletin. She takes this opportunity to offer good luck wishes and a bottle of aspirin to her successor.

Baltimore Community

Spokesmen for the Baltimore community have indicated that they prefer to come to St. Mary's in Washington instead of having services in an Episcopal Church in Baltimore. Our various invitations to come here in a group have remained unanswered.

Bingo

We call your attention to Title 22, Sec. 1504, of the D. C. Code, which forbids any form of gaming in the District of Columbia, including Bingo. Failure to comply is punishable by imprisonment "for not more than five years."

Hearings

A letter was received from Polly Shakleton, member of the D. C. Council, Ward 3, advising that a hearing would be held on May 12 in the District Building, to consider a request for a liquor license by Ratzos (to be opened on the premises of the "Godfather," which already has an unsavory reputation.) Miss Kavookian conferred with attorneys representing area residents. Later Mr. Mukhitar Derderian, representing our parish, testified at the hearing. The result was that Ratzos was denied a liquor license and could not locate on the premises of the "Godfather", which latter is still in business much to our distress.

Massage Parlors

The proliferation of these nuisance establishments in residential areas has caused grave concern to the neighborhood churches. We did our share in collecting signatures to have these places banned. The D. C. Zoning Commission is now in process of taking some action.

Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Parish Council I wish to express deep appreciation to all the subordinate bodies of the church, to all parishioners, and to the friends of St. Mary's who helped us in our work. A special vote of thanks to the members of the Women's Guild. They never fail the church! Also many thanks to Mrs. Elma Johnson, church secretary, who did much of the office work.

Respectfully submitted by


S. A. Esserian, Chairman
Parish Council

January 16, 1976

Enclosed are all pertinent reports except the Auditing Committee's Report and the ACYOA Treasurer's Report.

(Please bring these reports with you to the Annual Assembly as the copies available are limited to one set per member.)