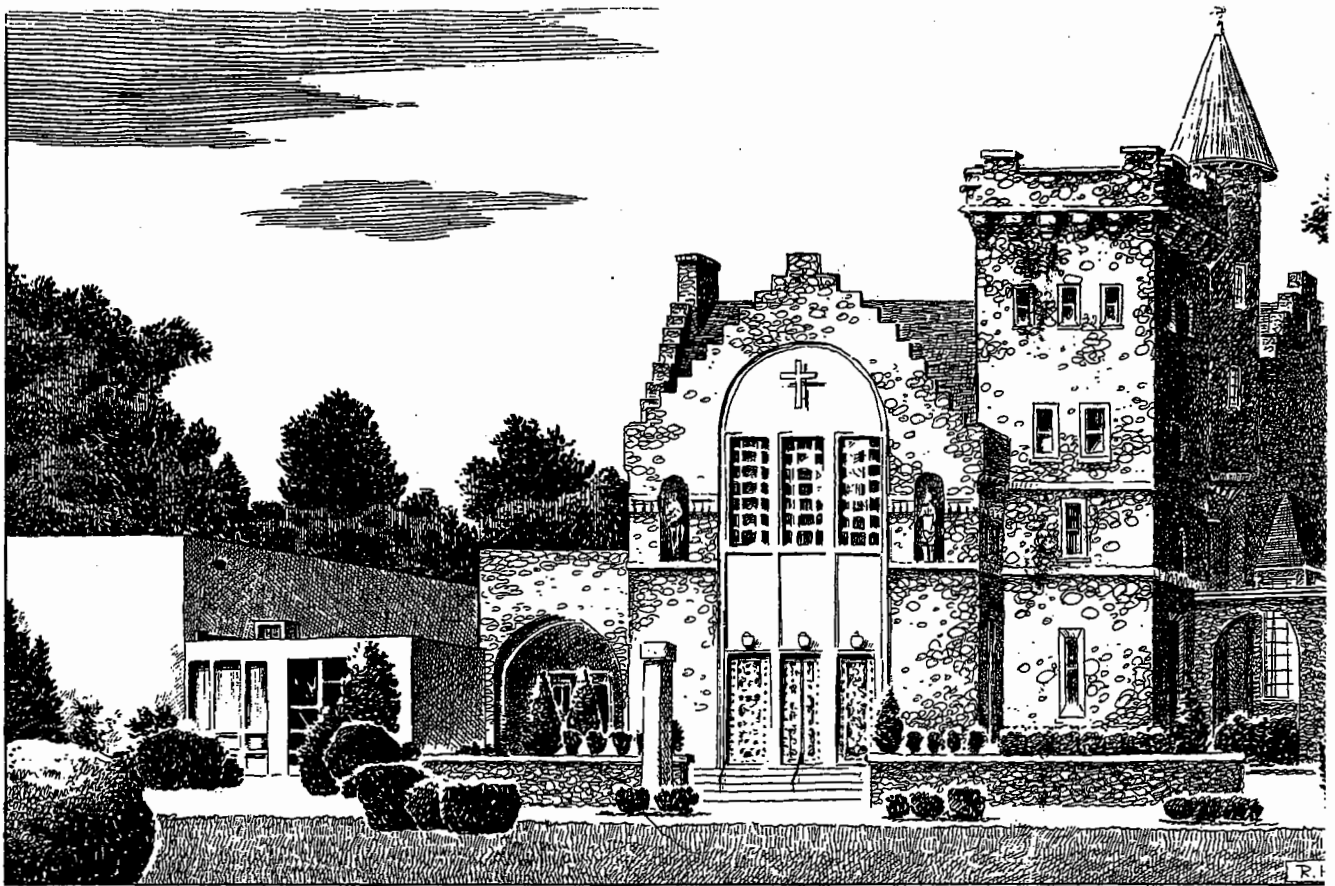


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ST SAHAG AND ST MESROB ARMENIAN CHURCH WYNEWOOD PA



The Very Reverend Father Haigazoun Najarian
Pastor

ST. SAHAG & ST. MESROB ARMENIAN CHURCH PARISH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

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Church Office Hours

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Pastor's Hours

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Sunday Divine Liturgy Services

Morning Service – 10:00 a.m.*

Divine Liturgy – 10:30 a.m.*

(* - summer hours begin ½ hour earlier)

Choirmaster – Noubar Karagulian

Organist – Laraine Ballard



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 Lisa Manookian Vice Chairman
 Joseph Brinker Treasurer
 Robin Williams Assistant Treasurer
 Carol Lesczynski Recording Secretary
 Richard Shakarjian Corresponding Secretary
 Melcom Avrigian Advisor
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Lisa Manookian

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Sossi Avrigian

Sarkis Etoian

Alice Torossian

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ACYOA Srs. Robin Williams

Armenia Outreach V. Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian

Choir Elizabeth Barsamian

Hokejash Committee Edward Boyajian

Men's Club Richard Shakarjian

Permanent Endowment Fund Robert Cannuscio

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Women's Guild Carol Lesczynski

Youth Committee Jovia Keytanjian

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Lisa Manookian, *Editor*

Armenian Heritage Bookstore

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The Pastor's Corner

Armenian Women and Christianity

(An outline for the 1-14th centuries)

To speak about the character of the Armenian women, one has to look back to the role models in history. From Gospel tradition, St. Mary stands out as the supreme example par excellence. Most of our churches are called after her beginning with Etchmiadzin, Soorp Mariam ("St. Mary") or Soorp Asdvadzadzin ("bearer of God"). It is the icon of the Virgin with the child Jesus that adorns our altars. Through her mediation, our prayers, supplications and thanks are directed to the Lord. The name Mary, with its variations, is given to many maidens from peasants to queens, with the expectation that her blessings will come upon them and adorn their souls. However, history is silent most of the time even to mention the wives of important figures. The historian Agathangelos, as a passing remark, mentions that St. Gregory was married and had two children without mentioning the name of his wife. According to Khorenatsi, her name was Mary, daughter of David.

In the first century, the tradition mentions St. Santukhd and Vokuhi as the first martyrs whose blood made Armenia a fertile land for the Christian faith. Without the martyrdom of St. Hripsime and St. Gayaneh, it is impossible to envision the course of the events and the victory of Christianity in Armenia in the beginning of the 4th century. As the Good News was first witnessed and later transferred by women, so it was Princess Khosrovitukhd who reminded everyone that only St. Gregory from the dungeon could heal King Drtad and then convert the Armenians to the Christian faith. Next to King Drtad, Queen Ashkhen is always present. It is obvious that she was in agreement for the acceptance and the spread of the Christian faith in Armenia. When St. Gregory was preparing a resting place for the martyred maidens, "The queen, her daughters, and the daughters of the princes brought purple robes and brocades gold and blue, and white garments and piled at the door of the vat-store gold and silver and linen." If the King was busy in digging the earth or bringing huge stones from Mount Masis, Ashkhen and Khosrovitukhd gathered the earth into their clothes and removed it. St. Hripsime's fame was passed from one generation to generation throughout Armenia. Gomidas Catholicos, in the 7th century, dedicated a famous hymn to the martyrs. The current magnificent martyrium (618 AD) is built by him also. Vrtanes Kertogh (7th century) in his work *Against the Iconoclasts*, testifies among others, of the pictures and murals of St. Hripsime and Gayaneh. In 1010 A.D., next to the Cathedral of Ani, a martyrium was established after St. Hripsime, having relocated there some of the relics of the Saint from Vagharshabat. In the church of Dikran Honents (c 1260), murals of St. Hripsime and Gayaneh are mentioned. In the 13th century, among the churches of Sis, then the capital of Cilicia, a church after St. Hripsime is mentioned. Among the active churches of the Diocese of Siunik is mentioned St. Hripsime of the village of Keghanush. In Krna, Nakhichevan, the ruins of St. Hripsime were testified till the 1970ies.

In the 4th century, the figure of Karekin Rshtuni's wife, Hamazasbui, stands out among all others. After King Arshag II was imprisoned by Shabuh II of Persia, the Persian army invaded Armenia. The princess was among those who were taken captive and imprisoned in Van. When the pressure and the tortures could not convince her to deny her Christian faith, she was hanged naked from one of the towers of the castle of Van. Even after her death, her body was left there hanging. Her bones fell and were collected, one by one, by her nurse, and buried in Tsorovank or Salnabad. Through the orders of King Bab of Armenia (c 370 AD), the tradition of gathering maidens in convents for asceticism and prayer came to an end. The women of the martyred and exiled princes of Vartanank, more than 37 in number, withdrew from their mansions to impregnable locations. For more than 12 years, according to the historian Yeghishe, these tender women of the Armenian nation, like ascetics, willingly took upon themselves the harsh way of life, all kind of deprivation and affliction, but they never gave up their faith. Through their prayers, they not only stood firm in their faith, but they taught their children with the vision of Christ descending upon St Gregory, and through the God-given letters of St. Mesrob, that the spirit is above the matter and that the perceived death is eternity. Tsuvig Ardzruni, wife of the martyred prince Hmayag Mamigonian, took refuge at her sister Anushvram's place. The latter was married to Prince Ashusha of Georgia.

There the orphans of the Mamikonians and of Gamsaragans were gathered. Here, all were educated and instructed by princess Dzuvig. According to Ghazatr Parbetsi, “she became a renowned woman, superior in everything and good intellectually she nurtured and counseled her children in the Georgian land in the house of Ashusha”.

The daughter of Vartan Mamigonian, Shushanig was married to Varsken, the son of Prince Ashusha. After Ashusha’s death, his son, Varsken, succeeded him as the prince of the region c. 462 A.D. In 466, Prince Varsken met the Persian king Peroz in his summer residence, Ctesiphon, where the prince converted to the Zoroastrian religion, and took as his wife the king’s mother-in-law and promised to convert all of his household as well. But St. Shushanig declared that She would take refuge in God, would die for His name, and would not renounce the tradition of her ancestors, the enlighteners of Armenia. The author of her life testifies that the saint always carried with her a small gospel, which belonged to her ancestor St. Sahag. With it, she prayed to God in her solitude. St. Shushanig passed the seven years of her imprisonment with fasting, watching, in prayer and with tears, more than a solitude. She preferred to die in the name of Christ than trample the tradition of her holy ancestors. She died as a martyr in 474. Her apostate husband, Varsken, was killed in 482 by King Vakhtang Korgasal of Georgia.

After King Arshag was imprisoned by Shabuh of Persia, Queen Parantsem, for more than 14 months, withstood the attacks of the invading Persians in the castle of Ardakers. However, when the famine and the sickness killed thousands, Queen Parantsem surrendered. King Shabuh would have been pleased if the queen submitted to his wishes after renouncing her Christian faith. However the brave queen of the proud Arshag rejected Shabuh’s proposal as nonsense, preferring martyrdom to submission.

During the invasions of the Tatars, Paldun Amira besieged Ani in 1126. Among the defenders of the city is mentioned a woman called Aydzemnig, who encouraged the defenders, rushing from one wall to the other. Even when arrows pierced her body she continued fighting and defending till her death. Queen Nana-Vanenu, the wife of King Apas I Pakraduni, built a wall around the monastery of Hovhannavak. This was obviously to defend the monastery and its inhabitants from attacking hordes. Around 1360 or so, among the Armenian knights of Cilicia, Prince Hetum through valor deeds, defended Cilicia against the Egyptian armies. After his death, his wife Zarmanuhi, with a band of brave men withdrew to the mountains and continued her struggle against the enemy. The brave maiden of Mush is another example. During the 1386 invasion of Timurlane, the inhabitants of Daron withdrew to the mountains to defend themselves. A woman holding a sword in one hand and a little boy in the other were trying to follow the people. Seeing that she would not be able to defend herself or outrun the enemy, she killed her son and threw herself into a deep gorge. She preferred such a death for Christ’s sake rather than to see her son and herself tortured and degraded in the hands of barbarians. In 1727, when the Turkish armies besieged the convent of Halitsor, the nuns there took active part in defending their convent.

During the domination of the Arabs, from the 7th through 9th centuries, many Armenian women were taken captive, imprisoned, or taken hostage. Many of them were martyred for not renouncing their faith. After the battle of Vartanagard in 703, about 300 Arabs fled the battle and took refuge in the house of Princess Shushan, the daughter of Prince Vahan Gamsaragan. Shushan not only opened the doors of her house and saved their lives, she fed them, clothed them and even cared for the wounded. However, several years later, she was taken captive to Kharan, where, under much hardship, she died inheriting confessors’ name. In the middle of the 9th century, Hripsime, the sister of Prince Pakarad Pakraduni, and the wife of the Aghtsnik margrave, interceded on behalf of the city of Shahasdan, which the Armenians had besieged. The Armenians heed the Princess and spared the Arab population. The same princess, on behalf of her son, Prince Ashot Ardzruni, goes as an envoy to Abuset the Arab ruler of Armenia. The princess later again tries to mediate between her son Kurken and Bugha, the Arab general, but this time she is imprisoned in Tvin and later taken with the other princes to Samara where the princess dies as a confessor of the Christian faith.

After the martyrdom of Prince Vahan Koghtnatsi (737), his sister Khosrovitukhd composes a hymn for her brother. In the same period Sahagatukhd, the daughter of the dean of Tvin’s cathedral, and the sister of Sdepanos Siunetsi, lived her life in the valley of Garni. As a famous musician, she composed many hymns, among them *Srpuhi Mariam*. She even taught music to her students, teaching them while being separated by a curtain. Those are very unique instances, which show the tolerance and the open-mindedness of the Armenian Church towards women and their participation in its affairs.

Հայ Իզական Սերը Պաշտպան Բրիգադներում

(Համառոտ ուրուագիծ 1-14րդ դարերում)

Հայ մոր եւ կնոջ կերպարի մասին խօսելու համար պէտք է նայիլ մեր անցեալի տիպար կերպարներուն որոնք նախօրինակ հանդիսացան մեր իզական սերին եւ ի մասնաւորի բոլոր մայրերուն: Ս. Գրքի պարագային Ս. Մարիամ կոյն է առաջին եւ գերագոյն օրինակը, անոր անունով կոչուած են մեր եկեղեցիներու մեծամասնութիւնը (Ս. Մարիամ կամ Ս. Աստուածածին) սկսելով Ս. Էջմիածնէն: Ս. Կոյսի նկարն է մանուկ Յիսուսի հետ միասին որ կը պարտարէ մեր խորանները եւ որուն միջոցաւ Տիրոջ կ'ուղղուին մեր աղօթքները, պաղատանքներն ու գոհաբանութիւնները ըլլայ պաշտամունքի ընթացքին, թէ անկէ անկախ: Ս. Մարիամի անունը հաճախ տրուած է մեր իզական սերունդին պարզ գեղջուկէն մինչեւ իշխանութիւններն ու թագուհիները, յուսալով որ անոր շնորհները կ'իջնեն ու կը պարտարեն անոնց հոգիները: Պատմութիւնը սակայն շատ ժառոտ եղած է իզական սերին նկատմամբ յաճախ նոյնիսկ կարեւոր անձանց կանանց անունները մնացած են անձանօթ: Օրինակ Ագաթանգեղոս պատմիչ հարեւանցի, իմիջ այլոց կ'ըսէ թէ Ս. Գրիգոր ամուսնացած էր եւ ունէր երկու որդիներ առանց յիշելու կնոջ անունը: Ըստ Խորենացիի կնոջ անունն էր՝ Մարիամ դուստր Դարթի:

Առաջին դարուն կը յիշուին Ս. Մանդուխտ Իշխանուհին եւ Ս. Ոգուհի Թագուհին: Անոնք առաջին հայ նահատակները եղան որ իրենց արեւմբ որոգեցին Բրիգադներում հունտերը հայ հողին ու հոգւոյն մէջ: Առանց Ս. Հռիփսիմէի եւ Ս. Գայանէի նահատակութեան դժուար է պատկերացնել դէպքերու ընթացքը եւ Բրիգադներում յաղթանակը Հայոց մօտ: Ինչպէս Բրիգադի Յարութեան բարի լուրը՝ Աւետիար, կանայք էին որ փոխանցեցին առաքելներուն, նոյնպէս մեր մօտ, Խորովիդուխտ Իշխանուհին էր որ յուշեց Գրիգորի անձը որպէս հնարաւոր միջոցը Տրդատ Արքայի բուժման եւ ապա Հայոց դարձին: Տրդատի կողքին միշտ կը յիշուի Աշխէն թագուհին: Ինչ որ կը նշանակէ որ ան ալ ջատագով եղած է Նոր հաւատի ընդունման ու տարածմանը ի Հայս, այս կ'երեւի երբ Ս. Գրիգոր կ'ուզէ հանգստարան պատրաստել նահատակուած կոյսերուն համար «Թագաւորի կինը, դասրերը եւ նահապարներու դասրերը կը բերէին ծիրանի եւ սպիտակ դիպակներ... ոսկի արծաթ եւ կտանէր կը հաւաքէին հնձանին դուրին մօտ»: Եթէ Տրդատ գետինը փորելով սուրբերու հանգստարանը կը պատրաստէր կամ Մասիս սարէն ապամաճներ կը բերէր, ապա Աշխէն եւ Խորովիդուխտ իրենց փեշերուն մէջ կրելով հողը կը մասնակցէին եղած աշխատանքին:

Թէ ինչքան տարածուած ու յարգուած է Հռիփսիմէի անունը Հայոց մօտ ահա հսկիրձ վկայութիւններ այս մասին: Յիշենք որ Առաջին Արաբոյիկոս, կառուցողը Հռիփսիմէի ներկայ վեհապալաց վկայարանին (618 թ), գրեց եւ յօրինեց «Անձինք Նուիրեայք» սքանչելի շարականը: Վրթանէս Բերթող 7րդ դար կը վկայէ իր Պատկերամարտութեան դէմ գործին մէջ գոյութիւն ունեցող այլոց շարքին Ս. Հռիփսիմէի եւ Ս. Գայանէի նկարներու եւ որմնանկարներուն մասին: 1010 թին Անիի մայր տաճարին մօտ հիմնուած է Ս. Հռիփսիմէանց վկայարան մը Վաղարշապատէն աչաւտղ փոխադրելով սուրբերու մատուցներէն մաս մը: Տիրան Հոնէնց եկեղեցու մէջ (շուրջ 1260) կը յիշուին որմնանկարներ նուիրուած Ս. Գայանէի եւ Ս. Հռիփսիմէի: ԺԳ դարուն Սսի եկեղեցիներու շարքին մէջ կը յիշուի նաեւ Ս. Հռիփսիմէ: Սինեաց թեմի գործող եկեղեցիներու մէջ կը յիշուի Գեղանոյց գիւղի Ս. Հռիփսիմէ: Բռնայի մէջ Նախիջեան մինչեւ շուրջ 1970 թուական կը վկայուի Ս. Հռիփսիմէ Եկեղեցոյ ստեղծման մասին:

Չորրորդ դարուն իգական սերին կրնանք առանցնացնել Գարեգին Ռշտունիի կինը՝ Հանապասպուհին:

Հանապասպուհի Իշխանուհին Շապուհ Բ արշաւանքներուն ժամանակ (Արշակ թագաւորի բանտարկութիւնէն ետք) գերի ինկածներէն մին էր արգելափակուած Պարսիկներու կողմէ Վանի բերդին մէջ: Երբ եղած ճնշումներն ու տանջանքները բաւարար չեղան որ Իշխանուհին ուրանար իր հաւատքը, զայն գլխիվար մերկ կախեցին աշտարակներէն մէկէն եւ նոյնիսկ մահէն ետք մնաց այդպէս մինչեւ որ անոր ոսկորները մէկ առ մէկ ինկան եւ անոր դայեակը հաւաքելով զանոնք անփոփեց Չորովանգ կամ Մալնապատ կոչուած վայրին մէջ:

Ճիշտ է որ Պապ թագաւորի հրահանգով կը փակուին մենաստանները (շուրջ 370) եւ Հայ իրողութեան մէջ հաստատուած կը հանդիպինք մինաձնուհիներու: Մակայն Վարդանանց Ճակատամարտի փոռած իշխաններու եւ ապա արքայազ 37 նախարարներու կանայք լքելով իրենց հանգստաւէտ դղեակները քաշուեցան անմատչելի վայրեր: Ըստ Եղիշէ պատմիչի «Տիկնայք փառկասունք Հայոց աշխարհի» նման մինաձնուհիներու, 12 երկար տարիներ, յանձն առին չարքաշ կեանքն ու ամէն տեսակի կրկանք ու նեղութիւն սակայն չհրաժարուեցան իրենց հաւատքէն: Ոչ միայն աղօթքներով ամուր մնացին իրենց հաւատքին մէջ այլ եւ դաստիարակեցին իրենց զաւակները Ս. Գրիգորի Միաձնատէջ տեսիլքով եւ Ս. Մեսրոպի Աստուածատուր տարերով կրթեցին մատղաշ սերունդը, թէ՛ հոգի առաւել է քան զմարմին եւ թէ ինացեալ մահը անմահութիւն է: Նահառակ Հնայեակ Մամիկոնեանի կինը Չուիկ Արծրունի իր քրոջ Անուշիւրանի (անուանացած Վրաց Աշուշա բղեշխին հետ) մօտ կ'ապաստանի: Այնտեղ կը հաւաքուին Մամիկոնեաններու եւ Կանապականներու որբերը որոնք կը դաստիարակուին Չուիկի կողմէ: Դալար Փարպեցի կը վկայէ «Եղեւ կին անուանի եւ առաւելեալ ամենայն լաւ եւ մտաւոր մասանք... սնոյց եւ խրատեաց փորդիսն իւր յաշխարհին վրաց ի տան Աշուշայի»: Վարդան Մամիկոնեանի մեծ աղջիկը Շուշանիկը անուանացած էր Վրաց Աշուշա Բղեշխի որդոյն Վարագենի հետ: Աշուշայի մահէն ետք իր որդին Վարագեն կը յաջորդէ որպէս Բղեշխ շուրջ 462 ին: 466-ին Վարագեն Տիպոն երթալով կ'ընդունի Զրադաշտական կրօնը եւ Պերոպ արքայի փոքանչը իրեն կին առնելով կը խոստանայ իր ողջ ընտանիքը դարձնել Պարսից հաւատին: Մակայն Շուշանիկ կ'ըսէ եւ Աստուծոյ պիտի ապաւինիմ եւ իր անունին համար պիտի մեռնիմ եւ պիտի չորանամ աւանդութիւնը իմ նախահայրերուս՝ Հայաստանը լուսաորոտներուն: Վարքագիրը կ'ըսէ թէ Սրբուհին իր հետ միշտ կը կրէր փոքրիկ Աւետարան մը իր նախահայր Ս. Մահակէն մնացած, անով ան կ'աղօթէր առ Աստուած իր առանձնութեան մէջ: Իր բանտարկութեան եօթ տարիները Շուշանիկ անցուց ծոնապահութեամբ, աղօթքով, հսկումով եւ արցունքով աւելի քան միանձնուհի մը: Ան աւելի լաւ համարեց մեռնիլ Բրիստոսի անուան համար քան ոտնակոխել իր սուրբ նախահայրերուն աւանդութիւնը: Շուշանիկ կը մարտիրոսանայ 474ին, իսկ իր ուրացող անուսինը Վարագեն կ'ապանմուի 482ին Վախթանգ Գորկասալ Վրաց թագաւորէն:

Երբ Արշակ Թագաւոր բանտարկուած էր Շապուհի կողմէ, Փառանձեմ թագուհին քաջաբար կ'ընդունանար Պարսից բանակներուն տանկորս ամիս մինչեւ որ սովը եւ հիւանդութիւնը կը հնձեր պաշարուածները եւ Փառանձեմ անձնատուր կ'ըլլար: Շապուհ գոհ պիտի ըլլար եթէ Փառանձեմ որպէս հյու հպատակ ենթարկուէր իր կանքին իհարկէ ուրանալով Բրիստոնէութիւնը: Մակայն հպարտ Արշակի քաջասիրտ թագուհին ոչինչ համարելով Շապուհի առաջարկը յանձն կ'առնէր նահատակուիլ՝ քան հպատակուիլ:

Արաբական տիրապետութեան շրջանին Օրբելեան պատմիչ հետեալը կը վկայէ: Աղուանի Վարապորդաւ Իշխանի դուստրը Շահանդուխտ Միւնիք հարս երթալու

Ճանապարհին Տարթաի մօտ այլապզիներու յարձակումին կ'ենթարկուի: Երբ ան հասու կ'ըլլայ թէ անոնք պինք հափշտակելու են իր ձիով յանդերձ անդունդ մը կը գահալիծէ: Հրաշքով անոր ոչինչ կը պատահի: Եահանդուխտ կ'ուխտէ ճգնաթեան անցնիլ, իրեն կը միանան այլ աղջիկներ եւ կուսանոց մը կը հիմնեն: Եահանդուխտ այնտեղ ճգնելով 30 տարի սրբութեամբ կը վախճանի:

Թաթարական արշաւանքներու ժամանակ երբ Բալտուն Ամիրան կը պաշարէ Անին 1126թ.ին Անիի պաշտպաններուն մէջ կը յիշուի այժեանիկ անունով հերոսուհի մը որ պարիսպէ պարիսպ վապելով կը քաջալերէ փնտորները, նոյնիսկ երբ նետեր կը խոցոտեն անոր մարմինը ան կը շարունակէ պայքարիլ մինչեւ իր մահը: Յովհաննաւականք-Աբաս Ա Բագրատունի թագաւորի կնոջ Նանայի (Վանէնու) միջոցաւ կառուցուած է վանքի պարիսպը, որը նոյնպէս պաշտպանողական նպատակ կը հետապնդէ: 1360-ական թուականներուն Կիլիկիոյ Հայ ասպետներուն մէջ կը յիշուի Հեթում որ քաջագործութիւններ կ'ընէ Եգիպտացիներուն դէմ: Ի մահէն ետք կինը Չարմանուհի լեռները կը քաշուի քաջապուններու խումբով մը եւ կը շարունակէ պայքարը: Ասոնց շարքին կարելի է յիշել նաեւ Մշեցի քաջուհին որուն անունը մեպի չէ փոխանցուած: Լենկթիմուրի արշաւանքներու ժամանակ 1386թ.ին Տարթաի ժողովուրդը կը փորձէ լեռները ապաստանիլ ասոնց մէջ Մշեցի կին մը սուրը մէկ ձեռքին եւ միւսին փոքրիկ վաւակը կը փորձէ հետեփ ժողովուրդին: Տեսնելով թշնամի փնտրներուն մօտիկութիւնը որ անկարող պիտի ըլլար պաշտպանուիլ կամ խուսափիլ անոնցմէ: Կը նախնարէ սուրով սպաննել իր վաւակը եւ ինքն ալ գահաւէժ կ'ըլլայ բարձունքէն քան իր եւ իր վաւակի չարչարանքն ու նուաստութիւնը բարբարոսներու ձեռքին:

1727-ին երբ թուրք բանակները շրջապատած են Հայիձորի կուսանոց անապատը անոր պաշտպանութեան մասնակցած են նաեւ կոյսերը:

Արաբական շրջանին (7-9րդ դարեր) Հայ կանայք գերի տարուեցան, բանտարկուեցան, պատանդ մնացին Արաբներու մօտ եւ յաճախ իրենց հաւատքի համար մարտիրոսացան: 703-թ.ի Վարդանակերտի ճակատամարտէն փախստական շուրջ 300 Արաբ փնտորներուն Վահան Կանաւրականի դուստրը Շուշան իր տան դռները բանալով կ'երաշխարդէ անոնց կեանքը՝ մերկին հագուատ տալով, բոկոտին՝ կոշիկ, խնամելով վիրաւորները: Սակայն հակառակ իր այս բարիքին քանի մը տարի ետք Շուշան այլ Իշխաններու հետ գերի կը տարուի Միջագետքի Խառան քաղաքը ուր եւ ճնշումներու տակ կը մահանայ (708-թ.ին) մերժելով ուրանալ իր հաւատքը: 9-րդ դարու կեսին Բագարատ Բագրատունիի քրոջ Հռիփսիմէի միջնորդութեամբ, որ Աղձնեաց նախարարի տիկինն էր, Հայերը երբ կը հալածեն Արաբները մինչեւ Բաղէշ, թէեւ կը պաշարեն Եահաստան քաղաքը բաց չեն կոտորէր ժողովուրդը: Նոյն Հռիփսիմէ տիկինն է որ իր վաւակի Աշոտ Արծրունիի խնդրանքով որպէս բանագնաց կերթայ Ապուսթո Արաբ ոստիկանի մօտ: Հետագային Աշոտի եղբայրը Գուրգեն իր մայրը բանագնաց կը դրկէ Բուղայ ոստիկանի մօտ: Սակայն Հռիփսիմէ նախ կը բանտարկուի Դուինի մէջ եւ ապա կ'աքսորուի միւս նախարարներուն հետ Սանարա ուր եւ կը մահանայ խոտովանողի անուն ժառանգելով:

Վահան Գողթնացիի նահատակութիւնէն ետք (737 թ.) քոյրը Խոսրովիդուխտ շարական մը կը նուիրէ անոր յիշատակին, ինչ որ կը վկայէ քրոջ երաժշտական կարողութեանց մասին: Հապուագիւտ եւ բացառիկ երեսոյթ մը հայ իրողութեան մէջ:

Սահակադուխտ, (8րդ դար) որ Դուինի կաթողիկէի Աւագերեցին դուստրն է եւ Սոտեանոս Միսնեցու քոյրը, որպէս միանձնուհի ճգնած է Գառնիի ձորին մէջ ուր եւ թաղուած: Հնուտ երաժշտագէտ մը որ յօրինած է տաղեր ինչպէս Սրբուհի Մարիամ երգը: Ան նոյնիսկ վարագոյրի ետեւէն սորուեցուցած է այլոց իր գրած շարականները:

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to wish you all a safe and wonderful summer! As we approach the long overdue warm weather, we are all thinking about vacations, camps, and maybe a day at the shore. Before you know it, we will be gearing up for the fall and winter, and will need help for the Annual Picnic on September 11 and the Annual Christmas Bazaar in December. Please contact either the church office or any Parish Council members if you are interested in helping with either (or both) of these events! I would love to see some new faces!

Since my last message, at the Annual Parish Assembly we elected new Parish Council members, Melcom Avrigian, Elizabeth Barsamian, and Brigitte Kordzian, along with those of us who were re-elected. I would like to thank the outgoing members, David Deratzian, Sako Etoian, and Jackie Hajinian for their diligent service to our Parish. I would also like to acknowledge George Kodokian, who recently resigned from the Parish Council. George's keen insight and leadership were very valued by the Council for the past two years and he will be missed. The first alternate, Hrair Mezerian, will take his place.

Since my last correspondence, the Parish Council organized a bus trip to New York City for the 90th Anniversary of the Genocide. The trip was very successful, and showed tremendous unity among Armenians. Further information appears in the "Parish Pages" section of this issue of the *Mer Doon*.

We are in great need of someone who is willing to coordinate the Grounds and Maintenance Committee. I know there are many talented Parishioners out there – we need you!!! Please see the "Parish Pages" section for more details.

Previously, I had mentioned the tower repair. We have obtained approval from the Diocese to obtain a loan for up to \$150,000.00. This is a tremendous amount of money! During 2004, we had the Capital Improvements campaign to which many of you have generously pledged. I am asking now that, even if you did not participate in the Capital Improvements drive, it's not too late! Any donations that we receive that are earmarked for capital improvements and the tower, the less in debt our Church will be. Also, we all need to be more diligent in paying our dues, as the dues that we collect barely cover the expenses for our utilities alone! We have one of the most beautiful facilities within the Diocese, but unfortunately it is very costly to maintain. Please take a few moments to become a "member!"

The Parish Council has also undertaken a new initiative. All organizations hosting coffee hour on selected Sundays will be taking up collections for projects or causes they feel strongly about. On its assigned Sundays, the Parish Council's collections will go towards the design of the new website. Please support this new initiative and give what you can.

Last, but not least, I would like to take this time to thank our ACYOA for presenting a wonderful variety show on Palm Sunday! They truly exceeded our expectations. We have a group of very talented youth, and I encourage all of you to continue to support them in their endeavors. Someday they will be the leaders of this church, and we need to encourage their participation in all facets of church life.

Arpy Attarian Jones
Parish Council Chair



HYE YERGINKI LOOR

(Armenian Diaspora News)

FROM THE MOTHER SEE IN ETCHMIADZIN

Meeting Between the Catholicate of Holy Etchmiadzin and the Catholicate of Cilicia

In early March, delegations representing His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, and His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, met to explore issues shared by the two entities.

Armenian Church Sends Delegation to Pope John Paul II's Funeral

A delegation from the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church attended the Funeral Mass for His Holiness Pope John Paul II of blessed memory, presided over by His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now known as Pope Benedict the XVI.

Catholicos Delivers Remarks to International Genocide Gathering

On April 20, His Holiness presided over the opening session of an international conference titled *Ultimate Crime, Ultimate Challenge – Human Rights and Genocide*, which convened in Yerevan, Armenia, dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Both His Holiness and Armenian President, Robert Kocharian delivered opening addresses to the assembled international participants.

Genocide of the Armenians Commemorated in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin

On April 24, a solemn Divine Liturgy was offered in the Mother Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin with His Holiness presiding. The celebrant was His Grace Bishop Paren Avedikian.

Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, a special Repose of Souls Service was offered by His Holiness in memory of the one and one-half million innocent victims of the Genocide of the Armenians. At the conclusion of the service, visiting representatives from sister Christian Churches presented their words of solidarity and support to the Armenian nation dispersed throughout the world, and extended messages of friendship and brotherhood from the heads of their Churches to His Holiness.

Representatives from the Syrian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, Russian Orthodox Church, Greek Orthodox Church, Romanian Orthodox Church, Georgian Orthodox Church, the Church of England and the Conference of European Churches joined His Holiness during the service.

1.5 Million Armenians Marched on the Occasion of the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

This year, 1.5 Armenians walked to the Genocide Memorial Monument in Yerevan, Armenia, in memory of the 1.5 million Armenian victims of the first Genocide of the 20th century.

This march of survivors, 90 years later, took place just 50 kilometers from the Armenian-Turkish border – the only closed border in all of Europe.

This year took on added significance as it coincided with Turkey's efforts to begin accession talks to join the European Union by meeting European standards. Genocide recognition is no longer a Turkish-Armenian issue, but a universal issue and must be reckoned with. Further, this is also the year when the UN High Level Panel has noted that genocide continues to be a threat, even at the beginning of the 21st century. As such, the worldwide and mass commemoration of the Armenian Genocide 90 years

later is as much about condemnation and prevention, as it is about remembrance.

Visitations to the United States

His Holiness visited the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America in early June to consecrate the foundations of several new churches and meet with community leaders. He then traveled to Michigan, to join former U.S. President, Jimmy Carter, in building houses as part of Habitat for Humanity's annual Jimmy Carter Work Project. The latter trip was organized by Bishop Vicken Aykazian, our Diocesan Legate, who is active in the international Habitat for Humanity movement. As a partner country in the Habitat for Humanity effort, Armenia will receive a portion of the volunteers' tithe. The money will be used to improve housing in Armenia, where 40 percent of the population lives in substandard housing.



WITHIN OUR DIOCESE

Diocesan Website Changes to .Net

The Diocese's website has moved to www.armenianchurch.net. Please note that the website change to .NET does not affect current e-mail addresses, which will remain @armeniandiocese.org. Be on the lookout for the new website of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, coming to the old web address.

Diocese Hires New Youth Outreach Coordinator

Jennifer Morris, outgoing chair of the Central Council of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America has been hired as the Diocese's new Youth Outreach Coordinator. An elementary teacher and parishioner from St. John Armenian Church in Detroit, Michigan, Jennifer will move to New York City to begin working in her new position in early July. She will be taking over for Ygn. Arpi Kouzouian, who will now focus on the growing St. Vartan Camp program as the part-time camp director.

Armenian Community of Charlotte, North Carolina Consecrates New Church

The Primate consecrated the very first Armenian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina on March 12-13, 2005. The new church will be known as St. Sarkis Armenian Church. The building was made a reality with the generous financial support of Sarkis and Bobbye Acopian and years of dedication by several parish leaders.

Update on Setrak Nalbandian

Below is another update on Setrak Nalbandian, the 41-year-old father of 7-year-old triplets and a member of St. Peter Armenian Church of Watervliet, NY. We receive periodic updates from Rev. Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian, the Pastor of the Watervliet parish.

On Easter Sunday, March 27, the St. Peter Armenian Church community was blessed to see Setrak Nalbandian with his wife Talin and their three children together in the front pew worshipping together as a family. They were reunited in New York just prior to Palm Sunday and made their first journey to church as a family since May 2004. It was an emotional day to see the five of them approach the Altar and receive Holy Communion together.

Setrak is home with his family in Troy, New York, and is resting comfortably. He will be making periodic trips back to Indianapolis for further follow-up visits by his medical team. Although he still has challenges he must face with infections, etc., Setrak is a living miracle and his family continues to thank God every day for His blessings of life and hope. They also profoundly thank all of you for your continuous emotional, spiritual and financial support throughout the past year.

Legate Delivers Tsunami Relief Check

Bishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Officer, presented a check for more than \$66,000 on March 29th to Church World Service, the international aid organization of the National Council of Churches. The money was raised by local parishes and through individual donations to help relief efforts for victims of December's Asian tsunami.

Armenians in Texas Come Out for Opening of Genocide Exhibit in Houston

On March 29, several hundred people turned out for the opening of a new exhibit on the Armenian Genocide at the Holocaust Museum of Houston, TX. The keynote speaker for that event was Dr. Vahakn Dadrian, the eminent scholar of the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Dadrian was honored for a lifetime of academic achievement during a gala banquet on Saturday, April 2nd at the Diocesan Center in New York City.

Primate Ordains New Priest

Dn. Ara Kadehjian was ordained into the Order of the Holy Priesthood during a two-day ceremony at New York City's St. Vartan Cathedral, on April 2 and 3. Dn. Kadehjian currently serves as the Interim Coordinator of the Diocese's mission parish project. For more on the ordination and to learn more about Dn. Kadehjian's path to the priesthood, please visit the Diocesan website.

Armenian Clergyman Delivers Invocation at NYPD Gathering

Fr. Mardiros Chevian, the Dean of St. Vartan Cathedral, was selected to deliver the invocation during the Police/Clergy Breakfast hosted by the 17th precinct of the New York Police Department. Held on April 7th at the Church Center for the United Nations, dozens of interfaith leaders were in attendance. Fr. Chevian was one of only two church representatives to speak at the gathering.

Delegates Tackle Business at 2005 Annual Diocesan Assembly

Delegates from throughout the Diocese gathered during the first week in May for the 2005 Diocesan Assembly, hosted by the Holy Martyrs Church of Bayside, NY. Highlights of the Assembly are noted below:

Election of Diocesan Council members: Fr. Arakel Aljalian, Fr. Haigazoun Najarian, Dr. Raffi Hovannessian, James Kalustian, Oscar Tatosian, and Papken Megerian.

Budget: A presentation on the 2004 budget by Diocesan Council members who shared that the Diocese ended 2004 with a surplus of \$74,258, thanks in part to generous gifts left in wills and bequests.

The 2006 Diocesan budget of \$4.4 million was passed, just about 5 percent higher than the actual 2004 budget, with increased revenue projections from endowment income and the Archbishop's Annual Appeal.

Proposals: A proposal was passed requesting the Diocesan Council to examine the issue of parish assessments – the “tax” paid by parishes to help fund Diocesan ministries and efforts by the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. Some parishes believe that since the assessment is based on only certain types of income and not others, parishes can end up paying too much or too little. Assessments have not gone up since 1992, and the Council is working on a more equitable assessment.

A proposal to conduct a professional sociological study was also passed. The Assembly charged that the study determine the state of the Armenian Church in the Eastern Diocese, and to find ways to bring more people, especially the youth, into the life of the church. The proposal included the allocation of \$40,000 to fund the study.

Youth Panel: As this year has been designated as the Year of the Youth, a special panel of young people, moderated by Arda Nazerian-Haroutunian, provided insight on how they first became involved in the church and what kept them involved.

A special meeting of Parish Council Chairs took place before Assembly business got underway with more than 20 chairs participating. The meeting provided an opportunity for them to share ideas and concerns. A subsequent meeting of Parish Council chairs will take place at the Diocese in October.

Prominent Armenian Vaccine Developer Honored

Dr. Albert Kapikian, a pioneer of vaccine development, was honored on May 10 with the prestigious Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal. He is the 13th recipient of the award, which is awarded annually by the Sabin Vaccine Institute to honor achievements by vaccinologists and infectious

disease specialists. Dr. Kapikian developed the first rotavirus vaccine and is known for his pioneering use of electron microscopes to study vaccines.

Bell Choir Marks 5th Anniversary

On May 22, the Narek Bell Choir of St. Mary Armenian Church in Washington, D.C., celebrated the 5th anniversary of its founding with a special service honoring its early supporters. The group of young musicians plan to travel to Armenia this summer to perform in several high profile concerts. They will also help support efforts to build youth bell choirs in Armenia.

ACYOA Working to Strengthen Programs

In an effort to further strengthen its programs, the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) is in the middle of a national fund-raising effort. Only 500 tickets, at \$100 each, will be sold. The first prize is \$5,000.

ACYOA Plans Fast for Armenia

Young people throughout the Diocese took part in the ACYOA's Fast for Armenia on April 23 and 24. The Fast was the organization's way to commemorate the Genocide, while raising money to help needy families in Armenia.

Youth Summit Brings Leaders Together

The Diocese hosted a Youth Summit on June 13 to bring together clergy, Diocesan staff, Diocesan Council members and other community leaders to evaluate youth programs, talk about youth-related challenges and brainstorm solutions for bringing the next generation into the church family.

Diocese to Award New York Life Grants

As part of the settlement earlier this year with New York Life Insurance Company, the Diocese and a number of other Armenian organizations received funds to be used to "assist the needy, orphans, elderly, disabled, widows, and the impoverished." The money can be used for such things as medical and education needs, institutional programs, scholarships and special services. The Diocese sent letters to all parishes and has received 26 proposals. The Diocese will carefully analyze each request to

ensure that each one conforms to the terms of the settlement and will provide the funds accordingly.

New Armenian Church Magazine Well Received

The Armenian Church magazine has been recently revamped into a new format easier to read which is printed and delivered at a lower cost to the Diocese. So far, reaction to the magazine has been positive. Please e-mail your thoughts to Arpie Nakashian McQueen, editor of the magazine at tac@armeniandiocese.org.

New Publications

The Diocese recently published a new book, *Frequently Asked Questions*, by the Very Rev. Fr. Krikor Maksoudian, which aims to answer some questions often asked about the Armenian Church's teachings and history. The Diocese is working on a new book, *The Armenian Church Welcomes You*, designed to provide guidance for people becoming members of the Armenian Church. The book will serve as a useful tool for non-Armenian spouses, for people who were born into the church but left and are now coming back, and for all Armenians in general.

New Mission Parish in Virginia

To meet the growing demand of dispersed Armenian communities, the Diocese has opened a new mission parish for the Tidewater area of Virginia. The community on the Eastern shore of Virginia will be serviced by Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan, pastor of the St. James Armenian Church in Richmond, VA.

Armenian Genocide Topic of Play in New York City

Beast on the Moon, an Off-Broadway play that opened in New York City on April 12, is an award-winning play that follows the lives of survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Its producers are trying to secure a run throughout the summer to keep the Genocide in the public view as long as possible. It is essential that we support this by taking our friends and family to see this play. Thus far, 10,000+ have seen the critically-acclaimed play; however, the summer is a slow time for ticket sales and the producers say the support from the Armenian

community is critical so that the play can survive into the theater-friendly fall season. You can buy tickets by calling 212-239-6200 or visiting www.broadwayoffers.com and entering code BMNAA39. For more information on the play, please visit www.beastonthemoon.com

St. Nersess Happenings

St. Nersess Graduates Three

On Sunday, May 22, 2005, three seminarians graduated from St. Nersess Armenian Seminary: Dn. Levon Kirakosyan, Yervant Kutchukian, and Daron Bolat.

For more information go to www.stnersess.edu.

Projects and Programs Sponsored and Supported by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR)

The following is information on projects and programs sponsored and supported by the Fund For Armenian Relief (FAR) – the humanitarian aid and development arm of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America:

Young Professionals Retreat

A Young Professionals Retreat took place June 24-26, 2005. The weekend reunion for individuals who have participated in the Young Professionals Trips to Armenia provided an opportunity for individuals to reconnect with friends and participate in the founding of a new association of FAR Young Professionals and electing Associate Board members who will work independently and in parallel with FAR's Board of Directors.

Armenian National Science and Education Fund

FAR recently announced the next round of scientists and researchers in Armenia who will receive financial assistance to support their research projects through FAR's Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF). The program offers researchers funds through a peer-review process to strengthen Armenia's scientific community.

Diocese and FAR Honor Linda Aiken

The Diocese and FAR hosted a reception on May 26 to honor Linda Aiken for her accomplishments in

introducing international standards for nursing excellence in Armenia.

FAR is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization based in New York, with offices in Yerevan, Gumri, and Stepanakert. For fifteen years, FAR has implemented various relief, development, social, educational, and cultural projects valued at more than \$250 million. It has been and remains the pre-eminent Diaspora organization operating in Armenia.

FAR caters its general relief and development programs to the changing needs in Armenia. It also responds to Diasporan major donors' initiatives, helping realize their dreams to make a direct, positive impact for Armenia. For more on FAR and the programs it supports, go to www.farusa.org.



FROM THE DIASPORA

A Different Mer Doon

Former CASP Director, Julie Ashekian, and several other leaders from throughout the country formed a new NGO (non-governmental organization) in Armenia called "Mer Doon." Mer Doon is a home environment and program for those youth transitioning out of Armenia's orphanages and who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The home will annually serve ten youth, ages 18-20, who will benefit from the stability of a family-like home and professional training experience. The home is located in Etchmiadzin and its mission will be to train these individuals with unique skills and practical experience to help them transition into the outside world after two years.

Please see Julie Ashekian's letter to the Armenian community in this issue of *our Mer Doon*.



For more information on the above highlights, visit the News and Events section of the Diocese's website, www.armeniandchurch.org and the website of the Fund for Armenian Relief at www.farusa.org.

Note: Information for articles appearing in this section comes from various sources, particularly from the Diocese of the Armenian Church in New York.

PARISH PAGES

Lenten Lecture Series

As we were going to press with the last issue of the *Mer Doon*, there were three more lectures in the 2005 Lenten Lecture Series.

On Friday, March 4, we were joined once again by Dr. Abraham Terian, noted scholar and Professor of Armenian Patristics at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary. Fr. Terian gave us more insight into Mesrob Mashdotz and Gorune's biography on his life. St. Mesrob was so evangelical minded that he felt the Armenian people could not be Christianized until the scriptures were put into the native tongue. With the help of then-Catholicos, Sahag Bartev and the help of a Byzantine scribe, Mesrob Mashdotz came up with our beautiful *yergatakir* ("alphabet").

The late Dr. Margaret Mead, who was a noted anthropologist, once said that of all languages that lend themselves as international languages of the world, Armenian lies at the very root of Indo-European languages, including English. Fr. Terian added that most people who study classical Armenian outside of Armenia do so to probe the Armenian Bible. This is because the Old Testament was translated from ancient Greek at the turn of the 5th century; yet the Greek version was accidentally distorted and the existing Hebrew text had more than 4,000 differences from the revised Greek text. Thus, as the Armenian Bible is among the oldest, students and scholars who wish to study early versions of the Bible learn classical Armenian to study the Armenian Bible.

Gorune was the first author to write in the native Armenian language and his biography on Mesrob Mashdotz was the first piece of Armenian literature by an Armenian author of whom we know something. Armenian writers from the 5th century, known as the Golden Age of Armenian Literature, all rely on phrases, sentences and whole paragraphs from Gorune. St. Mesrob Mashdotz's story would never have been known had it not been for Gorune.

It was not an easy task for Mesrob Mashdotz to come up with letters for the Armenian language and the switch to Christianity was not sudden, taking almost a century for the gospel to penetrate half of the country.

On Friday, March 11, the Right Rev. Bishop Vicken Aykazian, our Diocesan Legate in Washington, D.C., paid us a visit to discuss Jerusalem and its Armenian community. Bishop Aykazian went into depth about the Armenian community of Jerusalem and spoke of its drastically dwindling population throughout the years. He stressed that Jerusalem is a center of vital importance to Armenians, yet one which has been severely neglected in recent years. The existence of Armenians in Jerusalem goes back to the 4th century, since the beginning of Christianity. The first Armenian church built in Jerusalem was the St. James Monastery – one of the most beautiful of all Armenian churches.

Bishop Aykazian discussed the recent trip he led to Jerusalem with the National Council of Churches and its President, former Pennsylvania congressman, Bob Edgar. He stated that the NCC was amazed at how the Armenian Church owns approximately one-fifth of Jerusalem for the Armenian people. But he expressed his deep concern that the Armenian people, as a people, have forgotten about Jerusalem and that it is important for every Armenian to be concerned about the Armenian presence in the Holy Land.

He stressed that it is important for the Armenian people to give to Jerusalem and assist the Patriarchate. He stated "don't expect someone to thank you for a donation. Be happy that they came to you and requested your assistance in God's name."

On Friday, March 18, 2005, Dr. Roberta Ervine, Associate Professor of Armenian Studies at St. Nersess Armenian Jerusalem gave the last presentation of the series, focusing on *Mesrob Mashdotz and the Bible*. Dr. Ervine stated that without Mesrob Mashdotz' efforts, Armenians, throughout the centuries, could not have understood and preserved their heritage.

Dr. Ervine engaged the audience in our knowledge and understanding of who Mesrob Mashdotz was and enlightened us as to how the order and shape of the letters created by him were very significant. As an example, the first letter of the Armenian alphabet *Ayp* represents "Asdvadz," which means "God." The last letter of the Armenian alphabet is *Keh*, representing "Kristos" which means – and is shaped like the symbol in Greek for – "Christ." We notice that when we see our letters at times, they are

written with “bird” artistry and are surrounded by leaves and flowers. These represent the living aspects of the letters of the Armenian alphabet.

Dr. Ervine’s lecture was especially poignant in that though not of Armenian descent, she possesses a passion for Armenian culture and history with the distinct ability to communicate that passion and thirst for knowledge to others as well. There could have been no more fitting a lecture to end the series than one which enthralled all those in attendance and left them hungry for more.

Much thanks to Hayr Soorp for organizing an incredible lecture series and to the members of the Tekeyan Cultural Association for preparing the meals preceding each lecture. Each meal was donated by members of the organization in memory of their loved ones.

Special thanks to parishioner, **Mayis Seapan**, who personally videotaped each of the six lectures. Mr. Seapan will prepare videotapes for the church’s archives and for use by parishioners at meetings and for individual viewing.



Holy Week Recap

Holy Week services and activities brought many parishioners together once again this year.

On Holy Thursday, the Women’s Guild hosted their traditional Holy Thursday Dinner in honor of our Senior Citizens. (See *Elizabeth Barsamian’s article in this issue of the Mer Doon*). Following dinner was the Washing of the Feet, followed by the traditional Khavaroum service (Passion of Christ).

During the day on Holy Friday, there was one hour of vigil readings during the Crucifixion of Christ. Burial services were held later that evening over the tomb of Christ.

Holy Saturday began with the yearly Sunday School Communion Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt. This year’s communion breakfast was hosted and donated by **Nourhan & Hilda Antilian** and **Paul & Tina Miharanyan**. (See pictures in this issue.)

Later that evening was the *Jurakalouytz* (Candlelight service) with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, followed by a coffee reception donated by the Tekeyan Cultural Association. The organization traditionally donates this reception each year and we acknowledge them for their continued support of and participation in the church.

Easter Sunday’s Divine Liturgy service bore witness to a crowd of worshippers, culminating in the celebration of Jesus’ resurrection from the grave. Special thanks to **Julyet Degirmenci** who donated the choreg for the reception which followed and to **Alice Torossian** for coordinating the reception.

A moving sermon was given at each service, helping worshippers to experience the true meaning of our Lord’s suffering, crucifixion and finally, his Glorious Resurrection.



ACYOA Palm Sunday Variety Show A Resounding Success

On Palm Sunday, our ACYOA Srs. presented their first annual Variety Show. Both groups worked together for months organizing every aspect of the show, with marathon rehearsals to get it just right. In the end, with over 200 in attendance, their creativity was a rousing success. The comedy skits, song and dance routines, and pre-filmed commercials were such a hit that the youth are preparing a DVD of the show. (See DVD order form in this issue of the *Mer Doon*).



Hye Affair 2005

On April 16, 2005, St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church hosted its third *Hye Affair*. The dance committee once again transformed Memorial Hall into a beautiful dance environment. Attendees entering the hall were greeted by a canopy of gold and white streamers held aloft by a floating cloud of white balloons. Each table was adorned with candles and lovely geraniums set on mirrored tops. Special thanks go to **Wedgewood Gardens** for donating the geraniums, and to our team of decorators, led by **Jovia Keytanjian**, and including

Carol Leszczynski, Brigitte Poulatian, Ed Boyajian, Sako Etoian and Rob Cannuscio.

This year we again featured the fabulous music of the John Berberian Ensemble. The vocals were provided by Onnik Dinkjian, with Ara Dinkjian on guitar and keyboard, Carnig Mikitarian on clarinet, Chuck Yegian on dumbeg and, of course, John Berberian on oud. The band did not disappoint, playing Armenian favorites that kept the dance floor filled all night long.

In addition to the Armenian band, this year's Hye Affair included Jake Terkanian of Terkanian Entertainment as the DJ for the night, playing a wonderful assortment of music that kept everyone dancing.

The feet were not the only things that received a workout over the course of the night. Palates were bombarded with an assortment and abundance of delicious food, including *mante*, *yalanchi*, *lahmajoon*, *kufte*, cheese and meat *boreg*, *muhammarah*, egg rolls, chicken strips and piles of shrimp. Thanks go to **Maro Arutunian** for preparing the Armenian dishes. Our team of cooks also included **Karen Cannuscio, Alice Aznavourian, Lisa Manookian and David Deratzian**. Special thanks go to **Diana Etoian** who assisted Maro throughout the night. Thanks also to **SunNi Cheese** for donating the mounds of delicious string cheese.

While a significant amount of the food was piled high in Fellowship Hall, the majority of the food was brought around to our guests by a group of volunteer ACYOA Juniors and Seniors. The event would not be even close to what it was had it not been for the smiling faces and non-stop energy of our ACYOA. This year's team included, from the Juniors: **Nanor Arabatlian, Tina Arutunian, Mike Arutunian, Arpi Derderian, Tigran Marashlian, Armand Rechelian, Alex Torcomian**, and from the Seniors: **John Baboujian, Lisa Baboujian, Vicken Bazarbashian, Dee Degirmenci, Mari Degirmenci, Aram Derderian, Maggie Merdjanian, Lorie Odabashian, Arese Soghomonian, and Vache Soghomonian**. We are truly grateful for all their help.

And what better way to wash down all those delectable treats than with a refreshment from our fully stocked bar. This year our refreshments were coordinated by **George Kodokian**. Thanks go to

Haig Geovjian and Bill Kassabian who worked tirelessly throughout the night to quench everyone's thirst.

The inside of the hall was not the only thing that looked splendid, for one could not enter the hall without passing by our beautiful girls at the door, **Pam Brinker, Karen Cannuscio, and Carol Leszczynski** who worked throughout the night greeting guests, collecting tickets and handling sales.

Once again thanks must be given to our treasury team of **Joseph Brinker and Robin Williams** who handled the finances for the event.

If success is measured in the amount of enjoyment an event brings to its guests, then there is no doubt that the Hye Affair 2005 was a successful event. The positive feedback was not limited to members of our Church, but was repeated by guests from the other four regional churches.

Of course, as with every event, thanks must be given to those that labored in organizing, and wrapping up the event. This year's team handling publicity included **Karen & Rob Cannuscio** with assistance from **Betty Boyajian and Alice Aznavourian**. Post event cleanup was handled by **Gail & George Kodokian, Robin & Jerry Williams, Diana & Sako Etoian, Karen & Rob Cannuscio, Mary & Ed Boyajian, and Richard & Alice Shakarjian**. They worked into the early morning hours to clean up the hall. They truly deserve our thanks.

There were others who played various roles in the success of the event, we thank them for their help. However, even with all the help that we had, the dance would never have taken off without the support of Parish Council. Not only did many of them donate the bottles for the Basket of Cheer, and baked many of the delectable desserts, but they also continued to support a dream to bring our parishioners and friends together for a night of camaraderie and enjoyment. And, of course, we would be delinquent if we did not thank **Anie Megerian** for all her help with the dance from the beginning to the end. Thank you.

Plans are already underway for the next Hye Affair in Spring 2006, which is tentatively scheduled for April 29th. *✍ Rob Cannuscio*



Joint Commemoration of 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

On the morning of Sunday, April 24, 2005, 94 parishioners and friends took two buses up to New York to join our brethren for a solemn day-long commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The day began with Divine Liturgy services at St. Vartan Cathedral, which was packed with faithful worshippers beyond the Cathedral's entrance. The gathering at Times Square boasted throngs of Armenians and featured several congressmen and leaders within the Armenian community.

The culmination of the day was an ecumenical requiem service at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral, so overflowing with Armenians, that hundreds could not make it into the Cathedral. We were lucky to get in.

The events were organized by the Joint Committee to Commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and it is estimated that over 5,000+ took part.

While we participated in a solemn commemoration, we also joined together in celebration for those who survived so we could be here to live on this joyous earth in the shadows of the memories of our loved ones, determined to never allow the world to forget this horrible crime against humanity.

Those who participated were grateful to the Parish Council for organizing the trip, the logistics for which were coordinated by **Lisa Manookian**.

I wanted to take this opportunity to commend the organizing and implementation of the April 24th commemoration in New York. The Parish Council should feel proud because everything was anticipated and nothing left to chance. From the breakfast bundles to the ordering of dinner sandwiches to the transportation of two buses from place to place. It was a wonderful and spiritual experience. Whomever didn't go, missed an important observance. Again to the Parish Council, many thanks and applause.

Sincerely,
Nancy Derderian

The Parish Council expresses its sincere gratitude to **Anahid & Papken Megerian** for generously donating breakfast bags and snacks for the trip.



Parish Council Elects New Executive Committee for 2005-2006

The Parish Council elected a new executive committee for 2005-2006 as follows: Chair – Arpy Jones; Vice Chair – Lisa Manookian; Treasurer – Joseph Brinker; Asst. Treasurer – Robin Williams; Recording Secretary – Carol Leszczynski; and Corresponding Secretary – Richard Shakarjian. Please see Arpy Jones' message in this issue of the *Mer Doon*.



Women's Guild Update

The past few months have been very busy for the Women's Guild. During Lent, the Guild sponsored the Meecheenk luncheon and the Lenten dinner on Holy Thursday night, at which our senior citizens were the guests of the Guild. **Anahid Megerian** organized both affairs and she and her committee did an outstanding job. Thank you Anahid for always volunteering. The expenses for both dinners were paid for by **Anahid & Papken Megerian**. We sincerely thank them for their continuous generosity.

The Women's Guilds throughout the Diocese traditionally celebrate Women's Saints Day. This observance is alternated between Holy Trinity and St. Sahag & St. Mesrob. This year, our Women's Guild hosted this affair on April 9. **Charlotte Ajamian** and her committee of **Margaret Ashkian, Rita Khachadourian, Adrienne Hatchikian Riser, Sarah Kapikian, and Laura Zakian**, worked very diligently to make this affair a success – which it certainly was. Others who helped included **Alma Alabikian, Vicki Sagherian, Diana Etoian, Diane Kapikian, and Betty Ann Ajamian**. Also, a very special thank you to **Noubar Karagulian** who helped in so many ways, including with the church services, and to **Helen Parseghian**, our organist for the day. **Ruth Melian**, who attended and is a member of the Armenian Martyrs Church wrote an article for her Church's publication

and we are very pleased to include it at the conclusion of this article. Also, our thanks to all the women from the various Armenian Churches for attending, and for their support.

The annual Women's Guild Assembly took place in Bayside, New York, at the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs from April 29 through May 1. Our delegates were **Alma Alabilikian, Sarah Kapikian,** and myself as Chairlady. A report will be given at our next general membership meeting.

Since Mother's Day is a day of remembrance, the Guild wanted to remember and honor our deceased members and had a special Hokehankisd (requiem) service in their memories.

Our annual Mother's Day dinner took place on the evening of May 11 in Hayatian Hall under the very capable leadership of **Norma Takoushian.** She and her Committee members of **Paris Garabedian, Sonia Garabedian, Sarah Kapikian, Jane Keytanjian** and **Adrienne Hachikian Riser** prepared and served a delicious dinner. The delightful musical entertainment was provided by vocalist **Arpi Derderian** and **Laraine Ballard,** who accompanied her on piano. The members of the Dinner Committee donated the evening's entire expenses including the door prizes. The evening's proceeds will be donated to the Schoolbag Project in Armenia. Thank you ladies for your donations and your hard work. It was a very enjoyable evening.

Throughout the years, the Guild has contributed to the needs of our Church, be it by numerous items for the kitchens, monetary gifts, etc. Our latest addition is the new curtain for the Holy Altar. The Guild is very pleased to have been able to make this gift to our Church. The money for this purchase came from the sale of the certificates, through the efforts of **Millie Barsamian** and her committee.

On May 14, 2005, a group from the Guild had an outing to the Barnes Foundation in Lower Merion. The art work on display was magnificent, and it was an extremely well spent afternoon.

The Guild will soon be undertaking a membership drive. Please contact me at 610.356.3937 if you are interested in joining the Women's Guild. ✍
Elizabeth Barsamian

Below is an article from Ruth Melian, who is a member of the Armenian Martyrs Church. Ruth attended our Women's Saints Day and was asked to write an article for her Church's publication. We are very pleased to include a copy below. Thank you Ruth, for your kind words and to the ladies of Armenian Martyrs Church for their attendance and support:

WOMEN'S SAINTS DAY

The Women's Guild of St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church invited the women of all the Philadelphia Armenian Churches to join them in prayer and celebration of Women's Saints Day, honoring saintly woman, Tsuveeg Mamigonian, on April 9th.

After the church service, all of the women enjoyed a delicious luncheon, followed by a program in which the life of Tsuveeg was described by Luncheon Chairlady, Charlotte Ajamian. Princess Tsuveeg was the daughter of Prince Vasag, one of the important noblemen in Armenia. She was the wife of St. Vartan's martyred Brother Humayeag. Tsuveeg raised her four sons and the children of other martyrs in the absence of a Father. She was an intellectual who motivated her children towards education, while piously nurturing them in their faith. Her oldest son, Vahan Mamigonian, went on to win the final battle against the Persians in 484 . . . which sustained us as Armenian Christians with freedom of religion, in a world against the Persian Zoroastrians. Tsuveeg, the wife of an Armenian prince martyred in the name of Christ, had succeeded in laying the spark of faith and love of her homeland in the hearts of her children and foster children, thus becoming an example to all Armenian mothers after her.

Hayr Haigazoun spoke of the uniqueness of Armenian Mothers and why they sacrifice so much. He stressed the importance of nurturing our children in faith at an early age so that they will not depart from it, and he gave examples in Armenian history where Mothers have made an impact on our faith and heritage. Arpy Derderian, accompanied by Lorraine Ballard, provided a musical interlude with her sweet voice.

Luncheon Chairlady Charlotte concluded the program by calling on all women to pass on our faith and heritage to our families. "In a few weeks we are going to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the genocide. Let us not become allies to the Turks and Persians in helping to contribute to their completing

their mission to eradicate us . . . this time without bloodshed but with our own apathy. Even those of us who are married into Armenian families have that responsibility."

We thank the St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Women's Guild for inviting us to share their Women's Saints Day.

Ruth Melian
Armenian Martyrs Church



2005 Annual Diocesan Assembly

In the *Hye Yerginki Loor* section of the *Mer Doon*, we have provided a short summary of the 2005 Annual Diocesan Assembly which recently took place in New York, hosted by the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs.

The Parish Council wishes to congratulate our **Pastor, the V. Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian** and **Diocesan Delegate, Papken Megerian**, for their elections to the Diocesan Council for a four-year term. We also wish to inform you that the parish will be hosting the 2009 Diocesan Assembly, which will be held in Philadelphia. **Lisa Manookian** will be chairing this four-day event.



Sunday School Closing Exercises

The Sunday School had their annual closing exercises on Sunday, May 22, 2005. The traditional closing, following Divine Liturgy services, featured the winners of the Essay Contest (reading their winning essays) and the announcement of the following awards and Sunday School graduates.

The *Hagopian/Sarraffian Award* is bestowed upon a student who strives to be a good Christian, wants to grow in his or her faith and is willing to serve the Church and Sunday School. This year's recipient was **Brian Rosborough**.

The *Nedurian/Jack Zakian Award* is bestowed upon a student who is spiritual, puts his or her Christian principles into action, strives to live up to

the teachings of the Bible and interacts with others in a loving way. This year's recipient was **David Kodokian**.

The *Deacon Hagop Kitabjian Sr. of the Year Award* is bestowed upon a student who serves the Church/Sunday School, attends Sunday School regularly, interacts with other students in a Christian way, and provides positive role modeling to younger students. This year's recipient was **Arpi Derderian**.

The winning essays appear in this issue of the *Mer Doon*.

Parish Council Chair, Arpy Jones, expressed her sincere thanks to outgoing superintendent **Talene Prescott**, and assistant superintendent, **Janine Rosborough**, acknowledging them for their efforts this past year.

Next year, there will be four individuals serving as co-superintendents – Pamela Brinker, Karen Cannuscio, Gail Kodokian, and Greta Wiley. In this issue of the *Mer Doon* is a special letter from the new team, along with a registration form for the upcoming Sunday School year, to begin in September. The new "team of four" will be meeting over the summer to create a slate activities for the coming year. Please take the time to complete the registration form and mail it in to Karen Cannuscio. Pam, Karen, Gail and Greta have made a serious commitment to our children and we all need to work together to support them.



2nd Annual Ararat Youth & Conference Center Summer Festival

On Saturday, August 6, 2005, the Ararat Youth & Conference Center will have their second annual Summer Festival. Last year's inaugural festival was a hit with the busload of individuals who participated. The Parish Council is looking into the possibility of sending a bus, but would like to focus on parents and children – primarily those who have younger children who would be interested in visiting the new site of St. Vartan Camp, which their children will attend in the future. The Council has not yet decided whether to reserve a bus and will only do so if there is a serious desire on the part of individuals to participate.

Note that this year, individuals must bear the entire cost of the bus and the luncheon charge at the festival. If you are interested in participating, please contact the church office and leave your name with Anie. The Parish Council will make a decision at its July meeting. If enough interest has been generated, a Parish Council member will contact those individuals who have expressed an interest.



Men's Club

Coming in September is a combined Men's Club function for all men from the Philadelphia area Armenian Churches. The affair is being hosted by the Men's Club of our parish and will feature a special program in addition to food and drink. More details to follow.



Dual Anniversary Celebrations in October

As we informed you in the last issue of the *Mer Doon*, we will celebrate two milestones during the weekend of October 15-16, 2005 – the 35th anniversary of the ordination of our Pastor, the Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian, to the Holy Order of the Priesthood, and the 42nd Anniversary of our parish at our present location. Presiding over both celebrations will be His Eminence, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church.

On Saturday, October 15, 2005, stole bearers and three new acolytes will be ordained. The acolytes are **Kevorg Arabatlian, George Bozadjian, and Alex Derderian**. There will be an evening service followed by a reception. On Sunday, October 16, 2005, the banquet and program will honor our Pastor on the anniversary of his ordination and reflect back on the past 42 years at our present location.

The two-day celebration is being chaired by **George Devletian**. Committee members include: **Alma Alabilikian, Melcom & Sossi Avrigian, Elizabeth Barsamian, Shake Derderian, John Eskandarian, Jovia Keytanjian, Lisa Manookian, Papken & Anahid Megerian, Margaret Merdjanian, Pete**

Seropian, Alice Torossian and Robin Williams. Please be sure to reserve the date on your calendars.



Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour is regularly hosted each Sunday by our various church organizations; however, families and individuals can sponsor and host a coffee hour if they choose. Many families and individuals have volunteered throughout the year, particularly in memory of a loved one on the anniversary of their death, or for a special occasion in honor of a family member. If you wish to sponsor and host a coffee hour on a particular Sunday, please contact the church office and Anie, our Office Manager, will provide you with all the necessary information and details.

Please note that the Parish Council recently decided that on those days when coffee hour is hosted by an organization, the organization will place a donation basket on the reception table for individuals to donate towards a program or project of the organization's choosing. Each organization will designate its own program/project. Look for more details in the weekly Sunday Bulletins.



Parish Council Seeks General Grounds & Maintenance Coordinator

The Parish Council is seeking a motivated volunteer from our Church to assist in coordinating and supervising the various maintenance issues that occur from time to time in our Church. A "handy person" would be a plus. If you are interested or know of someone who may be interested, please contact Arpy Jones.



In Need of a New Organist

This coming spring, the Parish will need a new organist to play on Sunday mornings as Laraine Ballard will not be able to continue in that capacity.

The Parish Council is seeking an organist to take Laraine's place or several organists who may be willing to alternate. Please note that this is a "dire need request" to keep our church functioning smoothly on Sunday mornings. If you can assist or know of someone who can, please notify the Pastor or Arpy Jones. The Parish Council acknowledges **Laraine Ballard** for her many years of service to our church.

COMMUNITY CLIPS

Armenian Intercommunal Committee of Philadelphia Sponsors Joint Programs on the Commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

On Thursday, April 21, 2005, the Armenian Intercommunal Committee of Philadelphia sponsored a special program in commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide at St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church. Msgr. James E. King, Ph.D. was the guest speaker.

Following Dr. King's presentation, a candlelight prayer service was held at the "khatchkar" in front of the church's sanctuary entrance. After the prayer service, a delicious madagh was served in the main hall, lovingly prepared and donated by parishioners, **Maro Arutunian** and **Alice Torossian**. Over 300 people were in attendance from throughout the entire Philadelphia Armenian community. The Intercommunal Committee organized this affair with the participation of the local Philadelphia chapters of national Armenian organizations.



Philadelphia Armenian Organizations Jointly Sponsor an Evening of Discussion and Education in Commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

On Friday, May 6, 2005, the Philadelphia chapters of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, the Armenian Democratic Liberal

Organization, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Intercommunal Committee of Philadelphia, the Armenian National Committee, the Armenian Relief Society, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Armenian Rights Council of America, the Armenian Youth Federation, Hamazkayin, Homentmen, the Knights of Vartan, and the Tekeyan Cultural Association presented an evening of discussion and education.

After Nine Decades: The Enduring Legacy of the Armenian Genocide, featured guest speaker Dr. Richard Hovannisian, a Professor and Holder of the Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA). The event was held at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia with several hundred in attendance. Dr. Hovannisian is one of the Armenian community's pre-eminent and respected scholars in modern Armenian history whose annual symposiums at UCLA have educated and fascinated many throughout the years.

The program also featured songs and recitations by the students of the Armenian Sisters Academy.



Armenian Bowling League

The Armenian Bowling League was founded over 50 years ago. It has just finished its 51st year of bowling and is preparing for the upcoming 2005-2006 season. The League is sanctioned on the National Level by the United States Bowling Congress (USBC) and is a member of the Greater Philadelphia Bowling Association (GPBA).

While most of the league's members are Armenian, it is open to non-Armenians as well residing in the Greater Philadelphia area. It is open to both men and women and to all skill levels of bowlers.

Our season starts the first Wednesday after Labor Day and continues through the middle of May. If you are interested in joining for the coming year, please contact **Sarkis Berberian** at 610.449.0826 in the evenings.



Mer Doon-Our House Մեր Տուն

Dear Friend:

For nearly 13 years I have worked with the children in Armenia most recently as Coordinator of the Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program (CASP). My work involved helping orphans and underprivileged children and their families when conditions following the 1988 earthquake and the period beyond were at their very worst. Although important strides have been made in the intervening years much remains to be done to improve the welfare and future outlook for Armenia's children.

I have always been concerned with what the future holds in store for Armenia's children upon reaching the age of 18, especially after living in an orphanage environment most of their childhood years. The Armenian government has a few programs that may "take them in", but these are of a temporary nature and not geared to the long range educational or vocational needs of these young people. For this reason we have been prompted to embark on a new project which will allow a more permanent solution to their continuing needs.

Board of Directors

Julie Ashekian, Coordinator

Clement Ashekian

Garob Garibian, MD

Robert M. Karanian, Esq.

Adrienne L. Krikorian, Esq.

Tanya Paretchan

We have procured a building in Etchmiadzin and have named it "MER DOON – OUR HOME". The principal function of this facility will be to provide a home solely for 10-15 young women between the ages 18-20. (Young men will not be included in this program since they are required to serve in the armed forces for two years). MER DOON will be a residence which these young women can call their own home for two years. In addition to being provided a nurturing environment they will be taught meaningful work skills and how to cope with responsibilities that face them upon reaching adulthood.

We have put together a dedicated team of individuals who have volunteered to devote their time and expertise to this program. Also, arrangements have been made with local businesses to provide internships to help in the training of residents for future employment as well as possible start-up business ventures.

Each resident will be expected to share in carrying out responsibilities entailed in the caring for and upkeep of MER DOON. This will help instill in them a sense of thankfulness for the wonderful opportunities being provided to them and furthermore will imbue them with the sense that nothing in this world is free.

We can do nothing to reverse the circumstances that brought about the plight of so many of Armenia's children. However, we in the Diaspora can help bring about hope and provide opportunities for them to become well-rounded, productive individuals not only for their own well-being, but for the benefit of Armenia's future as well.

The enclosed brochure explains our goal which is to raise the necessary funds to carry out this humanitarian endeavor. Please help make our vision turn into reality by giving this program your compassionate and generous financial support.

Sincerely,

Julie Ashekian
Coordinator



PAND

Philadelphia Armenian Nor Daree

March 1, 2005

The Board of Trustees
St.Sahag & St.Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church
630 Clothier Road
Wynnewood, Pa. 19096

RE: 2004 PAND NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA

To the Board of Trustees:

We are happy to enclose a check payable to your church in the amount of \$1500 representing our donation from a portion of the net proceeds of the 2004 PAND New Year's Eve celebration.

Since PAND's inception, St.Sahag & St.Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church has received \$37,795 and total contributions to all five Philadelphia Armenian churches has totaled \$188,975. We hope to continue these contributions in the future.

PAND's main objective is Armenian Unity, specifically UNITY among Armenians within the Philadelphia Region. PAND must continue to reinvigorate its local community. This year, PAND was disappointed in the lack of attendance from the Philadelphia Area Armenian community for the dinner on New Year's Eve. This year, 75% of all dinner guests were from North Jersey, New York, New England and other areas outside the Philadelphia Armenian community area.

Again, we are asking the churches to take an active role in encouraging greater participation and we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Scutti, Treasurer
For the PAND COMMITTEE

Enc.

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ACYOA



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April 19, 2005

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

As you are aware, April 24th is the day of remembrance of the genocide of one and a half million Armenians killed by the Central Committee of the Young Turk Party government during the Ottoman Empire between 1915-16.

Despite the recognition of strategic alliances and the foreign policy of the United States, given our commitment to human rights, it is vital that we continue to acknowledge these past atrocities and condemn the genocide of the Armenian people on this solemn day.

For more than 75 years, NCCJ has served as a resource for communities across the country – helping young people and leaders learn from our past and address today's intergroup relations issues in order to make America a better place for all of us.

Only by remembering and speaking out against all hateful and racist ideologies can we educate our communities and prevent such inhumanity from being repeated.

In 1990, your father, former President George Bush, called on all Americans to join with Armenians in commemorating April 24. It is my hope that you too will use your voice to deliver this important message to the public because even now, 90 years later, Americans and all of mankind remain divided based on race, ethnicity and religion.

Sincerely,

Alan A. May, J.D.
Interim President,
The National Conference for Community and Justice

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We Open Minds

The National Conference for Community and Justice, founded in 1927 as The National Conference of Christians and Jews, is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education.

Sunday School Essay Contest Winners

Ages 6-8 • First Place • Katherine Wiley • First Grade

"What is Heaven Like"

Heaven is really high up and God and Jesus are up there. There are many Angels up there too. Heaven is very blue. Heaven is very holy and lots of spirits are up there. Heaven is just like church but bigger. Heaven covers the whole world. When God was just making the earth, he created flowers, trees and many other things. He created man and woman. Here is the story. Once upon a time there was a man named Adam. He named all the animals one by one. One day when Adam was sleeping he created a woman. Her name was Eve. She lived with Adam but God said not to eat from the forbidden tree. I believe this is what heaven was like before Adam and Eve at from the forbidden tree. Heaven is a wonderful place because God and Jesus are up there. Good spirits go to God and Jesus. God decides when you come to heaven. God wants people to be the best they can be.

Ages 6-8 • Second Place • Michael Knudson • Second Grade

"Who Is Your Favorite Prophet?"

My favorite prophet is Jonah because he is a follower of God and can speak to God in his dreams. I like Jonah because he is a kind person and teaches people about God and God's knowledge and wisdom. I like Jonah because the story of Jonah and the Whale teaches you to obey God what He says.

Ages 6-8 • Third Place • Curtis Gallagher • Second Grade

"What Is Heaven Like?"

"If you could come up with a religious "live strong" bracelet, what would it say and why?"

I think that heaven is like it was inside the titanic, beautiful and very fancy. If I could come up with a religious "live strong" band the words would be IN GOD WE TRUST. I would write IN GOD WE TRUST because we believe in God and we trust in God's goodness.

Ages 6-8 * Third Place * Gregory Haig Dadourian * Fourth Grade

"What is Heaven Like?" "If you could create a religious "live strong" bracelet, what would it say and why?" "Why Do We Read the Bible?"

I believe heaven is where human like ghosts float around and look down on earth. If I could make a religious "Live Strong" bracelet it would say "We Trust in God Because He Gave Us Life." This will be a list of four reasons we read the Bible - (1) we read the Bible to learn religious facts about Christianity, (2) we learn prayers from the Bible, (3) we learn about prophets in the Bible and what they did, (4) we read the Bible to learn about God most of all. Moses was my favorite prophet because he left the farow when he figured out he was born as a slave and his father sent his men to kill infants because he thought the slaves would get stronger in population and rebel against the farow.

Ages 9-13 * First Place * Brett Wiley * Fifth Grade

"How would I describe my relationship with God?"

My relationship with God is very important to me. Whether it's if I feel sad or asking for forgiveness, I feel like he's always there for me.

I ask God to help me when I feel sad. This might be when I have done bad on a test I might pray to God and tell him how sad I am and I will try harder on the next test to get a better grade. Even when I'm unhappy I always trust in God. A good example would be the story of Job. Job had thousands of livestock and he was the richest person in that part of the world. One day God decided to test Job's loyalty to him. He took Job's money and children away from him. God also made Job sick too. His friends and wife tried to get Job to stop believing and worshipping God. Job didn't stop believing and worshipping God and not only did he get well again, Job had twice as many livestock and children.

I also think my relationship with God is important because God forgives everyone. When I pray to God, I think he listens to me because he seems to forgive me through my parents. It makes me feel great to know that God's forgiving me.

I feel comfortable knowing that no matter what I'm doing even if my parents aren't there God's still watching over me. I know that God's watching over me because God loves all of his creations. A fabulous example of this is Daniel and the Lions Den. Daniel had been thrown in the dungeon for praying and worshipping God instead of the King. He was thrown into a den with lions in it. But because he prayed to God and knew God was watching over him, Daniel wasn't eaten by the lions. I pray to God when I feel sad want forgiveness and just to thank him for all I have most of the time. Sometimes, I forget to do so but I think God knows I love him.

Ages 9-13 * Second Place * Brian Rosborough * Third Grade

"If you could create a religious "live strong" bracelet, what would it say?"

If I could create a religious "live strong" bracelet, it would say "WWJD," which stands for "What Would Jesus Do." I would put this because if you are in a tough situation, you can think of what Jesus would do. This could help you out in a moment of need or build your confidence. It can help you between what is right and wrong. It will feel good when you know when you do the right thing. Sometimes life just tempts you. This could help you remember some of the things that happened in the past of Jesus's life. Another thing is that not only just Jesus's life, you can remember prophets or important people or important events that made our life better today. Many events in your life, Jesus may had to go through too. Not only you can remember things that Jesus did, you can encourage friends to get a wristband or just encourage them to do the right thing. This is why I would write "WWJD" on a live strong band.

Ages 9-13 * Third Place * Eric Tanenbaum * Third Grade

"If you could create a religious "live strong" bracelet, what would it say?"

If I could come up with a religious live strong bracelet, it would say, "Believe in God." The reason is because a lot of other people in the world do not believe in God and when they get this bracelet, they will have hope to try to do better things. And I would give some of these bracelets to the poor. I would give some to the poor because they don't have a lot of money or a home and when they get this bracelet, they will pray to God to help them find a nice hom and give them the care they need. It is important to believe in God because God is the ruler of the earth. If you don't believe in him, he might not be happy with any bad things you are doing. If you believe in God and you did something bad, God will always forgive you if you pray to God and say please Cheerme up. And you can pray to God before meals, morning and night, thanking him for the food, toys and clothes and all the good things that you have.

Going to Sunday School has helped me learn about religion, God and Jesus. I have learned many things that I didn't really know before. It has made me a better person because now I know if I do a bad thing, God will always forgive me if I pray to him. And I am blessed to have my family and friends who care about me and God has given me many things to be thankful for. That is why it is important to Believe in God.

Ages 14-18 • First Place • Hannah Shaw

"If you could come up with a religious "live strong" bracelet, what would it say and why?"

The religious "live strong" bracelet would say BELIEVE. The color of the bracelet band would be clear. The meaning of having a clear bracelet is that even if the answer or solution isn't clear, you must still believe. If nothing is there, no one, no help, you have to believe in God for help. For example, sometimes no one believes in you or your ideas. There is no one there for you, nothing (clear) but if you believe in God, he will help you. You can always trust and rely on God as long as you believe.

Another thing the BELIEVE bracelet would represent is believing in yourself. Sometimes people back down from exploring new things because they don't believe in themselves. They think they'll fail or not succeed. But not trying is worse than trying and not succeeding. At least you can learn from what your mistake was. You must have faith in your self.

If you believe in God, he can help you when no one's there. He will guide you through life helping you to believe in your self to do something. Also, he helps you stay away from danger and trouble. If there's no one person you can trust and believe in not to tell your secrets, it's God.

The money received from the profit of the bracelets would go to churches and children's education on God around the world so the children can learn when they're young to believe in themselves and God. I think if a religious bracelet were made it should be clear with the word BELIEVE engraved into the bracelet resembles how much believing can do. Nothing should hold you back from your dreams. If you ever need help, just BELIEVE in God.

Ages 14-18 • Second Place • Lauren Rosborough

"If you could come up with a religious "live strong" bracelet, what would it say and why?"

Why do we steal? Why do we need someone to tell us not to steal? Well how may be we don't! Introducing the religious live strong that says on the front remember the first commandment, and for those who don't know what that is, on the back it says, "thou shalt not steal." This way, if we ever had the urge to steal, we can look down at our bracelets, and it will be like God telling us not to steal. Sometimes stealing might be the only answer but if you don't steal, God will reward you in more ways than stealing ever could. Stealing is something that we should never do know matter what the circumstances. It will always put you one step further away from God. We all know that our parents or guardians always tell us not to steal, but what if one day they're not there with us and you see something that you really want and have no money with you. Should you take or should you not? Don't! Stealing will never make you cooler, smarter, more fun, it won't make you anything better than what you already were. We all need something to tell us not to steal, and now in stores everywhere you can get the "first" commandment live strong.

HOLY SATURDAY SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMUNION BREAKFAST & EASTER EGG HUNT



1. On the steps in front of the church prior to the annual Easter Egg Hunt.

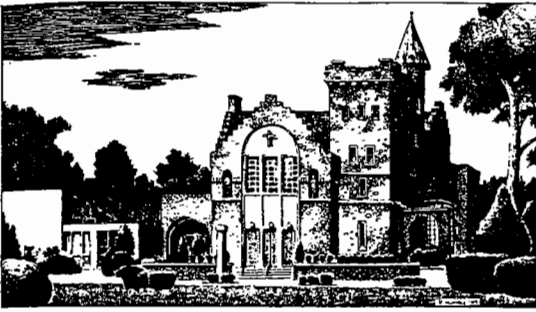
2. Enjoying the scrumptious buffet breakfast.



3. Our gracious breakfast donors with Hayr Soorp and friends:

From L to R,
Hayr Soorp,
Raffi Antilian
Hilda Antilian
Rita Kalanyan
Elise Mihranyan
Tina Mihranyan
Sandra Kalanyan
Nourhan Antilian
Mrs. Antilian
Selin Antilian, and
Vartan Kalanyan.





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St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armentian Church

630 Clothier Road • Wynnewood, PA • 19096-2214

610-642-4212 • Fax 610-649-4892

The Very Reverend Father Haigazoun Najarian

June 1, 2005

Dear Sunday School Families:

While we realize that summer is approaching and the current Sunday School year is starting to wind down, we are already making plans and looking forward to an exciting year in 2005 and 2006, and wanted to let you know a little bit about it.

Among the activities we're considering for next year are trips to a Christmas show, a Phillies game, and perhaps a Saturday movie night at the church. We'd ask that when you're filling in the attached registration form, please let us know which of these ideas you would be interested in attending . . . or let us know if you have any ideas of your own that you would like to add to the list.

We will be kicking off next year with a welcome reception on Sunday, September 18th at 11:00 a.m., with a parents' meeting to be held afterward. Thank you for taking the time to fill in the attached registration form, and we'll look forward to seeing you then.

Finally, while we are all looking forward to our new roles as Sunday School superintendents next year, we want to extend a warm and well-deserved thank you to Talene Prescott for the outstanding job she's done this year. Thank you Talene!

Sincerely,

Pam Brinker

Karen Cannuscio

Gail Kodokian

Greta Wiley

*Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.
Proverbs 22:6*

**ST. SAHAG AND ST. MESROB
SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION 2005-2006**

PARENT INFORMATION

LAST NAME: _____
MOTHER'S FIRST NAME: _____
FATHER'S FIRST NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
E-MAIL ADDRESS (please provide): _____
PHONE NUMBER: _____
CELL PHONE: _____

CHILD INFORMATION

CHILD'S NAME	BIRTHDATE	AGE	GRADE

Registration: \$10 FOR EACH CHILD

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

ST. SAHAG AND ST. MESROB CHURCH

PLEASE MAIL TO:

KAREN CANNUSCIO
710 CHELSEA CIRCLE
WEST CHESTER, PA 19380

----- *IMPORTANT NOTE BELOW!* -----

WE HAVE A FEW IDEAS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR. PLEASE CHECK THE ONES IN WHICH YOUR FAMILY WOULD BE INTERESTED, AND ADD ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

- ___ TRIP TO A CHRISTMAS SHOW
- ___ PHILLIES GAME
- ___ SATURDAY MOVIE NIGHT AT CHURCH

Acknowledgments

From the Parish Council . . .

to Betty Boyajian for labeling the *Mer Doon*.

to John Tajirian for donating the cover for *Mer Doon*.

to Joe & Sona Hloplamazian for donating the poinsettias and the Easter flowers.

to the Boyajian Family for donating an American flag
in memory of Richard Boyajian, loving husband, father and brother.

to PAINO, for their annual donation to the Church.
(see letter in this issue of the *Mer Doon*).

From Parishioners . . .

I would like to thank all those individuals who called, sent cards and offered prayers when I recently underwent heart surgery. Special thanks to the Most Reverend Archbishop, Yeghishe Girizirian; the Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian; members of the Parish Council; the Youth Committee; the Sister Parish Committee; the Church Choir; and the Diocesan Delegates. *& George Devletian*

Thank you very much for the fruit basket in memory of Dirmayr Sirvart Arbedjian. Indeed, she was a blessing and shared her gift of love with so many parish members. Thankfully. *& Der Parze and Yeretgin Angel*

To my dear Friends in the Church Choir, and my Deacon Brothers, and to my Special Spiritual Brother, Fr. Haigazoun: I have received many gifts in my lifetime. But the gift that I received in the form of a cardboard box, was one of the most precious gifts that I can remember. It was delivered to my home by Monica, of Sun-ni Cheese Co. The day was Holy Thursday and I was at home recovering from the devastating fall in the church on Friday, March 4, 2005, during our Lenten service. I was in great pain due to my injury on my back on that day. I was also very sad that I was not going to be able to attend church that holiest of all the days in the Armenian Church. But your very thoughtful gift changed all that . . . Even a card could have been enough. A huge box of goodies was unexpected, of course. But what made your "gift box" very special was the fact that it was full of everything I loved to eat, almost daily. The telbanir, olives, lahmajoun, pita bread, mantuh, two dozen cheese boregs, hummos, chorgh and **Basterma** (I am Kaysertsi, remember). I "forgot" my pain and was deeply touched by your kindness and generosity. *You are all my real family and friends.* Thank you from the bottom of my heart. God bless you all and thank you for your prayers as well. *& Hagop Kitabjian*

We wish to acknowledge all of the individuals in the parish and throughout the community for their in lieu of flowers donations to the church in memory of our husband and father, Vahe Soghomonian. *& Janet, Vatche, Hareg and Arse Soghomonian*

From Others . . .

Dear Pastor and Parish Council of St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church:

Thank you for your generous donation of \$50.00 for the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, in memory of Mrs. Sirvart Arbadjian.

Financial support, as you are aware, is always required to improve the programs, the care, and the facility itself. With new technology and the need to make this home a happy one for our elder residents who are in the winter of their lives. With your help, this can be achieved.

With caring and understanding people like you, the Armenian home will continue to improve and give happiness to the wonderful residents living at the home with appreciation.

Sincerely yours, *Thomas Miller, L.H.H.A., Administrator - Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center*

Announcements

Congratulations to Adam & Karen Tajirian on the birth of their new son on May 26, 2005. **Arden Noel Tajirian** came into this world weighing 3 lbs., 14 oz. and measuring 17 inches long. Proud grandparents are John & Kay Tajirian.



◇ SACRAMENTS ◇

Baptisms & Chrismations

April 17, 2005

Simon Edward Selverian

Son of Adam & Sarah (Makhlouta) Selverian
Godfather – George Gary Besnilian
Godmother – Annette Anahid Besnilian

April 17, 2005

Tiffany Susie Selverian

Daughter of Adam & Sarah (Makhlouta) Selverian
Godfather – Edward Sahag Selverian
Godmother – Nancy Hillanbrand

May 8, 2005

Mya Xin Derderian

Daughter of Dikran & Michele (Gualfetti) Derderian
Godfather – Aram Derderian
Godmother – Tanya Marandola

May 22, 2005

Christina Paulette Gilroy

Daughter of James & Christine (Meterissian) Gilroy
Godfather – John Gilroy
Godmother – Margaret Santerian

Funerals

May Christ shed His Eternal Light upon the souls of our dearly departed, and may He bless the souls of the deceased and comfort their families.

Artin E. "Harry" Armani passed away on April 24, 2005. He was the beloved husband of Raghda (Dogum) Armani; the loving father of Damon (Donna) Armani; Darren (Kathleen) Armani, Artin Armani, Aida Armani and Azad Armani. He was also the brother of Mariam Dervishian, Jack Kazanjian, John Kazanjian, Wardeh Kawar, Tony Kazanjian, Sarkis Kazanjian and Hovig Kazanjian. Mr. Armani had six grandchildren. Funeral services were held at St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Artin Armani's memory may be made to the Church.

George Baltaeff passed away on March 6, 2005. He was the beloved husband of the late Rosemary; the devoted

father of George, Thomas & Judith; the loving grandfather of Christina. He is also survived by brothers Harry and Albert. Funeral services were held at St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church. In lieu of flowers, contributions in George Baltaeff's memory may be made to the Church.

Victoria Bejian passed away on March 8, 2005. She is survived by her brothers, Krikor & Haroutune Bejian; her sisters, Vartouhi Berberian and Sirarpi Aghayan, and many nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Victoria Bejian's memory may be made to the Church.

Vahe Soghomonian passed away on May 20, 2005 after a long illness. Vahe is survived by his loving wife, Janet; his sons, Vache, Nareg and Arese; his brothers, Vartkes, Haroutune and Karekin; his sister, Araxi Mektarian; and three nieces and five nephews. Funeral services were held at St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Vahe Soghomonian's memory may be made to the Church.

George C. Sarkis passed away on February 19, 2005. George Sarkis was a master craftsman, repairing instruments for some of the all-time greats, including Dizzy Gillespie, Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and Clarence Clemons, a member of Bruce Springsteen's band. For many years, he operated a shop in Philadelphia, where the photos of musical greats were adorned on the walls. In addition to repairing instruments, he was an accomplished musician who performed in halls and theaters throughout the area. Mr. Sarkis is survived by his sons, George C. (Ruth) Sarkis, Jr. and Richard (Joan) Sarkis; his grandchildren, Kenneth and Randall (Lan) Sarkis; and his great-grandchildren, Alex and Samantha Sarkis. Funeral services were private. In lieu of flowers, contributions in George Sarkis' memory may be made to either the Christ Lutheran Church in Upper Darby or the All Saints Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

Wedding

June 11, 2005

Alex Topakbashian & Alexis Hajatian

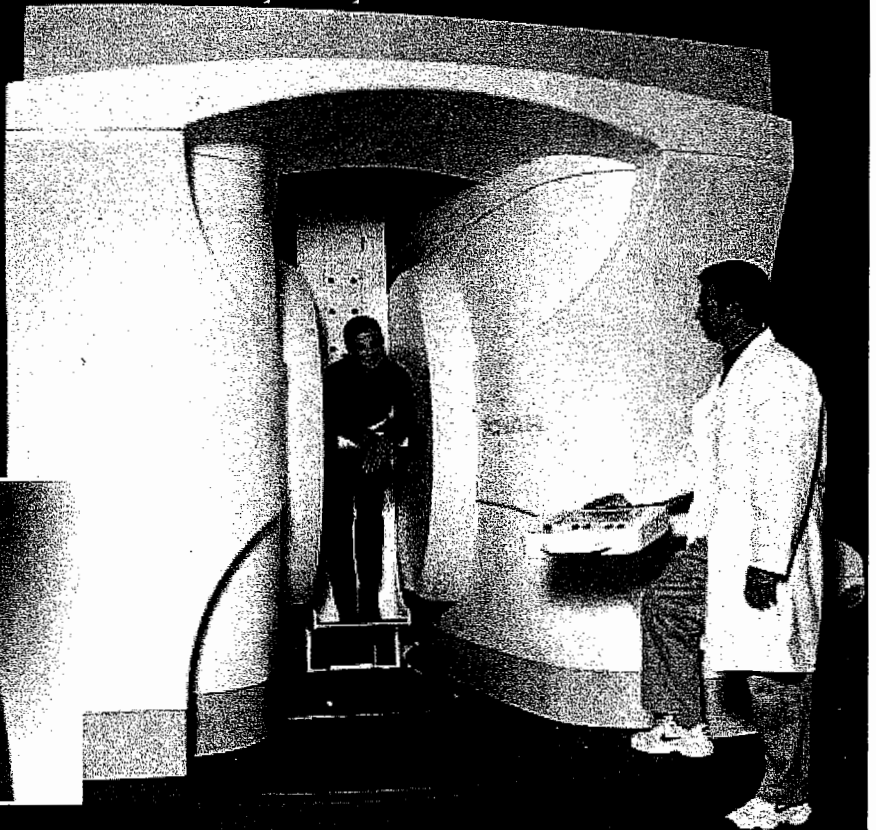
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, July 3, 2005

Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord

Sunday, August 14, 2005

*Feast of the Assumption of the
Holy Mother of God*

****Blessing of the Grapes****

Sunday, September 11, 2005

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

****Annual September Picnic****

Sunday, September 18, 2005

Women's Guild Annual September Affair

Sunday, September 25, 2005

Feast of the Holy Cross of Varak



SPRING 2005

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