

THE TORCHBEARER • Ջահակիր

St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit

22001 Northwestern Highway • Southfield, MI 48075
248.569.3405 (phone) • 248.569.0716 (fax) • stjohnsarmenianchurch.com

The Reverend Father Garabed Kochakian ~ *Pastor*

The Reverend Father Diran Papazian ~ *Pastor Emeritus*

Deacon Rubik Mailian ~ *Director of Sacred Music and Pastoral Assistant*



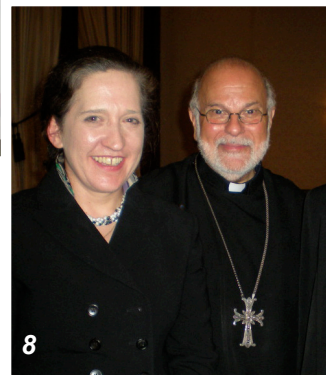
APRIL 24..... WE REMEMBER

Probably the most uniting issue of the Armenian community throughout the world is the annual commemoration of a tragedy that took place 94 years ago. Regardless of venue, religious or political affiliation, on April 24 each year, Armenians stand as one ethnic group to reflect awareness and sorrow for the 1.5 Armenians who lost their lives at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. This year's observances at St. John Armenian Church were unique in that there was extensive involvement by the parish's youth

Quite obviously anyone traveling southbound on the Lodge Expressway would notice the 1,500 white crosses place on the south lawn of the church campus. The number 1,500 was chosen by A.C.Y.O.A. Project White Cross Co-chairmen Jonathan Banks and Raffi Elchemmas to reflect the 1.5 million who perished in the Genocide. This project was planned and carried out by the youth of the parish, members of the A.C.Y.O.A.

The involvement of the youth did not end with the placement of the crosses, but much rather represented their initial contribution to the April 24th day of remembrance. Once the Martyrs Day requiem service began, it was apparent that our youth had committed themselves to an extensive role by participating in nearly every aspect of the evening's religious and cultural activities, starting with the symbolic lighting of the candles, recitations in Armenian, the meditation on the Genocide, and the presentation of the memorial wreath.

(Continued on page 6)



1. Fr. Diran Papazian, Fr. Garabed Kochakian and Fr. Hrach Sargsyan blessing the Madagh at the conclusion of the Requiem Service. 2. ACYOA Project White Cross. 3. Placing the wreaths at the Martyrs' Monument. 4. Survivors Ramela Carman, Sarkis Demirjian and Simon Tashjian. 5. Sub-deacon Aram Sarkisian delivering the Meditation. 6. Wreath Bearers Sevan Misirliyan and Adam Gumushian. 7. Ari Sagherian and Linda Kalfayan reciting "One Moment of Silence" - Meg Vargyan Lrootyoon. 8. Fr. Garabed with guest speaker Siobahn Nash-Marshall, co-writer of Skylark Farm.

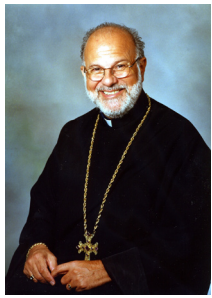
Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday: 9 AM - 5 PM

After hours in an emergency, please contact:

Pastor's Cell: 248.225.9888 ~ Administrator's Cell: 248.802.2861

The complete text of Sub-deacon Aram Sarkisian's "Meditation" may be read on the St. John's web site on the publications page: stjohnsarmenianchurch.com



FROM FATHER GARABED'S DESK.....

The Bottom Line

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?
[Luke 9:25]

Consider this...

Business people commonly talk about the “bottom line,” usually meaning the *financial* bottom line. In this passage from the Gospel according to Saint Luke, Jesus Our Lord challenges us to look at another bottom line: the final accounting each of us will give to God for how we have spent our lives on this earth; what we have done, what we have not done, what we have said, what we should have said etc.

Clearly one can be very successful from a human point of view and yet be finally lost. Moreover, a careless Christian's works will be judged adversely. That can happen both actively and passively.

Actively, we can sell out to the world's values by lying to a customer, cheating on a deal, or running over others to advance our positions in life or holding out on God by not sharing our gifts he gave to us for the good and benefit of others.

Passively, we can drift away from God by leaving Him out of our work, our thinking, our planning; sort of making him a consideration rather than a priority in our lives. We might even sacrifice our families in order to pursue wealth and statues over what is really important.

Either way, the “bottom line” is clear: we will bring ourselves to ultimate loss and even ruin. So, ponder the words of Christ: *For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?*

~Father Garabed

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Please check all that apply for your family in the form below and return to the Church Office. Thank you!

Name _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Cell phone _____
E-mail _____ (Will not be shared)

- ☐ I would like to be included in an e-mail system that will bring me timely parish and community news and be notified when the *Torchbearer* or other documents can be accessed on line. My e-mail address will be shielded from view as part of a group and not shared with anyone.
- ☐ I would like to receive the *Torchbearer* online as part of an effort to reduce printing and postage cost to the parish. (There will be a special code available only to members of the parish to have such access.)
- ☐ As a non-member of the parish, I would like to subscribe to the *Torchbearer* at a cost of \$30 year. I have included a check made payable to “St. John Armenian Church - *Torchbearer*.”
- ☐ I would like to be a professional or business sponsor of the *Torchbearer* or I have been an advertiser in the past. Please contact me with information. (The *Torchbearer* will be in the homes of our community eleven times a year and is a valuable promotional tool.)
- ☐ I would like to receive information on becoming a member of St. John's and/or becoming a Steward.
- ☐ I would like to make a donation to the success of the *Torchbearer*. I have enclosed a check.

*The original photograph of St. John's which now appears in the Torchbearer
and other church publications was taken by Arthur Mardossian.
The resulting illustration was done by Anna Sarkisian.*

ST. JOHN'S 14TH ANNUAL RETREAT A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The 14th Annual Lenten Retreat at St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, Michigan was another success. For once the weather was delightful with almost record temperatures in the 60's on March 14th in Michigan!

This year's subject, "A Spiritual Journey into the Divine Liturgy – Nourishment for the Soul" was based on Very Rev. Fr. Vahan Hovhannessian's book, *In Remembrance of the Lord – a Biblical Introduction, Historical Review and Contemporary Commentary on the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church*.

Fr. Vahan was, of course, the guest speaker. Charlene Goshgarian, co-chairman of the retreat, along with Lisa Mangigian, welcomed the participants, explained the retreat handouts and then introduced Fr. Vahan.

To begin Session I, "Biblical Foundations of the *Badarak*" from the last days of Jesus' life, Fr. Vahan explained the significance of the Passover Meal, washing of the feet of his Apostles, the last Supper that formed the foundation of the Church's Eucharistic Liturgy and the fulfillment of the Holy Sacrifice instituted by Christ Himself.

After breaking out into small groups and discussing the biblical passage, John 6:48-51, the retreat attendees were given ample opportunity for a question-and-answer period.

In the final session Fr. Vahan discussed the origin and development of the Armenian *Badarak* from the Greek, Syriac, Hebrew and Aramaic rites. Throughout his presentation Fr. Vahan stressed the importance and relevancy of coming to *Badarak* when it begins. Our church has been lax in emphasizing this.

Fr. Vahan closed the day's gathering of learning with the following comments; "The main purpose of the *Badarak* is and always remains to be our participation in the Sacrifice of the Lord, through the preparation and receiving of Holy Communion. In order to participate effectively in the *Badarak*, one must be aware of, and familiar with, its general structure and the unfolding of the main stages of its theme. "

Having read Fr. Vahan's book, *In Remembrance of the Lord*, I can only say it opened my eyes and explained everything which will only enhance my participation in the *Badarak*.

~ Charlene Apigian



Fr. Vahan is the pastor of the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs in Bayside, NY. He holds a PhD in Biblical Studies from Fordham University, NY, a Master of Divinity in Eastern Orthodox Theology from St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary and a diploma in Armenian Studies from St. Nersess Seminary. He has published numerous articles and books in the fields of Biblical and Armenian Church Studies. Currently Fr. Vahan is chairman of the "Bible in Orthodox Traditions" unit of the Society of Biblical Literature and has served as the Dean of St. Nersess Seminary. Fr. Vahan is also a member of the Brotherhood of Holy Etchmiadzin in Armenia.



ARMEN KETEVIAN ADDRESSES ACYOA DAY

Palm Sunday, April 5, 2009, was a day of celebrating our youth as the ACYOA Seniors presented a wonderful brunch and program following the Divine Liturgy. Nearly two hundred fifty supporters of our youth were present to enjoy fellowship, and hear an inspiring presentation by guest Armen Keteyian, well known for his ESPN career in sports broadcasting and now a CNN anchor for world news.

The day began with the installation of the new ACYOA Seniors Executive Board by Father Garabed. Following the delicious brunch prepared by both ACYOA Seniors and their mothers, a warm welcome greeted Armen as he was invited by the Master of Ceremonies, Daniel Dardarian, to speak and share the day with all present. He spoke lovingly from the heart about his youth, growing up in Detroit, serving the church as an acolyte and keeping his strong Armenian identity always in the forefront of his career.

Those words resonated with everyone as he addressed the youth whom he encouraged to never forget who they were and to be always proud, as they entered their careers, to remember that it was church and community that helped them move up the scale, and to never forget, whenever occasions arise, to come home and to do so with pride and passion, and pass on words to future generations that it was their church and identity that helped form who they are.

Throughout his presentation he frequently noted how moved he was and spiritually fulfilled as he was listening

to the beautiful hymns of the *Badarak* and in particular how uplifted he was in seeing two of our ACYOA youth, Andrea Gumushian and Dikran Callan present a compelling sermon “to remain ever faithful to follow Christ” as it was acted out in the form of a liturgical drama in church.

Armen spoke of his own youth, his aspirations, how happy he was that this opportunity, of being in Detroit for the Final Four Basketball competition that he was covering, made it possible to share the day with his family, the St. John’s community and especially to sit, talk, and share insights with the young adults who came to hear him. In his concluding remarks, he noted through his professional contact that weekend, that our own Daniel Dardarian was highly commended and complimented for his local TV news reporting in Detroit and that, as it was said to him, this young man has a bright future. So, in a sense, seeing and hearing from Armen himself, how a young man in the present generation of young Armenians is already on his way with the same pride, passion, and enthusiasm to a bright future.

We are all proud of the young people that serve St. John’s Armenian Church and on Palm Sunday celebrated all their good works and achievements. Der Garabed noted in his concluding remarks to Armen that two of our ACYOA Seniors, Raffi El Chemmas and Steven Nazoyan, have now taken their places on the Parish Council to lead as we move on into the future.



1. MC Dan Dardarian and Armen Keteyian

2. Left to Right: Dan Dardarian, Kelly Callan, Armen Keteyian, Father Garabed, Karen Dardarian, and Taline Kalandjian. Missing: Raffi ElChemmas

KOMITAS CHOIR NOTES

***The Komitas Choir
wants and welcomes new members.
Join the Choir and
enjoy the following benefits!!!***

- Choir members are always privileged to receive communion first.
- Offering plate is never passed to the choir.
- It's exactly like singing in the shower, except you're wearing a robe and people are actually listening.
- Sitting with a group in the first rows every Sunday is excellent practice in case you're ever called for jury duty.
- Being at rehearsal every Thursday evening definitely beats watching "Grey's Anatomy" or "Private Practice".
- If you can sing the melody loudly but can't read music you will be placed in the soprano section.
- No matter how packed the church is on Easter or Christmas, you'll be assured of having a great seat in the sanctuary, and you will be the first one to meet the Catholicos when he comes for a visit.
- You will travel to different cities/countries for concerts and sightseeing.
- And finally, you will make new friends and will be part of a wonderful group of people who add to the beauty of our service by their dedication.

Please contact Deacon Rubik at (248) 569-3405
or e-mail: rubik@sjachurch.org

St. Nersess Summer Conferences

Refer to the St. Nersess Seminary web site
for information on the
2009 Summer Conferences.

Tuition for attendees from St. John's
is paid for by our church's
St. Nersess Scholarship Fund.

<http://www.stnersess.edu/>

PARISH COUNCIL

Rev. Fr. Garabed Kochakian, *President*

John Yavruian, *Chair*

Karmen Santourian, *Vice Chair*

Sara Andonian, *Treasurer*

Tom Stambouljian, *Assistant Treasurer*

Raffi El Chemmas, *Secretary*

Marie Vanerian, *Assistant Secretary*

Gary Gumushian • Gary Hachigian • Steve Nazoyan
Ardag Tachian • Dr. Salpi Toroyan

WOMEN'S GUILD

The weekend of March 27th, the Women's Guild held their annual over-night retreat at the St. John's Retreat Center in Plymouth, MI. Ten women along with retreat leader, Yn. Valerie Goekjian Zahirsky, discussed passages from the bible on the subject of "God...our hope". Through faith and God's love, there is always hope. Our numbers were small but that allowed for lively interactions as well as to grow in our friendships. It was a wonderful and uplifting experience for all who attended. We sincerely thank Pam Dayinian for once again coordinating the retreat.

Our Lenten Season Bake Sale culminated on Palm Sunday. A special thank you to our devoted members who gave their time and talents to our very successful baking sessions: Roxy Choukourian, Dolly Matoian, Anita Arslanian, Marianne Dardarian, Almas Derderian, Yn. Roberta Kochakian, Pam Dayinian, Sue Tafralian, and their committees. Sincere appreciation also goes to Margaret Gozmanian for chairing the Katah baking. A special Armenian Delicacy Easter Basket Raffle, successfully chaired by Jackie ElChemmas, was extremely well received. Again, we appreciate the talents of Susan Ameriguian, Carol Aprahamian, Linda Assarian, Marianne Dardarian, Pam Dayinian, Agnes Dourjalian, Patti Morris, Marilyn Sarkesian, and Sue Tafralian. The lucky winners whose families enjoyed all the goodies were Elizabeth Shishmian, Judy Hovnan, Linda DiPetro, Marilyn Sarkesian, Charlene Apigian, and Dyana Kezelian.

Easter Sunday, the Women's Guild sponsored the annual Tea which followed the Divine Liturgy. Parishioners were treated to choereg, cheese, ham, pideh bread, olives and of course, the traditional hard-boiled eggs. We sincerely thank Joyce Obenhoff and her committee for preparing and setting a lovely Easter Tea for all to enjoy. *Krisdos Haryav ee Merelotz!* Christ is Risen from the Dead!

Seven TIPS for God's Sake!

In many places in our social, commercial and service bearing industries and businesses, **TIPS** are offered to the one providing services as a gesture of gratitude and thanks for timely attention. Routinely, we have no personal relationship with the individuals or businesses, and often the tip is above and beyond the cost or charge for the service.

If we were to add up all the tips that were given throughout the year, we would be astonished at the total amount.

Consider that...

1. When we eat at a restaurant, the standard tip runs anywhere from 10-20% of the total bill and we tip accordingly.
2. When staying at a hotel, we tip the doorman, bell boy, concierge, housekeeper and for the delivery of room service.
3. When we take a taxi cab, we tip the driver, or when we take a long excursion on a bus we do the same for the bus driver.
4. When we go to the hair salon or barber, or when beauty treatments and manicures are given, tips are offered: *To Insure Prompt Service*
5. When deliveries are made to the home for the mail and the newspapers, we give tips, whether monetary or an item at the holiday season as a gesture of thanks
6. When we park at a *Park and Fly* lot, and hop on to the shuttle to the terminal, we often tip the driver in gratitude for getting us there on time.

All this said, a tip is a token of thanks and appreciation. So, why not consider yet another tip; *To Inspire People's Souls*

7. Isn't the Church and her ministries that provide spiritual edification and cultural enrichment of our heritage by many dedicated and loving faithful individuals working in the name of Christ also worthy of gratitude and thanks?

As members of St. John's your Stewardship, Pledges of financial support and contributions to the weekly offering plate help **To Increase Parish Service** and is a tangible offering to say "Thank YOU Lord Jesus Christ for Your Blessings!"

So, your giving and financial support... your **TIPS** rendered in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord and our God are no less important than all the others that you offer for services throughout the year.

~Father Garabed

BAPTISMS & CHRISMATIONS

April 2009

- 26 James Peter
Son of Tyrone & Katrina Baharozian
Godparents: Dwayne Baharozian &
Tamara Messer

WEDDINGS

April 2009

- 18 Paul Choukourian & Denise Marie Browne
Khachyeghpayr: Dikran Choukourian
Maid of Honor: Carrie McCarthy

Marriages

Arrangements for weddings are to be made at least eight months in advance. Marriage preparation and counseling are required before the celebration of the sacrament. The Bestman (Khachyeghpayr) must be a member of the Armenian Orthodox Church. The parish office will make all necessary arrangements for the deacon, organist and soloist. Marriages are not celebrated during Great Lent.

Baptisms and Chrismations

All baptisms must be scheduled at least two months in advance. Pre-baptismal preparation for the parents and godparents is required. At least one of the godparents must be a member of the Armenian Orthodox Faith.

Regulation of Sacramental Services

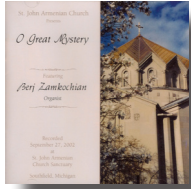
In accordance with Diocesan discipline mandated by the Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, all sacraments, e.g. funerals, weddings, baptisms and rites of Christian burial, can only be administered in the church sanctuary, which has been consecrated for the celebrations of these sacred rites.

April 24....We Remember (continued)

During the solemn ceremony, the names of sixteen Armenian Genocide survivors residing in the Detroit area were read. Of that group three were present and were appropriately honored. After placement of the wreath at the Khatchkar Monument the congregation of over 250 gathered in the Cultural Hall for the traditional Madagh Dinner of roast lamb and pilaf. After dinner, Father Garabed Kochakian introduced the guest speaker, Siobhan Nash-Marshall who represented Antonia Arslan, acclaimed author of Skylark Farm. Mrs. Arslan could not be present due to serious illness.

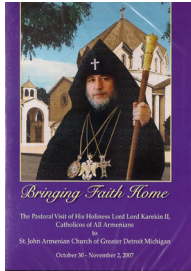
While in the year 2009 there remain individuals who dispute the proven facts of world history, let it be known that the Armenian community continues to seek affirmation of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

AT THE PARISH BOOKSTORE.....



O Great Mystery featuring Berj Zamkochian, Organist –
CD - \$12.00

This CD reprises the incredible 2002 concert at St. John's, including selections of Armenian Liturgical music and classical and modern works for the organ.

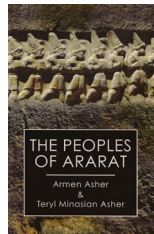


Bringing Faith Home – DVD - \$20.00

The Historic Pastoral Visit of His Holiness Lord Lord Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians to St. John Armenian Church October 30 – November 2, 2007 is featured in this DVD including the following events: Vehapar's arrival, breakfast at Masco, Ecumenical Luncheon, Pontifical Hrashapar Service and Armenian Heritage Costume presentation, visits at St. John's Church School, the AGBU School and our ACYOA Young Adults and his final farewell banquet.

The Peoples of Ararat by Armen Asher & Teryl Minasian Asher – Softcover - \$16.00

An enlightening work on the search for the vanished civilizations born in the shadow of Mount Ararat. Read about the Hittites and the Hurrians, the kingdoms of Mitanni, Van and Urartu, and the archaeologists and explorers who resurrected them from obscurity.



Also available, a variety of Armenian crosses in 14K gold and silver.

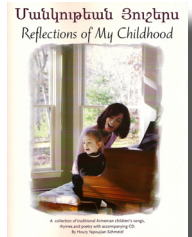


Armenian Coloring Book for Children by Taline Najarian, Illustrated by Suzanne Anoushian Froudjian –
Softcover - \$14.00

Armenian language learning – a page for every letter – with line drawings to color – vocabulary words and sentences to learn, 80 pages in all.

Reflections of My Childhood – Mangootyan Hoosherus

by Houry Yapoujian Schmeizl
CD and Book - Softcover - \$28.00
A collection of traditional Armenian children's songs, rhymes and poetry with colorful illustrations, Armenian alphabet and pronunciation guide, and CD with 26 songs.

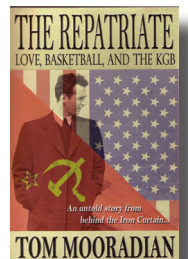


Armenian Golgotha by Grigoris Balakian
Hardcover - \$28.00

A memoir of the Armenian Genocide 1915-1918, this is a dramatic, comprehensive eyewitness account. Translated by Peter Balakian with Aris Sevag

The Repatriate: Love, Basketball & the KGB – Softcover - \$25.00

In 1947, 18 year-old Detroit-born Tom Mooradian, along with 150 Armenian-Americans willingly, but unknowingly, entered a nightmare when they repatriated to Stalin's Armenia. Mooradian recreates his 13 years behind the Iron Curtain.



Additional titles available . . . Stop by and browse.

St. John's Parish Bookstore is open on Sundays following Church Services.

Parish Bookstore items can also be purchased during office hours or by mail.

Books and recordings make wonderful gifts,

and we have many excellent items made in Armenia.

If you see something you like, you may order by phone - 248.569.3405

We now accept Mastercard, Visa, and Discover charge cards on all Parish Bookstore purchases.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE.....

May

- 3 Camp Ararat Reunion Committee, 12:30 pm**
Organizational meeting. Contact Laura Negosian Lucassian: 248.376.3794
- 9 & 23 Armenian Heritage and Culture Lyceum, 10:00 am**
The Lyceum needs teachers for the Fall in Armenian arts, music, dance and cooking. Contact Deacon Rubik at the church office.
- 9 Church School Bike-A-Thon for Armenia, 9:00 am**
Benefiting "Our Home-Mer Doon, Inc.", in Armenia. Nankin Mills picnic area in Hines Park. Participant information at the church web site or call Lisa Mardigian at the church office.
- 15 Kharpert Kufteh Family Dinner, 6:00 pm**
*St. John's Recreation Center
Sponsored by the Women's Guild.
Donation: \$20 ~ Adults; \$10 ~ Children under 12
Call Anita Kachadurian by May 8 for reservations or information: 248.669.8769*
- 17 St. John's Church School Graduation and Tea**
St. John's Cultural Hall

June

- 20 Tiger Baseball Game, 2:00 pm**
*All are invited to travel via bus to Comerica Park for 4:00 pm Detroit Tigers vs Milwaukee Brewers game \$30.00/person (includes ticket and bus)
Call Joyce Obenhoff for reservations: 586.754.3984
Sponsored by the Women's Guild*

St. John's Festival Committee invites you to the "Raffle Spaghetti Dinners", 5:30 pm

Wednesdays, April 29, May 20, June 17, July 22, August 19 and September 16

*St. John's Cultural Hall. \$6 per person
Includes complete spaghetti dinner, beverage & dessert
\$50 Big Raffle tickets will be available for purchase
Only 320 tickets will be available for purchase
Call for reservations: 248.569.3405*

Armenia - Land of Noah's Ark St. John Armenian Church Festival Thursday, October 1 - Sunday, October 4, 2009

*Watch the Torchbearer, Sunday Bulletin
and the web site for more details*

Please visit the St. John web site for up-to-date calendar information, the Sunday Bulletin, *The Torchbearer* and links to internet sites of interest to our parishioners:
stjohnsarmenianchurch.org

St. John Armenian Church
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The Torchbearer will be printed and mailed.

If you would like to read your copy of *The Torchbearer* online
and save St. John's the printing and postage costs, or if you would like to subscribe,
or contribute to its continued success, please complete the form on page two
and return it to the Church Office as soon as possible.

Enjoy the new format!