

# 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](http://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*



## A FITTING REMEMBRANCE .....



"Coincidence or Providence" was the title of an inspirational homily given by Fr. Garabed Kochakian on the occasion of the 96<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. The solemn service was held in the church with Deacon Rubik conducting the Komitas Choir on the evening of Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. The commemoration was delayed one day because, for the first time since the Genocide of 1915, April 24<sup>th</sup> was Easter Sunday.

After the parishioners had attended the services of Great and Holy Week, culminating in the standing room only attendance in church on Easter, Monday's day of remembrance took on special meaning. Fr. Garabed stated that Easter will not fall on April 24 again until 2095, 2163, and 2231. "Clearly an extremely rare coincidence but it is truly meaningful, echoing the words of the Risen Savior, Christ, who said, 'I have overcome the world.'"

Fr. Garabed said that Easter day is determined by calculations involving the positions of the sun and the moon. And as the maker of heaven and earth, "It would not be inconceivable that God set the clockwork in motion so that we would experience this conjunction at this time. Martyrs Day on Easter is not simply coincidental but rather it is providential."

Fr. Garabed stressed that we Armenian people must understand our Armenian identity beyond being victims and that is by knowing the achievements of our people. We must be understood, not as a people of weakness and victimhood, but as a people of victory. "Christ showed the world that a spirit born, nourished, and enlivened by centuries of existence as a distinctly Christian people will not and will never be wiped off the face of His world."

Fr. Garabed concluded by stating that we should not seek revenge on those who sought to wipe us off the face of the earth and who thought that 1915 would be the end of the Armenians forever. "You and I are witnesses to that failed attempt. The world must learn the truth from us. And that truth will set us free from eternal death, from victimhood to victory. This way our beloved ones who perished will not be forgotten by God or by us."

At the conclusion of this solemn requiem service, there was a procession to the Martyrs Monument by the clergy, deacons, choir, wreath bearers, survivors and parishioners. The wreaths were placed at the base of the monument.

In the hall, the *Madagh* Dinner was served and a program followed. Fr. Garabed introduced the guest speakers, Alex Webb, an award-winning director, writer and actor, and actress Shirleyann Kaladjian Webb. The speakers introduced and presented their film "Hove" (The Wind), a twelve-minute short movie starring Academy Award-winning actress Olympia Dukakis and Shirleyann Kaladjian Webb. Intended to raise questions and increase public awareness about the 1915 Genocide, this film told the story of two women who share a common history.

The name of the film "The Wind" is an important theme of the movie as it relates to a powerful force that goes unseen. As

*(Continued on page 6)*

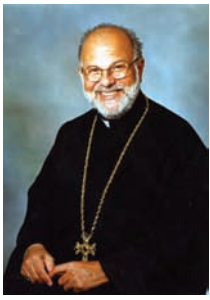
### **To the St. John Membership:**

A proposal was brought before the 2011 Parish Assembly February 20<sup>th</sup> by the Diocesan Delegates concerning the lowering of the membership pledge. This was in response to a year-long effort on the part of the Delegates to increase membership by returning lapsed members to the rolls, gaining new members for St. John's and updating the membership list as well. They were successful in their effort and should be commended. The Delegates responded to concerns of those they surveyed about the pledge amounts by proposing that they be lowered. **Please be advised that the proposal was not passed by those present at the Assembly and that the pledge for individuals remains at \$300 and for couples at \$600.** We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Also, this year your quarterly statement will only reflect your membership pledge. Stewardship commitments will no longer appear on the statements.

**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: 248.880.8391



FROM FATHER GARABED'S DESK.....

*It's not just a rumor ~*

*Christ is Risen!!!*

*Indeed He is Risen!!!*

*~Father Garabed*



### **Midwest Clergy Lenten Retreat**

Clergy from the Midwest region gathered March 28 at the Cardinal Stritch Retreat House in Mundelein, IL for a three-day Lenten Retreat. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Primate, presided over the gathering of the seventeen participants.

Organized by Diocesan Vicar, the Very Rev. Fr. Simeon Odabashian, the retreat focused on the personal prayer life of the priest. Through a series of Bible study and discussion sessions clergy examined personal and liturgical prayer and its importance in a pastor's life and ministry.

Father Daniel Findikyan, Dean of St. Nersess Seminary presented a major talk on the Armenian Holy Fathers and the discipline of prayer life. Worship, fellowship and quiet time was held in the chapel. Daily meditations were shared by all present.

### **MEN'S SOCIETY NEWS.....**

It has been an active year for St. John's Men Society with sponsorship of three pancake breakfasts, the Super Bowl Party, and January's "Kef Klub." Members prepared a luncheon for Father Garabed's Habitat for Humanity meeting, the Annual Lenten Retreat, and assisted a local Armenian organization with their anniversary dinner. For members, two "Men's Night Out" events playing pool were held. Most recently, members are in the process of making wine for use on the altar, and members also assisted Father Garabed in making 700 *Nushkhars* for Easter (see photo at left). For the church office, the Men's Society graciously donated a book binding machine and laminating machine.

The interest and excitement generated over the last year has been encouraging, especially the high level of member involvement and input. Thanks go to all who have supported Men's Society ventures to date and plan to do so in the future.

Some plans for the rest of the year include members working on numerous projects. Noel and Eric Slowik will be working with John Yavruian and George Boyagian on the Annual Church Picnic, scheduled for Sunday, July 31<sup>st</sup>, with a focus on new activities for kids. John Lucassian is planning a "Family Portrait Sunday" in September. For the annual Festival in September, Greg Baise is working on expanding the "Health Fair," and Glenn Akarakian and Paul Yousoufian are working to expand the Men's Society's food booths. Dan Cristiano and Greg Baise and their committee are working with the Women's Guild on a joint fundraiser in celebration of St. John's 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. There will be 5-6 more Sunday pancake breakfasts, 3-4 more "Men's Night Out" events and a family outing.

Coming up soon is the Men's Society's second annual "Wine and Spirits Tasting" on Friday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at St. John's Cultural Hall, which will be filled with wine stations, and tables with hors d'oeuvres. Toward the end of the evening there will be a tasting of assorted single malt Scotch. Tickets are \$35.00 and are available at the church office. Please check the flyers in the main lobby for more information.

-Paul Yousoufian





## ***“Heavenly Hope Through Saintly Hearts”***

The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Lenten Retreat Seminar founded by Yeretzgin Rosalie Papazian of blessed memory was held at St. John Armenian Church Saturday, March 12, 2011. Rev. Fr. Hovnan Demirjian, pastor of St. Hagop Armenian Church in Pinellas Park, Florida was the guest speaker. The topic, *“Heavenly Hope Through Saintly Hearts,”* was well received by the participants of the seminar.

Rev. Fr. Garabed Kochakian, pastor of St. John Armenian Church, opened the seminar by saying that the day’s topic would be Love: Love of God, Love of Christ and Love of the Saints who have guided us through their example. Chairlady Charlene Goshgarian welcomed everyone and then invited Fr. Hovnan to the podium.

The first session was entitled “All we know and don’t know about heaven.” Everyone needs to know where they are going and how they will get there. A journey is undertaken and one must decide whether they are going further from home or returning to home. For Christians you are going closer to home and you change your lifestyle to accomplish this.

Fr. Hovnan then presented the top six myths about heaven and, through discussion and discovery, the participants helped to prove them incorrect.

- 1) ***Heaven is up in the puffy clouds, Hell is fiery below.*** Nowhere is heaven described as a ***place***.
- 2) ***Inside information/We have no information.*** Some denominations claim to have the secret to get into heaven; that’s playing God. Christianity has always been public, there is no special information.
- 3) ***Heaven will be boring.*** Learning to know yourself and others and how to love each other will keep heaven from being boring.
- 4) ***We’ll have our same bodies/no bodies.*** Christians believe resurrection will be with a transformed body because the earthly body decomposes.
- 5) ***Will we recognize loved ones?*** Yes we will. Will we remain the same age?? It doesn’t matter; there is no sense of time in heaven.
- 6) ***The way to heaven is very complicated.*** There is no man-made way to heaven. You cannot enter heaven until Jesus (God) enters you.

At this point in the seminar the participants broke out into groups of ten for Bible study questions which were prepared by Fr. Hovnan.

After an excellent lunch the participants of the seminar gathered again in the Vartan Room of St. John’s Cultural Building. Fr. Hovnan led a lively discussion on the answers to the questions he posed for the Bible Study. The general consensus was that much of what was brought up dealt with our daily lives and experiences.

The second session was entitled “Getting Practical: Looking Backward and Moving Forward”. A quote from Kierkegaard was on the handout: *“Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.”* In other words, learn from the past but do not live in the past. Look on Jesus’ life and use it to build upon. Fr. Hovnan asked the participants to fill out three parts of the handout. The instructions on the handout read – “You are going to a funeral and discover that you are the person who passed away! Three people are going to speak, a friend and/or family member, someone from Church, and an angel of God. Write out what you hope they would say about you.”

The comments also brought up a few questions about the

state of your soul when you die. For example, were you a good person? How good is good? If a bad person turns their life around for the better at the very end is that good enough? Do we believe in Purgatory? What is the purpose of *Hokehankisd*?

To close the meeting portion of the Seminar Fr. Hovnan concluded that it is better coming home rather than leaving home. After a final prayer in the sanctuary the participants left with a good deal of information and ideas to apply to their daily lives.

*-Charlene Apigian*

## ***KOMITAS CHOIR NEWS.....***

### ***Aline Kutan sings at St. John’s***



If you attended church on Sunday, April 10, you enjoyed a rare treat. The choir was joined by Aline Kutan, the renowned Armenian coloratura soprano who was in town performing with the Michigan Opera Theater in the production of “The Magic Flute.” People may recall Aline’s beautiful voice when she performed the role of Anoush a few years ago.

Aline sang the entire *Badarak* with the Komitas Choir as well as two very moving duets, “*Amen yev unt Hookvooyd Koom,*” and “*Der Voghormya*” with our choir director Deacon Rubik Mailian. She was gracious enough to perform three Armenian selections in a short program in the Cultural Hall after church services. Aline was accompanied on the piano by Jeanne Schneider, Michigan Opera Theater accompanist.

Aline’s angelic voice captivated a very appreciative audience. The opportunity to hear an opera star in such an intimate setting is a real treat. We can honestly say that Aline brought the voice of an angel to us that Sunday.



***Shown with Diocesan Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian at the Diocesan Assembly in Boston, MA are St. John’s delegates Dr. Gary Zamanigian, Howard Atesian, Edward H. Korkoian, Jacqueline El Chemmas and Richard Norsigian. Not shown are Fr. Garabed Kochakian, Roseann Attar, Parish Council Chair John Yavruian and Janet Mardigian. Representing the Women’s Guild were Barbara Haroutunian, Kathy Mekjian, and Cathy Zwinck.***



## A PICTORIAL REVIEW.....



**ACYOA Lenten Retreat • ACYOA ever popular Lobster Dinner • Nushkhars for Easter Sunday**



**Palm Sunday Services • ACYOA Day Tea**



**Remembering the Wise & Foolish Virgins - Great & Holy Tuesday • Washing of the Feet - Great & Holy Thursday**



**The ACYOA White Cross Project • Commemorating Martyrs Day Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>**



## ACYOA Lenten Retreat Held in Michigan

ACYOA Juniors from St. John's and St. Gregory of Narek Church of Cleveland, OH, gathered the weekend of April 8-10 for a retreat at Camp Ohiyesa in Holly, MI. Young people were led in talks and activities on the topic of "Communicating Through Christ," organized by Diocesan Youth Outreach coordinator Jennifer Morris.

On Saturday morning, the Rev. Fr. Garabed Kochakian led sessions on Great Lenten practices and Holy Week. Ms. Morris led the remainder of the day's sessions and activities. Camp Ohiyesa staff also took the group on a nature hike and concluded the evening with an outdoor campfire next to the beautiful lake.

The retreat concluded on Sunday at St. John's with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and a Lenten lunch. During the Lenten season, Ms. Morris, with the support of parish pastors, youth advisors, and chaperones, reached out to more than 120 teens across the Diocese through the ACYOA Juniors Lenten Retreats. The next Diocesan-wide ACYOA Juniors program is the *Hye M'rtsoom* which is hosted each year by St. James Church in Watertown, MA, during Memorial Day Weekend. To receive more information, or to register for this program, contact Fr. Garabed, Lisa Mardigian or e-mail Jennifer Morris at [jenniferm@armeniandiocese.org](mailto:jenniferm@armeniandiocese.org).



### Edward Papelian Honored

On Palm Sunday, St. John's Armenian Church celebrated ACYOA Day with a luncheon to honor its first President, Mr. Edward Papelian.

ACYOA executive board member Harry Kezelian III introduced the honored guest, and all in attendance were delighted by the gracious words about Mr. Papelian, who in 1946 served as president of a provisional committee

organized by the then Very Rev. Tiran Nersoyan.

"It was heartwarming to see so many people stay after church to celebrate the history of the ACYOA and the significant impact we had on its success," Papelian said.

"It was an awesome day on Palm Sunday to celebrate a lifetime of service to the ACYOA and Armenian Church as we were able to honor St. John's own 'veteran' in many ways, Ed Papelian. We pray for his continued good health. He is truly a worthy example for us all to emulate," Father Garabed Kochakian said.

Mr. Papelian and his Provisional Committee were integral in creating a chapter in Detroit that has at times seen its membership total rise above 100 members. "In the over 50 years of the ACYOA, it is always important to recognize the people in our community that paved the way for future leaders in our church to follow," current chairperson Daniel Dardarian said. "We all have parents, grandparents, and relatives that participated in the ACYOA and to be able to have an event to celebrate that is the essence of ACYOA Day."

This year, during Memorial Day weekend, the ACYOA Seniors General Assembly and Sports Weekend will be held in downtown Philadelphia and many of our youth will make the trip and participate as delegates and athletes.

—Daniel Dardarian

### Fish Dinners and Lenten Vigils a Wednesday Staple



ACYOA Lenten Fish Dinners were popular and successful again this year ably planned and executed by Youth Director Lisa Mardigian, members, their parents and volunteers. Those who proceeded to the Sanctuary for the Lenten Vigil Service and Fr. Garabed's weekly homilies were inspired to continue their Lenten journey to Easter.

## THE WHITE CROSS PROJECT.....

The Pastor and Parish Council thank the members of the ACYOA Seniors and Juniors for installing the field of white crosses in memory of our martyrs. As part of this year's White Cross Project, the ACYOA asked parishioners to dedicate a cross in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one, or a village in historic Armenia. More than thirty individuals or families participated in this new aspect of the White Cross Project enhancing the meaning of this effort for everyone. Many thanks to all who participated.

### **A Fitting Remembrance.....***(continued from page 1)*

the film unfolded, the hidden impact of the genocide on subsequent generations became evident. Following viewing of the movie, the speakers entertained many questions regarding their film's production.

Fr. Garabed thanked the following parishioners for their contribution to the dinner: Charles Sansone and his committee for preparing the lamb for *madagh* blessing; Mr. and Mrs. Gary Mazmanian for donating a portion of the lamb; Alberta Godoshian for preparing the bulghur pilaf; members of the Women's Guild, the ACYOA, and Church School students for serving the dinner; members of the Men's Society for helping with the cleanup; and Anne Tarpinian for donating the red carnations presented to the survivors.

Lisa Mardigian and members of the ACYOA Seniors and Juniors and Church School students installed the field of 1,500 white crosses in memory of our martyrs, and coordinated the dedication and memorials for the requiem service.

Fr. Garabed thanked Mr. and Mrs. Richard Manoogian and Ms. Louise Simone for underwriting the expenses for the Madagh Dinner in loving memory of their parents, Alex and Marie Manoogian.

*-Elizabeth Aprahamian*

### **Summer Christian Youth Enrichment Program**

*Reaching Higher* has been motivating youth and adults to live a life of awakened purpose with passion and confidence for over 13 years in Southeastern Michigan. Traditionally offered in public schools and community organizations, our program helps people reach their full potential and experience more joy in daily life. We are very pleased to offer a new FAITH BASED curriculum to the St. John's community. This class explores key subject areas including goal setting, managing stress, and making healthy choices, while adding in a spiritual aspect that allows participants to deepen their relationship with God.

#### **Our Program:**

- Overcoming Your Fears
- Realizing Goals
- Handling Stress & Pressure
- Making Positive Life Choices
- Building Connections With Others
- Finding More Joy in Life!

#### **JOIN US MONDAY – THURSDAY, JUNE 27 – 30<sup>TH</sup> IN SOUTHFIELD!**

Class is open to teens, ages 13 and older (family and friends outside of St. John's parish are welcome). Class meets on Monday through Thursday, June 27 – 30, 2011 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at St. John's Armenian Church, 22001 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, MI 48075. Investment is just \$115 per person which includes all sessions, books and materials.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL, PLEASE CALL:**

Lisa Bahm at (248) 231-6511 or email at [LBahm1@gmail.com](mailto:LBahm1@gmail.com)

**Registration Deadline: June 1<sup>st</sup>**

## SACRAMENTS.....

### **Baptisms & Chrismations**

#### **April**

14 Gjon Ivezaj - Chrismation

#### **Funerals**

#### **April**

1 Edgar Hagopian, 80, White Chapel  
6 Arthur Barsamian, 85, Van Hoosen Jones  
11 Pearl Nishon, 80, Woodlawn  
13 Larry Bagdasarian, 80, Woodlawn

#### **May**

2 Sona Nuvart Dolikian, 92, Woodlawn  
4 Mary Vranian Krajicek, 89, Woodlawn

### **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.

### **Election Results - Annual Parish Assembly**

February 20, 2011

#### **Parish Council**

Dr. Mary Alani • Roseann Attar  
Edward H. Korkoian • Janet Mardigian • Dr. Salpi Toroyan  
Ardis Gregory (1<sup>st</sup> alternate) • Gary Gumushian (2<sup>nd</sup> alternate)

#### **Diocesan Delegates**

Howard Atesian • Roseann Attar • Jacqueline El Chemmas  
Edward H. Korkoian • Richard Norsigian • Dr. Gary Zamanigian  
Janet Mardigian (1<sup>st</sup> alternate) • Dr. David Aprahamian (2<sup>nd</sup> alternate)

#### **Membership & Stewardship Advisory Board**

Elizabeth Aprahamian • Kimberly Kalajian  
Roger Gregory (alternate)

#### **Nominating Committee**

Michael Boucher • Denise Boyagian • David Dardarian  
Gayle Hoplamazian • Karmen Santourian  
Hagop Alexanian (alternate)

#### **Auditing Committee**

Paul Andonian • Joyce Obenhoff (alternate)





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*Remember*

*St. John Armenian Church*

*in your Will.*

WHERE THERE'S A WILL,  
THERE'S A WAY.  
TO CONTINUE SERVING  
THE CHURCH FOREVER,  
REMEMBER THE CHURCH  
IN YOUR WILL.

**The Torchbearer Staff**  
Fr. Garabed Kochakian, Editor-in-chief  
Anna Sarkisian, Managing Editor, Copy & Layout, Harry Avagian, Mary Davidson  
Diane Ekizian, May Kafafian, Dolly Matoian

We welcome your comments and suggestions, so please feel free to contact the Church Office so we may continue to improve the way we bring information to our parishioners, subscribers and the St. John community. If you would like to help defray printing and postage costs, and are computer savvy, please consider receiving your *Torchbearer* online as 10% of our readership already does. The added bonus is that it appears in color online! Please contact the Church Office.

If you would be interested in sponsoring an issue of *The Torchbearer*, that is, assuming the costs of producing one, please contact May Kafafian at the Church Office for further information. We also need volunteers who would be interested in helping prepare *The Torchbearer* for mailing. This occurs around the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month and for just a few hours. Again, please contact the Church Office.

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

stjohnsarmenianchurch.com

## PLEASE SAVE THE DATE.....

### May

1 Men's Society Spring Brunch  
15 Church School Graduation & Tea  
20 Kef Klub  
25 Afternoon Bible Study  
30 Memorial Day – Complex Closed  
Grave blessings at area cemeteries  
(See schedule below)

### June

2 Feast of the Holy Ascension –  
*Hampartsoom*, Divine Liturgy 10:30 am  
5 Men's Society Pancake Breakfast  
6 Feast of Holy Etchmiadzin  
10 Men's Society Wine & Spirits Tasting  
12 Feast of Pentecost – *Hokekalousd*  
17 Kef Klub  
22 Afternoon Bible Study

### July

3 Men's Society Pancake Breakfast  
4 Complex Closed for Independence Day  
15 Kef Klub  
27 Afternoon Bible Study  
31 Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord –  
*Vartavar*; ANNUAL PICNIC

### Moms and Manooogs

- play group first and third Wednesdays in the Nursery at 10:30 am.

**Note: All events at St. John's Church and Cultural Hall unless specified.**

### MEMORIAL DAY GRAVE BLESSINGS

MONDAY, MAY 30<sup>th</sup>

Grave Blessings at Woodlawn 10 am - 12 pm

12 pm General Requiem  
at Martyrs Monument, Woodlawn Cemetery  
in memory of all Armenians buried  
at Woodlawn & Evergreen

Grave Blessings at Evergreen Cemetery  
12:30 - 1:30 pm by appointment only

## IN THE COMMUNITY.....

### ARMENIAN FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, JULY 16, 2011

6:00—10:00 PM

ROYAL OAK FARMERS MARKET  
(Watch for more details)

### COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

#### FOR STUDENTS WITH ARMENIAN HERITAGE

2011-2012 ACADEMIC YEAR

#### Armenian Renaissance Association Sophia Chapter of Greater Detroit

c/o Sena Harootunian

1561 Brentwood

Troy MI 48098

(248) 641-9476

E-mail: [arasophia@aol.com](mailto:arasophia@aol.com)

**Deadline: July 11, 2011**

#### John M. Azarian Memorial Armenian Youth Scholarship Fund

6 Prospect Street, Ste 1B

Midland Park NJ 07432

Contact: Matthew Scozzari (201) 444-7111 ext 16

E-mail: [info@azariangroup.com](mailto:info@azariangroup.com)

Web: [www.azariangroup.com/scholarship.html](http://www.azariangroup.com/scholarship.html)

**Deadline: May 31, 2011**

#### Detroit Armenian Women's Club Dabanian Memorial Scholarship

Contact: Carole Basmadjian (248) 879-8637

E-mail: [dawc07@aol.com](mailto:dawc07@aol.com)

**Deadline: June 30, 2011**

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