

**MESSAGES & ADDRESSES**

By His Holiness

**VASKEN I**

Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos  
of All Armenians

Delivered during His Pontifical Visit  
to the United States  
in the Spring of 1968

on the occasion of  
the consecration of

**ST. VARTAN ARMENIAN CATHEDRAL**  
of New York



*His Holiness Vasken I  
Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians*

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*His Holiness is visited by Archbishop Iakovos at Diocesan Headquarters. With them is Bishop Elisha Simonian.*

## **A SPECIAL PLACE IN HISTORY**

*At Reception By His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos*

We praise Omniscient God for directing our steps towards you in response to your gracious invitation.

How significant it is that you and we, representatives of Orthodox Christianity in the East, are met here in the new world, where the light of the Gospel shines ever victoriously.

May God bless this meeting and render our brotherhood stronger, so that we may learn and endeavor to do His will in the modern world. God's will in the world of man begins to be done the moment men love one another as equals, as brothers, with unreserved sincerity, not with words alone, but above all in action.

Greeks and Armenians occupy a special place in history and Christianity. You and we are two people who opened to each other their mind and soul, when the Armenian people became a communicant of the magnificent Hellenic culture and art, both during the Pre-Christian era and in the course of the spread and growth of Christianity from the time of the apostles to the fourth and fifth centuries.

The declaration of Christianity as the state religion in Armenia and the establishment of the Patriarchate in Holy Etchmiadzin in the fourth century, the discovery of the Armenian alphabet and the translation of the Bible into Armenian, in the middle of the fifth century, as well as the enrichment of the Armenian ecclesiastical literature and the development of the Armenian Christian culture and art during those centuries and later were indivisibly related to the religious thought and the history of literature and art of ancient Greece. And if after the second half of the fifth century the ecclesiastical and political relations of Byzantium and Armenia assumed a different course, that should be regarded as one of the tragedies of the history of the East, as a consequence of which the Armenian Church and people continued alone their Christian mission and often waged lonely struggles in defense of the boundaries of Christendom and civilization in the East, at times at the price of their martyrdom. In the hour of supreme sacrifice, during the fifth century, Vardan, Commander of the Armenian defenders, exclaimed, "I prefer to die rather than to live a betrayer without God." And when Catholicos Hovhannes, during the tenth century stated, "Our life is Christ and death is our gain"—these were true expressions of the faith of Christian Armenians.

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Continuously, for centuries until our day, the soil of Armenia, from Arax and Ararat towards the West to the very sources of the Euphrates and Tigris and as far as Cilicia became red with the blood of the Armenian people, for the love of Christ and of freedom. Our Church prays every year on April 24, for all the martyrs of its history especially for its more than two million sons who were martyred in 1915 in Western Armenia as the victims of the first genocide of our century.



Our Church, nevertheless, remained true to Christ, to His holy Gospel, remained loyal to its sacred traditions and lived creatively for fifteen long centuries as an autocephalous national church, giving birth to authentic values of Christian culture, literature, poetry, architecture, sculpture, music, and miniature painting, which today constitute a sacred legacy of our Church and people.

It is thus that the Armenian Church presents itself to the contemporary world ready to continue its mission both among its own people and in the world, in close cooperation with sister churches. We are convinced that Christ's Church has been called to indicate the road of salvation to mankind floundering in uncertainty and strife. For the success of this mission it is essential that the fraternity and unity of all churches which profess Christ as the Light of the World be further strengthened. The essential thing is the realization of spiritual brotherhood of all Christians in the love of Christ and the willingness to work together so as to bring to life the message of the Gospel in the present day world.

We are fully aware that the Greek Orthodox Holy Church with its imperishable spiritual legacy and its present day spiritual vitality is one of the vanguards of true Christian mission in our day.

We must not fail to remember the venerable and authoritative personage of your great Arch Priest His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras who so admirably symbolizes the spirit of Christian love and unity. We wish to extend from here to His Holiness our greetings of brotherly love in the name of the Armenian Apostolic Church and our Mother See Holy Etchmiadzin.

May the divine grace be upon your Holy Church and your gifted and Christ-loving people.

April 26, 1968



*Consecration of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral.*

## **DESTINED TO LIVE FOREVER**

*On The Occasion Of The Consecration  
Of The Cathedral In New York*

“Return, we beseech thee, O God of Hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted.” (Ps. 80:14-15)

Holy is the hour for us all, as the Patriarch of the Armenians opens the doors of this newly-built temple with prayer and praise and offers the first Divine Liturgy before this holy altar.

Under the magnificent vaults of this church we see you, dear faithful, a true image of a living church. As we watch your faces we are aware of the wave of sacred emotions with which your souls are filled and rendered radiant with the light invisible. This is an

admirable picture of spiritual grace; this is a rare moment of spiritual bliss, of which we all are witnesses.

Glory to God the Omniscient who has enabled us to live these hallowed moments.

How consoling, how significant, especially in our day, is the powerful glow of religious fervor, the glow of the light of victorious Christianity.

Thou, O Lord God our Saviour, thou art truly, yes truly, the light of the world, the hope of the world.

Observe, dear faithful, observe with the eyes of your soul the blessed hand of Christ which descends upon us all. Let us unite and bow before that hand which is the preserver, guide and Saviour of our faithful ancient people and our Holy Church.

Many centuries ago, since the times of the Apostles, the Armenian people saw and believed in Christ, especially through the historic vision of St. Gregory the Illuminator of Armenia. For nearly seventeen centuries the Armenians remained faithful to the Gospel of Christ, remained faithful to the great hope of salvation, consistently, throughout their history, despite the heavy blows of fate. The last and greatest tragedy of the Armenian nation, in 1915, is well known throughout the world. Our people became the victim of the first genocide of the twentieth century, on its native soil, in Western Armenia, with the martyrdom of nearly two million Armenians.

The history of the Armenian people and their church has been an authentic witness for the Christian faith and martyrdom in the name of Christ and of freedom. Nevertheless the Armenian spirit, vitalized by St. Gregory's historic vision has had life and abundant life, creating the marvelous treasury of its distinctly original culture and has left to the centuries to come the book of its heroic history.

Today, on the fourth week of the fourth month of the year of our Lord, 1968, when Armenians everywhere are commemorating the martyrs of the nation, here on the soil of this great and magnificent city, you are gathered in your newly-erected house of worship to confess once more your Christian faith and your national and cultural traditions.

We came in response to your invitation from the distant land of Armenia, from Holy Etchmiadzin, the center of Armenia's Christian faith, so that by praying together in this temple we may bear witness that the Armenian people remain loyal to their two thousand year vow, and continue to keep alive God's word and their Christian mission in our day, in Armenia and throughout the world.

This thought presents itself especially today, for every time a Christian church is built, we are reminded of our mission to rebuild the world through the Gospel of Christ. We believe, especially in our day, that Christian churches, together in a new spirit, should come to a full realization of their mission relative to the facts and issues of life in contemporary world.

Dear faithful, God is not dead, neither is humanity in man. We believe that men are destined to know God and immortality. Let us, therefore, preach Christ's Gospel with renewed faith in a new spirit, as though it were written especially for the men and women of our day, for their spiritual guidance, and their active participation in the solution of the great issues which confront the world today. Individual men and peoples are all in the midst of crisis today and are directing their gaze to the horizon searching for the shores of a new life "where mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Ps. 85:12)

As the Patriarch of the Armenian Church we will always pray for the peace of the world, the brotherhood of men, and harmonious cooperation of nations.

We also pray that your great and glorious land, Christ-loving America, exist in peace and prosperity through the continued flowering of the spiritual vitality, moral virtues, and constructive genius of its people.

On this memorable hour, we deem it a duty of conscience to express our gratitude for all the benefits which the sons of our church have been enjoying here, whose duty, of course, it is to duly appreciate those benefits as virtuous Armenian Christians and as honest and loyal American citizens.

Along with these thoughts, we greet cordially and gratefully the distinguished representatives of our sister churches, all our true

brothers in Christ who prayed with us today in the holy temple. May the Lord accept our prayers and further strengthen our unity.

We fervently greet and congratulate your industrious Primate and the clerical order, the dedicated members of the Building Committee and of the Diocesan Council, who brought to a glorious realization the historic tasks of the construction of this Cathedral. Our commendation and paternal greeting to all the contributors and our blessings to all the people.

And thus, dear faithful, we wish to end our words with this statement:

Remain firm and unshaken on the rock of your faith as Armenian Christians. Live and work united in love, *as one man*, firm as an indivisible church, persevering and "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ" (Eph. 5:21), retaining your sacred traditions, the values of your national heritage, and your Christian Armenian spirit under the blessings of Holy Etchmiadzin. Keep your newly erected Cathedral bright and luminous, approach with faith its holy altar, and open your hearts to the grace which will be distributed from this altar to you and your children. You will live by these graces, you will be enlightened and will shine by the work of your hands. It is through these graces that the great hope of salvation and eternal life will shine upon your soul. You, Armenian people, are destined to live forever, for Christ is eternal.

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

"Ye are the salt of the earth;. . .ye are the light of the world. . ."

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Mt. 5:12-16)  
Amen.

April 28, 1968



*Worship at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York.*

## ONE IN CHRIST

*At St. Patrick's Cathedral In New York*

Right Reverend spiritual Brethren and beloved faithful, the Patriarch of the Armenian Church comes to you with a warm heart and brings to all Christians greetings from the Holy Etchmiadzin and Biblical Ararat.

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When we Armenians mention the name of Holy Etchmiadzin, we feel the truth of that ancient tradition according to which St. Gregory the Illuminator on a blessed day saw the Only Begotten Son of God descend on the sacred soil of Armenia and there lay the foundation of the Armenian Mother Church and the See of the Armenian Patriarchate. For us the vision of that much-tortured St. Gregory is the great testimony according to which the Armenian nation in the beginning of the 4th century ultimately embraced Christ and lived creatively the experiences of Christian vitality, to this very day.

The Armenian Church approaches the modern world and her sister churches with a great heritage of rich experiences of seventeen centuries. Stirred by these emotions, the One Hundred Thirtieth Father of the Armenian Church brings to you all Fraternal greetings and divine blessings from the Holy Etchmiadzin.

We rejoice, for in our day the doors of all churches have been opened wide for brotherly embrace, to pray and to work together.

This bright era opened for the great Roman Catholic Church by Pope John XXIII of blessed memory, whose work is today carried on by his most worthy successor, His Holiness, the Pontif Paul VI, with such noble inspiration and well-founded spiritual authority.



Through the establishment and progress of the great movement of the World Council of Churches and of the ecumenical spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, the ideal of love and unity among all Christians has become crystalized and with which we all, all churches have become imbued. Thus gradually the ideal of brotherhood will gain strength, making it possible to carry on the dialogue with the world more successfully.

Even though the term "Dialogue with the contemporary world" is a new expression, its beginnings, as a mode of Christian life and action go to the time of the apostles. Were they not Christ's apostles who initiated the great dialogue with their contemporary world? And is it not true that the luminous personalities of the Church constantly, for centuries, followed the same course? We believe that they well understood the signs of the times, understood the social degradation, crying injustices, and moral ills of their time and knew how to plunge into the torrent of life so as to renew human life through the light of the Gospel, dispensing peace, consolation, and the great hope of salvation.

In the course of their history, all churches have produced apostle-like spiritual fathers. When St. Francis of Assisi cast away his garments of silk to put on the rags of a mendicant, when he kissed the leper and when he stated to the Bishop of Assisi that if we amassed riches we would have to provide weapons with which to defend our wealth—were these not bold attempts in his time to seek forms of dialogue with the contemporary world?

These thoughts have occurred to me, dear brothers, on the occasion of visiting you and your celebrated cathedral.

We are moved by your gracious words, our brothers in Christ, Archbishop Cooke, and feel obligated for your warm hospitality.

You and we preach the same Holy Gospel with the same faith and same hope. We are, therefore, one in Christ. May God enlighten the fulfillment of His will.

"Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, we might receive the promise." (Heb. 10:35-36) Amen.

April 29, 1968



*His Holiness is greeted by Archbishop (now Cardinal) Cooke.  
With them are Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Archbishop Sion  
Manoogian and Bishop Papken Varjabedian.*

## **FIRST TO LEARN, THEN TO TEACH**

### *At the Ecclesiastical Assembly of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America*

We greet with Paternal love this Ecclesiastical Assembly of the Clergy of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of the United States of America. The joy of His Holiness, Catholicos and Patriarch of All Armenians, is unbounded when we see you, Holy Bishops, Vartabeds, Priests and Deacons, and all of you dedicated servants of our Holy Altars, all of you joined in a spiritual brotherhood and ready to wage "the war for the good," that is, to serve God and our faithful people. Why then should we not be joyful, why should we not be comforted? "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at His coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy." (1 Thess. 2:19-20)

From Etchmiadzin and from our heart we bring you greetings and blessings and prayers for the success of your inspiring efforts.

This may be the first and perhaps the last opportunity that we shall have to be in the midst of an assembly of clergymen, outside of the Holy See of Etchmiadzin. And we wish to address our message not only to this august Assembly but to all the spiritual fathers of our Church in the Diaspora.

It is now thirteen years that we have been carrying on our shoulders the duties of the Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians. It is natural that we have gained certain impressions concerning the devoted servants of our church, experiences mingled with light and shadows, joys and disappointments. And from the lessons of these experiences, the Holy Father of Etchmiadzin might have many things to say, but it is obvious that this is not the place for such things. There have been times when we have laid a heavy stone on our heart and kept silent. Oh, human circumstances and fears. . .

Today, we wish to concentrate our message on certain thoughts and exhortations.

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1. We find it timely, first, to speak of the distinct character of the Armenian communities and the Armenian clergy. There is no doubt that the primary mission of the clergyman is religious, to preach God's word to his congregation and to guide it toward the recognition of God and to practice the message of the Gospel of Christ. Historically, this mission is carried on among the Armenian people by the Armenian Church, the Church whose members are the people of Armenia, all the children of the Armenian nation, starting from the days of St. Gregory the Illuminator.

The Christian Church and the Christian religion are universal, because Christ and the church He heads are one; however, in the process of applying the mission to practical life, many churches have been born and formalized, in distinct and independent organizations, hierarchies and Holy Sees, all remaining as components of the same body, which is the Church of Christ. This phenomenon is peculiar to the human condition and the historic logic of human societies. It is not our purpose to speak about all of these points but merely to indicate through them that the Armenian people as a nation

professing the Christian religion have organized its independent and autocephalous Church, its hierarchy, its Apostolic See. Being an independent and autocephalous Church, she has not been willing to be detached from the general Christian fraternity of the universal church of Christ. The tragedy of the isolation of the Armenian Church which took place in the fifth century is a consequence of the expansionist policy adopted by Byzantium toward Armenia and the Armenian Church. In fact, Byzantium was telling the Armenians: Christ is one, the church is one; therefore you should become one body with us. Indubitably, Byzantium was aiming to make the universality of the Christian Church subservient to the universality of its empire. The idea of the universality of Christianity was to serve as the driving force and creed for the universality of Byzantium's political power.

The Armenian people resisted and the Armenian Church followed her people. And Byzantium went so far in its political policy that often she preferred to form alliances with pagan and Christ-persecuting nations with the avowed aim of subduing and even exterminating those Christian peoples who refused to submit to her. The case of Emperor Marcian is well known to you. He signed a treaty with Zoroastrian Persia and thus gave her a free hand to attack Armenia and uproot the Christian faith of the Armenian people. It was thus that Ghevontyank and Vartanank entered the battlefield of Avavayr for the defense of our faith and the independence of our country. Byzantium followed its policy for centuries. This policy comes openly to light in the letter Emperor Maurice addressed to the ruler of Persia toward the end of the sixth century:

"Incorrigible and disobedient are the Armenian people who live in our midst and who pollute our relations. But come, I will gather all the Armenians in my domain and exile them to Thrace and you gather those living under your rule and deport them to the East. If they die, it's our enemies who will die; if they kill, they kill our enemies and we live in peace. Because if they remain in their land, we shall have no peace."

As during the reign of mighty Rome, likewise before mighty Persia and Byzantium, Armenia with her people and her Church

always remained rebellious and unconquered. And we shall always live that way until the end of time. The Armenian Church and the Armenian people, through Christianity, defended their spiritual and national identity and independence against Persia and, by rejecting Chalcedon, against Byzantium.

The historians confirm that this shortsighted and repressive policy of Byzantium against the Christian peoples and churches of the East was one of the major causes of the weakening and eventual disintegration of Eastern Christianity and paved the road for the invasion and conquest by the Islamic religion.

It is a sign of ignorance to try to analyze the problems of Chalcedon solely through theological points of view.

But now it is your turn to raise the question as to why the Holy Father is unearthing this ancient history. Does it represent any value for our day, in our age of ecumenism? Our answer is *yes!* That history still has a particular significance in our day, at least for our Church and for our nation. Ours is a small Church, scattered to the four corners of the world, and we already see signs of incursionary policies against our Church and our people. And as long as this danger remains, we stand steadfast on our historic pedestal. We would think that our sister churches would understand our position correctly. We shall defend with our people our Christian faith and our Apostolic Church. Through our national Church we shall continue to preserve and to defend the existence of our people and its spiritual independence.

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We purposely used the word *still*; it is not just accidental to our way of thinking, because we hope the day will come when our fears will be dispelled and the establishment of Christ's kingdom of love, brotherhood, and union of Christians and their churches will be realized. Guided by this conviction, the Armenian Church will continue to collaborate actively with the ecumenic movement of churches.

We consider all Christian churches to be our genuine sisters; we have faith in and respect for all of them. All churches must work out a rapprochement, must know each other, and love each other, and must remove all mutual anathemas, and with the spirit of tolerance,

must dispel their domineering attitudes and work hand in hand with the knowledge of mutual equality to bring their share with determination toward the solution of the vital problems of the world.

2. Today, the Christian churches, individually and collectively, consider it opportune and indispensable to determine the role and the place of the church in this world. The church and the modern world, or the church in dialogue with the modern world, or the calling of the church in the modern world, are mere formulas by which all express the same basic ideas, differentiating one from the other only in certain gradations of color and degree. This idea, this differentiation from each other, we consider a new attestation of the vitality of Christian thinking. Today all humanity in its present mode of living, with its external appearances, its thoughts and tendencies, is in the grip of a deep crisis, has almost lost its course. We will not be mistaken if we also speak of the crisis of ecclesiastical life and religious faith. Concealing the facts is not a healthy way of thinking. Moreover, not to observe or not to be able to observe the facts is a sign of weakness, a sign that we ourselves as clergymen doubt the truth of our faith and the mission of the church. Yes, the world is in a turmoil today and humanity is in an agony of soul-searching. All are suffering from a lack of religious certitude, equilibrium and peace. This situation is a challenge directed to us as clergymen, so that we may open our eyes to search and find the means that may satisfy the need of man today. This means that we have to continue our Christian mission in a new light, with a new spirit, in such a way as if the Gospel was being preached especially for the modern world. We think that there is much truth in Giovanni Pappini's words: "Every age has its own Gospel." This directive leads the church toward the issues of the modern world, toward a dialogue with the modern world, and still more. We believe in that word *still*. Our moral conscience impels us to think about reconstructing the world and man's life with Christ and with Holy Gospel. By all means, we can think with certainty of the great and irreplaceable role of the Gospel of Christ in reconstructing the world and man's life.

3. To be in dialogue with the modern world and life, to remain in the modern world with the church also means that the church be in dialogue with the community, which forms the immediate environment of its faithful. In our case, it means to be in communion with the Armenian people, with its world, its spiritual life, its aspirations and its dreams. For us, the modern world means first of all our contemporary faithful people. Our correlation with the world and humanity is through our little garden. Consequently, our church will be in dialogue first with her people and through it with humanity.

It would be incongruous for us to speak among ourselves about dialogue with the world and to disregard our own people among whom we are called to work. The flock that has been entrusted to us, the Armenian people, is that world. We ought to decide seriously to remain within that world, not in the role of a ruler or as a domineering force, but with the real meaning of modern dialogue as in the message of Apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:3): "Not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock." This means to live with our people cordially and in harmony, to understand accurately their inner world, their needs and aspirations, with the aim of finding ways and means to help their needs and problems and guide them toward the path of spiritual reconstruction.

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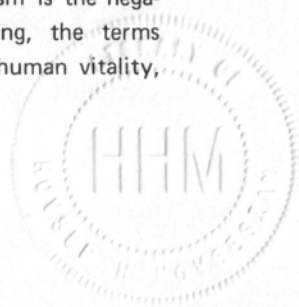
We do not agree that religious work and the church should deviate from their mission and purpose. We do not agree that religious work and the church should become tools for the attainment of non-religious purposes. We do not agree that clergymen should preach on subjects other than the word of God. We profess religious faith to be a self-evident fact, with an intrinsic value and with a self-containing purpose, a spiritual human aspect and experience; and that the church is a collective organization of that religious experience and mission. But all these things do not signify that we should disregard the fact the Armenian Church is the Armenian people. It is in this sense that we call the Armenian Church a national church. The Armenian people are a people of the church and its entire history is a heroic testimony of its collective Christian life and experience.



The Armenian Church, both in her historic and religious mission and in the indispensable role she has had to play in the dialogue of the modern world, must dedicate herself to her people with greater love and determination and to the work of reconstructing her religious life. To dedicate herself to the service and spiritual lifting of her people suggests to us also to preserve the Armenian Church in her distinctive Armenian character. It is our conviction that one of the means and conditions of being in dialogue with the world is to profess the existence of different nationalities as a standard, as a reality. One of the historically determining aspects of the existence of general human life is its nationalistic character. This is especially true in our age. Look around you and you will see, from West to East and from North to South, that today the most distinctive characteristic and the strongest driving force of human life is nationalism. The Utopias of bygone days are all bankrupt. We do not defend a cause but merely confirm a fact. Among our people also there is an awakening today and an explosive burst into life everywhere. To disregard this fact would mean to keep the church away from her people. It would mean to negate not only the historic mission of our Church but also the idea of the dialogue of our day. As long as mankind remains constituted and organized within national aggregates, giving form to the Christian church, within a given nation signifies containing that national aggregate organically within that church and on the path toward its religious mission. This is true especially of the Armenian Church. To divest the Armenian Church of her nationalistic character, of her national and cultural values, of the life and ideals of her people, would mean to weaken the religious faith of the Armenians and to alienate the nation from its church.

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When we speak of the ideals of "nation" and "national," we must take great care not to confuse those terms with "nationalism" and "fanaticism." Nationalism, Nazism are degenerate meanings of "national understanding," just as aggressive militarism is the negation of true patriotism. To our way of thinking, the terms "nation-national" are patterns and expressions of human vitality, healthy, natural and creative.



By approaching correctly and by preserving the national character of our Church, we will be able to remain in dialogue more fruitfully with our people for the fulfillment of our religious mission.

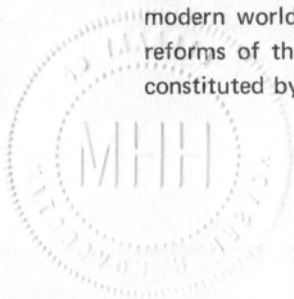
By the expression "preservation of the national character of our church," we never mean deviation of the church from her purely religious mission; on the contrary, we understand it to mean the revitalization of that mission within the patterns and limits peculiar to our national and collective entity.

"Preservation of the national character of our church" involves:

- a. Preservation of the national traditions of our church and the adoration of the saints, and full consciousness of our ecclesiastical history.
- b. Preservation and strengthening of the hierarchical, autocephalous independent existence and organization of the Armenian Church with the sole Mother See of the Catholicos of All Armenians at Holy Etchmiadzin as its only Head. We should always sound the alarm so that our children who may have strayed from the fold, may return to the illuminated road of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.
- c. Preservation of our national ecclesiastical rituals and language and the teaching of church literature.
- d. Preservation of the sacred music of our church and her architecture, her sculpture and the traditions of her miniatures.
- e. Preservation of a spiritual communion with the genuine living and the visions of the Armenian people.

We as Armenian clergymen must remain loyal to our religious mission and the reconstruction work of the spiritual life of our people. We must also remain loyal to the principle of close and harmonious cooperation with our sister churches. Further, we must remain loyal to our historic duty of preserving our little nation as one and indivisible.

4. One of the formulas and conditions of remaining within the modern world and being in dialogue with it concerns the internal reforms of the church. Of course, the church as a body born and constituted by divine dispensation cannot and should not change her



intrinsic nature, her status, her character, her calling and her traditional patterns; but as an organism living in the conditions prevalent in the modern world, it is natural that she should introduce certain changes in the pattern of her activities and her organizational modes. In our church this change is known as "reformation of the church."

As you know, the Armenian Church has usually been broad-minded and has understood the pressing needs of the times and has not hesitated in introducing necessary reforms within her domain in prudent moderation. Confining ourselves to the past one hundred years, we can mention the adoption of many regulations for the wide participation of the laity in the control of church affairs, mostly administrative and organizational, adoption of a New Calendar, changes in the regulations of marriage and remarriage of priests.

During the past ten years our episcopal gatherings had on their agenda new problems of reform, with some decisions made and adopted, which however, have not been carried out. We now consider that the time has come to prepare an index of reforms in all earnestness and to thoroughly examine them at an Assembly of Bishops in the very near future, and, if necessary, present them to an Ecclesiastical-National council. It will be very appropriate and practical that we should convene that Episcopal Assembly next Fall at Holy Etchmiadzin on the occasion of the consecration of Divine Chrism. The issues to be included on the agenda should be examined in a comprehensive manner and then submitted to the Episcopal Assembly. After our return to Holy Etchmiadzin we will seriously study this matter, and through special communications we will issue a definite plan for our Bishops, proposing that they should forward their ideas and proposals to Holy Etchmiadzin.

However, it is imperative to emphasize the fact that we must approach the problems of church reforms with particular circumspection and farsightedness, especially with a spirit of meditation and reasoning which we call traditional-historical. It is possible to approach these church matters in two ways: one is the religious way of thinking, by which every one of us can rationalize and propose a

solution. The second way is the traditional and historical method; in other words, to follow traditional and historical reasoning.

We of the Armenian Church must remain steadfast on the latter ground which is the safe and tried one. In the words of Patriarch Ormanian as published in the *Ararat* of 1888: "The solution of factual things is made possible by experimental interpretation and not by explanation of probabilities." We can easily confirm, from the experience of other churches, to what end the rationalist road will lead us. It is through this road that in your country certain well-known Christian theologians have reached the point where they trumpeted to the world, "God is dead."

The Armenian Church had also a certain experience of "free" thinking. That temptation was born in the Armenian Church during 1923-1926 in Erevan and Tiflis and spread to the Northern Caucasus under the name of "Free Church." That church was headed by a group of talented Bishops, Vartabeds and Arch-Priests, some of them with vast theological knowledge and experience, such as Bishop Ashot Shakhian, Penig Senior Vartabed Yeghiazarian, Arch-Priest Father Mesrob Selian, and others.

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It is wrong to assume that those unfrocked clergymen were mere opportunists and non-believers, at the service of foreign interests. The documents in the files of the Mother See and the monthly "Free Church" published by them demonstrate that they had embarked on their course motivated by an anxiety to reform the Armenian Church. Some of their theories concerning the Congregation of Holy Etchmiadzin are probably partly justifiable. Some day the history of that movement should be written. At present it may be too early for such an undertaking. However, we can and must ask the question: Where did that movement to reform the Armenian Church with "free thought" reach? It reached the point, we can assume, where it turned out to be a church-destroying activity. The "Free Churchmen" relying on rationality tried to reform the church, but actually weakened it and battered the hierarchical foundations of our Apostolic Church, her traditions and historicity. How sad it is today to leaf through the files of the Office of Mother See and discover under what disadvantageous external conditions our great Church

Fathers of lamented memory had struggled to defend the sacred body of the Armenian Church with a clear vision and courageous faith, among them, Catholicos Kevork V and his militant comrades-in-arms, Karekin Hovsepianz, Khoren Muradpekianz and Kevork Cheorekjian. Today, the "Free Church" makes its appearance with the countenance of an infamous movement.

In examining the problems of the reformation of the Armenian Church we have to take into account the fact of the dispersion of our Church all over the world. This signifies that the Armenian Church finds herself, to a certain extent, under different conditions subject to various environmental factors; consequently, under a different urgency of reform. From this point of view, we can divide the life and activities of the church into five areas: 1. Armenia, with its internal Bishoprics and with a population of three and a half million; 2. The Middle East, Persia and Turkey, with a population of five hundred thousand; 3. Europe, with about two hundred thousand Armenians; 4. North America and Australia, with about three hundred thousand; and 5. South America, with more than one hundred thousand Armenians.

Consequently, when we think of reforms, it is imperative to ascertain the conditions under which they have to be carried out, and to formulate them in such a measure and manner that they will conform and correspond to all the areas of the vast geographical dispersion of the Armenian Church, and not simply take this or that area as a basis. However, if we think in preferential terms, of course that area should properly be Armenia. Because, whatever may be said otherwise, we must be convinced by now that the fate and the future of the Armenian people as well as of the Armenian Church will be determined on the soil of the Motherland where the greatest number of Armenians live, have their sovereign state and where they multiply, develop their flowering culture and have their strong national character deeply rooted in the soil, in such a manner as never existed since the 11th century.

Before concluding our message, we wish to bring to your attention the most important question related to the reform of our Church. It is the education and reform of the clergy. It is our firm

conviction that the paramount need for the reform of the Armenian Church is to have spiritual servants, Bishops, Vartabeds, priests and deacons who are worthy of their calling.

Today there is no doubt that the Armenian Church has within her ranks many faithful, virtuous and devoted clergymen, but not in sufficient numbers. Likewise, there are also a number of clergymen of whom we cannot give the same testimony. During the thirteen years of our pontifical office, we have lived through many grave disappointments, starting from the Mother See to the East and the West and in all directions. There are certain grave events which are familiar to you. There are also other grave situations unknown to the public, which are equally unhealthy and whose resolution demands that we should all collaborate with a sincere and wholehearted determination. The Armenian people have a right to expect these things from their spiritual servants. All of us are duty bound to respond nobly to those expectations.

It is to be expected that we clergymen should have more faith in our work, infuse it with more idealism and content in our daily life and our labors, without surrendering to silver, without subordination to lassitude and egocentric tendencies. Gregory Nazianzus has these words in his famous work "Flight to Pontus," about the mission of the clergy: "We should not start on the road to healing others when we ourselves are full of wounds. It is absolutely necessary to be cleansed first, then cleanse others; first to learn, then to teach; to be the light first; then to enlighten others; to approach God first, then to bring others closer to Him; to be sanctified first before sanctifying others." What a beautiful morality there is in these thoughts, and what a rich life, and what a sublime and heroic understanding of the mission of the Christian religion.

We preach love and brotherhood, mercy and forgiveness and moral virtues to our people from these sacred altars. We condemn covetousness, vanity and ambition, lies and hypocrisy, jealousy and hatred. That is our calling, our noble duty. And our words should be the expressions of our entire existence and our private life. Otherwise, the words will become dead letters and will resemble "the peddlers of God's word," of whom Apostle Paul speaks with scorn. (2 Corin. 2. 17)

Stay alert, holy brethren, do not weaken, do not doubt, because "...the world passes away and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2. 17)

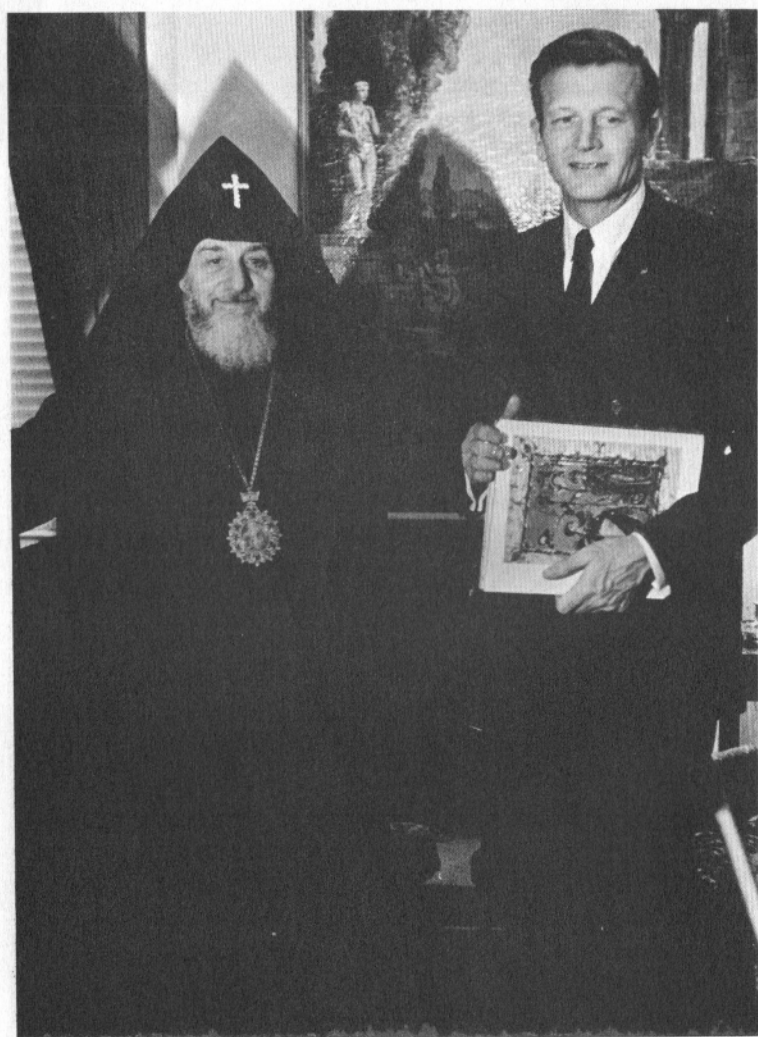
There are two ways to conquer the pinnacles of religious perfection and mission, both indispensable and each complementing the other. One is the inspiration of the Holy Writ and inspiration from the lives of the saints; and the other is to be in communion with the spiritual life and wishes of our people, with a readiness to serve them.

Then let us approach with faith illuminating word of God, the illuminating Gospel of Christ and dispense them to our faithful and hopeful people as diligent cup-bearers. Let us perform our sacred duty before God and our people, with love, optimism and humility. It is in this way that we shall infuse a moral sense and spiritual beauty into our lives and will remain as servants without shame.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you." (1 Peter 1. 2-5)

May grace and peace be multiplied for you. Amen!

May 1, 1969



*His Holiness with Mayor John V. Lindsay of New York.*



## **PUT ASIDE ALL LAMENTATIONS**

*At The Annual Assembly Of The Diocese  
Of The Armenian Church Of America*

To the Most Reverend Fathers, the Reverend Vartabeds and Kahanas, and worthy delegates:

Greetings to you sons of Armenia in dispersion whom fate has driven and scattered as far as America.

Greetings to you from the Land of Ararat, from the Ark on Masis, and from the Holy Cathedral of Etchmiadzin.

Greetings from the Hairig of the Armenians, who once wrote:

"Would that, as the dove of Noah, I could give you the tidings that the flood had dried up from off the earth, return to your fatherland!

“Take heart and be of good cheer, unfortunate and fortunate sons of Armenia, the day of God’s visitation to our tormented land is near.

“Greet also Edison, the great inventor, who through his marvelous invention brought to you my living voice. Long may he and the memory of his invention live!

“I congratulate you on the occasion of the New Year, by wishing you long life and success—January 3, 1894.”

So stated the recorded message of the Supreme Patriarch of the Armenians, Khrimian Hairig, seventy-four years ago.

We also greet you, true sons, and once more we bring God’s blessings to you, and through you, to the Armenian people.

Time flies, conditions of life change, generations come and go, Supreme Patriarchs succeed one another, but Ararat and Holy Etchmiadzin stand unshaken and unchanging, irremovable and irreplaceable. Unmoved and unchanging, irremovable and irreplaceable is also the Supreme Patriarch of the Armenians at Holy Etchmiadzin. This has been true in the instance of every Catholicos of All Armenians, as a spirit, a symbol, as a message, beginning with the days of the great Illuminator, St. Gregory.

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Let us see the one and unchanging Supreme Patriarch of the Armenians which has taken on body and breath in our inadequate person. We trust that you believe us that the experience of this spiritual transition strongly shook our being in those days, when, even though faithfully, but with great fear and trepidation we approached the See of Holy Etchmiadzin, and ascended the altar, the Mt. Tabor of all the Armenian patriarchs.

Once more greetings and blessings.

This is a historic and unprecedentedly significant occasion. We will not be wrong in affirming that this is the first time that the Patriarch of the Armenian Church personally attends and presides over a Diocesan Assembly, and that in the largest and most important diocese, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

On this historic occasion we first recall the memory of Catholicos Megrdoch Khrimian, of blessed memory, through whose patriarchal Gontag and blessings the Diocese of the Armenian churches was

organized in the United States, as an undivided and indivisible part of the Armenian Church, under the jurisdiction of the Catholicate of All Armenians at Holy Etchmiadzin, the sole head of our Church, yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

In the course of the last half a century, your Diocese and parishes, and their various religious, educational, and cultural auxiliary bodies, made rapid progress through the gradual increase of the number of the faithful, and blossomed forth in this prosperous land. The Patriarch of the Armenian Church, therefore, deems it a primary duty today to express his gratitude to the hospitable government and magnanimous American people for all the benefits which the Armenian faithful have enjoyed and are enjoying here. May God keep forever in peace and prosperity your great land along with the peace and prosperity of all the world.

On this historic occasion we remember with gratitude and blessings all the industrious spiritual leaders, the brave shepherds, and our devout and generous sons who, in the course of past decades, offered their spiritual, organizational, and financial aid for the progress of the Diocese and the development of its spiritual and cultural life. Honor and blessing to their luminous memory.

Today, we address also words of commendation and blessings to you all, worthy Delegates, to you Most Rev. Archbishop Torkom, Diocesan Primate, to you loyal and unselfish spiritual fathers, to you delegate members of the diocesan and parish councils, and especially, members of the Cathedral and Cultural Center Project Committee who through your high authority, your will and enthusiasm, brought to realization the Armenian American dream of many years, by erecting your magnificent temple, in the original Armenian architectural style, and to talented Armenian and American architects for their able and conscientious work.

We address our words of paternal love and appreciation also to all the generous church-loving benefactors and Armenian American people, whose voluntary gifts made possible the erection of the Cathedral in New York as well as the beautiful churches of Detroit, Boston, and other cities, which are magnificent monuments to the Christian faith and architectural genius of the Armenian people.

Dear and most worthy Delegates!

We are aware that you expect us to state also our thoughts relative to questions which are the object of your anxieties and endeavors. Numerous and varied are those questions. But we find it possible and desirable to delve into a few questions which we consider timely and important. Consider our words as paternal counsel and heartfelt aspirations addressed to you and without discrimination, to all Armenian faithful people in America.

a. Our primary wish is that in America the Armenian people remain loyal to the luminous Christian faith of their fathers, remain vital and undiminished as a religious community, as a religious one and indivisible organization, as an Armenian cultural grouping. Live and continue to be as God has created you, as Our Church and the centuries have fashioned and inspired you. We are a spiritual nation. The mirror of our soul is in our religious faith, our national culture, our free will to live and work in the world under the blessings of the divinely founded Holy Etchmiadzin.

b. We counsel that you, along with your religious traditions, preserve also the legacy of the Armenian creative mind and spirit, that is Armenian cultural values, above all, our mother tongue, the language of our reborn homeland. We present to you as a vital issue the question of organizing Armenian courses on a broader base in your Sunday Schools, the dissemination of the Armenian prayer and Armenian book among the new generation and to think, seriously think, about establishing high schools, grammar schools, under the auspices of the church. We are aware of the difficulties in the realization of such programs, but who can say that a difficult task is also impossible. God be praised, you live in a broadminded country where you enjoy every liberty for the realization of such projects. You have and are able to create the necessary financial means. The essential thing is that man with faith and vision, both lay and clerical, come to the fore. The Armenian Church and Armenian school can live and survive through one another. Without Armenian language, without Armenian letters and literature, without Armenian history, the Armenian Church may lose its spiritual identity, may lose even the sense of its individual existence. Whereas it should be

your vow and mission to keep the Apostolic Church of our forefathers unshaken and unblemished, as the Armenian Apostolic Church. It is only through its Armenian character that our Church can be maintained as an original authentic Christian Church.

We do not say to you don't be Americans. But being American does not mean not to remain Armenian. We recall the admirable counsel of one of your recent presidents to the effect that every community preserve its religious traditions and ethnic and cultural values.

c. We still wish that in your family and community life you make Armenian culture, with its oldest and newest values, the object of your interest and knowledge. We wish that you organize and direct this work according to a plan with persistence. Your religious and cultural organizations, your young people's organizations, your religious publication, as well as the press, in general can play a great role in this task. We are aware that already some noteworthy tasks have been performed by you, and are being performed, but more is expected. We know that the A.G.B.U. and compatriotic organizations have similar concerns. You all can, thus, cooperate so as to illuminate, refine and inspire the soul of Armenian Americans with the values of Armenian culture, especially since that culture is essentially a Christian culture. Armenian Christianity, Armenian culture and Armenian history have become almost one and have been fused into one whole. Every Armenian American who enlightens his soul by the light of Armenian culture becomes not only a better Armenian, but also, a more inspired and refined person a more disciplined and more idealistic citizen, and will cause to better appreciate the heroic concept of the Christian faith.

d. We wish to stress here the vital significance of the preservation of the indivisible internal unity of the Armenian Church, on the historic and canonical basis, that the Armenian church is one by its hierarchal order and organization, headed by the Catholicos of All Armenians at Holy Etchmiadzin. The unity and autocephalous position of the Armenian Church are conditioned by the supreme hierarchal see of the Mother See Holy Etchmiadzin. Only the Supreme Catholicate of Holy Etchmiadzin is the head of the

Armenian church. The other sees, the House of Cilicia, of Jerusalem, and of Constantinople have only local jurisdiction in the organization of the Armenian Church, under the high spiritual authority of the Catholicate of All Armenians. This is the canonic and historical truth which also coincides totally with the profound conviction of the faithful everywhere, as well as with the basic and long-range interests of the nation.

Therefore, it is not possible to separate oneself from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and at the same time to be in the organization of the Armenian Church. It is a fantastic and regrettable delusion under which certain religious communities, their clergy and lay members continue to remain detached from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.

Therefore, in the name of the sacred interests of our church and people, in the name of our religious and national conscience, in the name of our history and our future, we express once more our fervent wish that, with God's grace, misunderstandings of all types and pointless and meaningless consideration are dispelled and the dissidents return to luminous Etchmiadzin towards the unity of the Armenian Church.

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The spirit of disunion was established in the dispersion twelve years ago, during the early part of our incumbence. We did not understand then and neither have we understood today why, for what purpose, and in whose interest it was accomplished. We pray that the daybreak of true and sincere embrace of reconciliation becomes possible in the near future, so as to see and to bless the complete unity of our church and the brotherhood of all faithful people under the auspices of the divinely ordained Holy Etchmiadzin.

e. It is our counsel that in our religious and cultural endeavors, you live and work by mutual fraternal respect, in an orderly spirit, holding the common good uppermost, in harmonious, constructive cooperation.

When Armenians love their church as one in body and spirit, naturally they will love also one another. The atmosphere of brotherly love and harmonious cooperation among the clergy, as

well as the clergy and laymen, is the first essential condition for a truly dutiful community life, that is, church life.

Apostle Paul has told us to obey one another in the fear of Christ and in the love of Christ. Truly, whoever has faith and love towards God and the Holy Church, respects and loves his brother finding in him the reflection of his personal aspirations and his comrades-in-arms for the realization of his objectives. Let us recall the fiery words of the Apostle John: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother he is a liar." "He who loveth God, should love his brother also." (1 Jn. 4:20)

The fountain of love for mankind and for one's brother is the love of God, love of the Church, that is the Collective life and work by which Christians live and strive together, so as to know God together, to carry out, together, God's commandment on the earth, to hope, together, for the Kingdom of God.

On the bases of these spiritual truths, we deem it our duty to underline the importance of harmony, unity, and cooperative endeavor in the church. It is imperative to maintain a consistent balance between religious discipline and liberalism. There is no freedom in disorder. Our primary objective should be to nurture in the soul of faithful Christian brotherly love, which is the basis for the development of spiritual life, in and through our religious community life.

Consequently, strive to become a community based on love, a true brotherhood of Christian Armenians, work together united in love always conscious of law and order, cooperate with mutual esteem and appreciation, and when necessary, with mutual forgiveness.

Wherever peace and brotherly love exist, there descend the Lord's blessings. "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe in the saying of the soul." (Heb. 10:39)

Dear ones, never forget that along with your religious community—you Armenian faithful—you all are a true and indivisible part of the whole, the great Christian brotherhood which is the Armenian Church and all the Armenian faithful both in Armenia and in the worldwide dispersion.

Fate has scattered our sons over all the continents of the globe. One half of our small nation lives outside of the motherland. We Armenians often bewail this fate. But come, let us put aside all lamentations, let us accent the reality as it exists, and even seek something useful in it for our church and nation. We are a nearly three-thousand year old historic nation, with a tempestuous past and heroic accomplishment. We are a culture-creating people which has its respectable place in the history of human civilization. We are one of the oldest Christian peoples, with a church rich in traditions, with authentic witnesses of the faith and a great spiritual legacy. We are a people reborn as an autonomous nation and state, on the highway of growth and progress. Then why must we weaken, and why must we despair, especially since we have the rich historic experience of vital Armenian communities on distant shores, where our forefathers have lived, sometime even attaining a flourishing national-ecclesiastic, and cultural life. The world of man and life in all its external aspects is a creation of the human soul.

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The Armenian Church will be preserved through its people in the dispersion, if Armenians will strongly adhere to their spiritual resources, to their religious traditions, to their culture, their national calling and ideals, and to their manner of living. Every nation collectively tends to serve some idea on the realization of a supreme ideal. What idea are we Armenians to serve, what ideals are we to follow, and how are we to express and justify our existence, the meaning of our life?

In our opinion, the Armenian nation should consider self-realization, self-improvement, that is, the expression, growth, and refinement of its spiritual gifts, its creative powers, its distinct manner of living life with a free will and understanding and expressing it, especially through the crystallization of its religious and cultural values. The Armenian nation was thus able to endure and to survive throughout its history. It is thus that it will be enabled to preserve its existence also today. We are small in number and dispersed; we have not gold and silver; we cannot impose ourselves upon the world by the force of arms. Our weapons are our spiritual and cultural values through which we shall be able to endow our national



existence with meaning. And we believe that there still are hidden, limitless resources in the spiritual inner world of the Armenian people. It is necessary to reveal them and bring them to light. The Armenian people still have words to address to the world.

May God bless the sacred and creative Armenian impulse.

Let us all, both in the motherland and throughout the world, stand on this spiritual rock, firm and unshaken, proud and optimistic.

The Armenian nation was created and has the calling to live within itself and to develop in its own style the real man and that which is human.

The Armenian Church itself has been a most brilliant and authentic expression of the mission of our people for nearly two thousand years.

Armenian Americans, as a living indivisible part of the Armenian Church and the body of the people, you have the calling to serve as participants and co-laborers on the road of this mission, within the manner and contingencies of your circumstance of life.

Believe, unshaken, in the spiritual vitality of the Armenian church and people, remain loyal to the spiritual and cultural legacy of the Armenian people, preserve them and proudly bear witness that you are Armenian Christians, true sons of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Stand firm on this rock, do not fear and do not weaken.

“Quench not the spirit.” (Thes. 5:19) “Grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 3:18): Amen.

May 3, 1968



*Visiting UN Secretary General U Thant with Archbishop Torkom.*

## **PEACE AND JUSTICE**

*At The United Nations*

In the name of the Armenian Apostolic Church, we are happy to greet you as the honorable emissaries and representatives of your peoples and governments and express our gratitude for being honored by sharing the same table with you through your gracious acceptance of the invitation extended to your Excellencies on this occasion. Please accept our good wishes for the happiness and prosperity of your countries and your peoples.

As the Head of one of the most ancient Christian Churches, it

gives us joy to meet you today and offer our blessings to the Organization of the United Nations; we wish that in time it will become the strongest force for assuring peace in the world, security for all peoples, and harmonious cooperation among the world powers in a framework of human rights and moral principles.

We know that the United Nations is sincerely seeking the solution to international problems by peaceful means, embracing as its basic principle the supreme law of reason.

Peace is the result of life's healthy and creative forces, working harmoniously, and guided by the light of justice. In today's world the intellectual genius of man has soared to conquer the entire physical universe, up to the sun, the source of light; what a miracle it would prove to witness the victory of the moral genius of this same man in regaining the light of peace and justice which shone brightly centuries ago from the pinnacles of faith and hope, bringing to the world the message of God, "Peace on Earth and Good will to men."

We do not believe that international problems and intra-national misunderstandings can be solved by war, especially in our age when the threat of a nuclear war menaces mankind with death and destruction, equally to all peoples. Only a spirit of mutual goodwill and peace can serve as the source of human happiness and progress.

As the head of a Church, and the religious leader of a people which has so often been the victim of other governments at war, especially in 1915, we earnestly pray that similar tragedies shall never be repeated anywhere in the world.

Consequently, let the responsible leaders of the world powers strive to search out the ways of peace, with patience and optimism; let them try to understand each other with a spirit of compromise and with mutual concessions and never permit the seeds of hatred to take root among men and peoples.

Let all nations and powers appreciate one another as brothers and help each other in this world with its untold blessings which belong to all equally, under this sun which throws its light equally upon all, under the blessings of the same God, distributed equally to all.

Let peace and justice meet and embrace each other. Amen.

May 2, 1968



*Arriving in Washington, D.C.*

## FAITH OF OUR NATION

*On the Voice of America, Washington, D.C.*

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Through the Voice of America; we are happy at this moment to greet all our faithful people of the United States and bring them all God's blessings from Holy Etchmiadzin, Mother See of all Armenians, the centuries-old center of the Armenian Church, the foundation of our Christian faith.

We arrived in America at the invitation of His Grace Archbishop Torkom to consecrate the Armenian Cathedral in New York.

In the annals of the Armenians in the Diaspora, April 1968 will remain as a memorable day when, with the participation of thousands of devout and faithful Armenians, and in the presence of the Honorable John V. Lindsay, Mayor of the City of New York, and the representatives of sister churches, the doors of the newly-erected Cathedral were opened in the name of St. Vartan, the greatest defender of the Christian faith and the independence of our homeland.

In the heart of the greatest city of America rises the Cathedral of St. Vartan, the Mother Church; and may she always stand erect as a glorious testimonial to the spiritual vitality of the Armenian people

and as a symbol of the Christian faith of our nation, and may she always remain unextinguishable and perpetually lighted from the torch of the Holy Altar of Etchmiadzin.

On this auspicious occasion, we feel that it is our duty to express our warmest gratitude to the leaders of the United States and to its noble-hearted people for the blessings and privileges enjoyed by the faithful children of our Church.

And it is our further wish that the devout children in this land live and work as disciplined and law-abiding citizens and that they preserve undefiled the light and the faith of their ancestors, their sacred traditions, their national Armenian spirit; and with their church organizations intact and in harmonious collaboration, remain one and indivisible, under the aegis of Holy Etchmiadzin.

Founded on the sanctified land of Armenia of Biblical fame, and erected by God, Etchmiadzin is the Supreme and only guaranty of the unity and oneness of the Armenian Church.

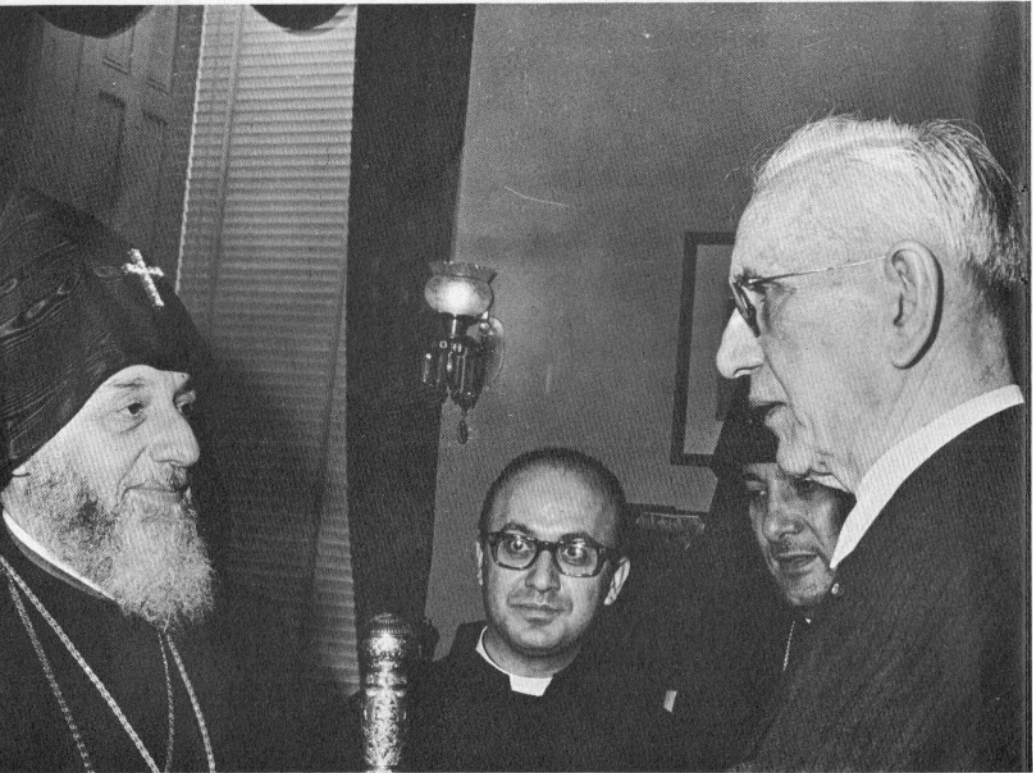
We were happy today to offer our blessings in a prayer in the august House of Representatives in Washington, the Capital of this great country, and for the God-loving and industrious people of America who live in peace and prosperity. We also pray that peace be established permanently all over the world and that all wars end forever.

In these days security and peace are one and indivisible. Every war is a threat directed to all peoples, and it is not possible to reconcile the conscience of man with the idea of war. We greet the efforts to bring the Vietnam war to an end and we pray that the results of the negotiations now going on will be salutary and will end in peace and justice. We also salute the efforts of the United Nations to insure peace and justice in the Middle East; there the Holy City of Jerusalem is located, the Sacred center of three great religions, and there the Armenian Church has her Holy Shrines with its centuries-old traditions under the sovereignty of the Armenian Patriarch.

May God crown with success the labors of the workers of peace.

Peace unto those who are far away and those who are nearby and a heavenly love in peace to all, now and forevermore. Amen!

May 10, 1968



*With the Honorable John McCormack, Speaker of the House of Representatives, in the company of Deacon Hovhannes Kasparian and Archbishop Torkom.*



## WITH COURAGE AND COMPASSION

### *The Prayer offered in Congress*

In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

We thank You, O Lord, our God, for granting us the opportunity of standing at this time in the midst of this venerable legislative body as the humble spiritual head of the Armenians and a servant of Your Church.

As we visit this wonderful land, we offer You our gratitude for the peace and prosperity which the children of our church, the descendents of the world's most ancient Christian state, have found in this hospitable country.

We fervently implore, O Lord, that You guide the minds and wills of all legislators everywhere, to bring about justice and peace, love and happiness in this strife-torn and restless world of ours.

You, O Lord, who are the true destiny of men and of nations, grant, we beseech You, Your wisdom and guidance to these distinguished Representatives of the people of the United States of America that they may lead this country with courage and compassion toward purposes pleasing to You. We ask Your blessings in Christ's name and we glorify Him together with You and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.

May 10, 1968

## TOWARD ENLIGHTENED YEREVAN

*Spoken at an Audience for Writers and Artists*

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We deem it a heart-felt responsibility to bring greetings and blessings to you all from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, with good wishes to each one here, and especially with profound commendation for your work and achievements.

When names were read a short while ago, we noted that of those gathered here, some are writers, some artists, and still others in the performing arts: pianist, singer, actor; and a few educators and scholars as well.

As the Head of our Church, we cannot but appreciate the work you do in the conditions which exist in your country, conditions which of course are completely different from those in Armenia or even in the Constantinople and Tiflis of our past, where Armenians lived in large numbers and somehow regarded those two cities as their native land; while these cities were not on Armenian soil, Armenian literature and art were raised to such peaks (there) that they represent authentic values in Armenian culture, and will remain so forever.

You live in different circumstances, and so are more deserving of commendation, because of your heroic efforts to keep alive Armenian letters, literature, the press and other arts.

We believe that you will not misunderstand us if we explore our thoughts more deeply concerning Armenian culture and art in the dispersion. And we would like to emphasize that we are concerned here only with literary and artistic creativity, and not with the performing arts; but with Armenian poetry, literature, music, painting, sculpture and comparable arts.

It is necessary to have a definite understanding of culture and art in order to be able to see the situation clearly. If by literature and art we mean the expression of individual talents, then it is of course possible to speak of Armenian culture and literature in the dispersion; but we believe that no one here would accept such an interpretation. For ourselves at least we feel that literature and art must be linked organically to a people; to that people's soil, place, conditions, social circumstances, psychology, dreams and visions of the future; and to experiencing and understanding that people's way of life.

Authentic literary and artistic values have always been such. It is impossible to separate from their people a Cervantes, a Moliere, a Shakespeare, because they represent a part of their national consciousness and spirit.

Irrespective of the contents, since it is not a condition that the contents be nationally oriented, a creative work must fulfill artistic requirements. In Dante, for example, there is nothing national; nor is there in the work of Krikor Naregatzi; still Krikor Naregatzi is authentically Armenian, as Dante is supremely Italian, and Cervantes is Spanish, and Moliere French.

Noted thinkers and men of letters have said that if French history of the 18th century were lost for a moment--the thought is absurd of course--a Moliere would be enough to reconstitute the history of France in that era, as spirit and national being.

This view is correct, just and salutary in our view, as it relates to culture and all the arts. We refer, we repeat once more, to truly creative work which can conquer time and live from century to century. And if the Armenian people are to survive the centuries, it will not be because of any other circumstances--we are a very small people on this earth--but from the values deriving from our cultural, spiritual and intellectual endeavors.

And fortunately, Armenian values have begun to take firm and real shape on the soil of our homeland, because as a tree takes root in the ground and grows, our culture flourishes in our own soil, in our contemporary human condition, takes on color and shape and light, and gradually truly authentic values emerge.

We can speak at great length about writers and artists of Armenian origin in the dispersion, but they do not represent Armenian values. For example, we are from Rumania as you know, and that country's greatest poet of all time, Michael Eminescou, is of Armenian origin. His father moved to Rumania from Lenburg. He went to Armenian school for a while, his name was Eminovich, which was recognized as an Armenian name in the Poland of that time. He was even persecuted to some extent in the beginning as a non-Rumanian, but all that is forgotten today, and he is the pride of the Rumanian people and as a poet enjoys international renown. He is not, however, an Armenian poet, but an authentic Rumanian poet, just as Carzou is an authentic French painter, though Armenian by origin. Similarly with Charles Aznavour as a poet, though he even speaks Armenian. When he came to Yerevan, he created a tempest among our people. Still he remains a Frenchman. In Paris, in 1965, during an official visit, an outstanding intellectual from the Ministry of Education said in commendation: "The French are amazed that Charles Aznavour, though Armenian by birth, is so thoroughly French."

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In the dispersion we have had, and have, authentic talents and works. It would be difficult to review them all, but we would like to remember two people. For example, Hamasdegh, who did all his work in this country, America. And Gosdan Zarian, who wrote his major work in the dispersion. There should be no mistakes, however; they were the true offspring of the Armenian soil. They wrote demonstrably in Armenia, on Armenian soil, in the spiritual sense, because they were with their entire beings tied to their mother country.

Hamasdegh's entire literary output, as you know, is nothing if not the broad picturization of his village, his homeland, and the life there. Hamasdegh created, always sensing himself on Armenian soil,

existing in those conditions, in that environment.

Gosdan Zarian did the same. We first met Gosdan Zarian in 1960 in Los Angeles. We had been an admirer of his work for a long time. We invited him, he came, we spoke, and we had occasion to say: "Mr. Zarian, are you not going to come to Armenia one day?" He was touched. "And if they exile me to Siberia," he said. He spoke in jest of course, but added seriously: "Your Holiness, I live in Armenia, my entire spirit is linked with Armenia. I have no spiritual connection with this world (for America). I see nothing in this world. My world is there, and I will come." And he came.

These are exceptional developments in our tragic history, written after the first World War.

Continuing our thought, we feel that any Armenian artist in the dispersion--poet, author, composer, painter--if he really wants a place in Armenian art, must make a heroic effort to place himself, within reasonable limits--it would be impossible to say completely--in the same spiritual condition, as did Hamasdegh and as Gosdan Zarian.

You know very well that in Armenia today our culture is flourishing in all its phases, in poetry and fiction, in sculpture, painting, architecture and music. In reality, we are experiencing a renaissance of great significance in our history--in our literature, art and culture generally. And there is a strong and unique sense of impressing national feeling vigorously on our art. And sometimes, in our personal view, even in exaggerated measure. It is not necessary to stress nationalism in a speech, because there is no art in a speech; a speech can be extremely national, but it will remain a speech and not a work of art.

The rise and expression of Armenian spirit in Armenia, and its intensification in our works of art are highly commendable. We will not make note of any names; you know the many poets, authors and musicians; and new talents are developing steadily, a marvelous generation, moved by Armenian pride and integrity, each creating work characterized by Armenian style and spirit. And that by giving natural, organic expression to the contemporary life of the Armenian people, its circumstances, its dreams, its visions and its conscience.

Consequently, if you, as Armenians in the dispersion, seek a message from us, it would be to turn our spirits toward Ararat, toward enlightened Yerevan, toward our people.

We want to speak freely here because there are frankly certain realities--there are here people who are apart from Armenia, from even Etchmiadzin--who represent the tragedy of our Armenian life. Not clergyman, nor any artist, whatever his political background, can permit himself to stand against our spiritual center of Etchmiadzin or the cultural life of our mother country.

Political attitudes and judgments are entirely different matters. We have nothing to say about these because we believe that every man must be free to have his own view of the world. Our religious, spiritual and cultural life has no relation to this. We don't know why this truth has not been understood.

And our heart bleeds when we see the division continuing in our Church, and to a lesser extent in our literary-cultural life.

When we met Khoren Catholicos in Addis Ababa, in the course of conversation on one occasion, we brought to his attention the two invitations we had extended to him to visit Holy Etchmiadzin. Do you know what he answered in the presence of Archbishop Yeghishe? "I am not the man to come to Armenia," he said.

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This is the deterioration of the Armenian spirit. We cannot permit this to happen, if we are indeed Armenians, not on religious, not on artistic or cultural grounds. We are one people, with a 3000-year history, with an established Church 2000 years old, headed solely by Holy Etchmiadzin.

The Armenian Church has never had two heads, nor can it ever have. That would lead to chaos and the destruction of our religious life. Such a thing cannot be. Our Armenian conscience must drive us to proclaim this truth, to preserve our spiritual and cultural unity, just as they were bequeathed to us by our fathers, very often at the price of martyrdom.

And this awareness is acute in Armenia, in our brothers and sisters there, and you must help strengthen that spirit everywhere.

Holy Etchmiadzin and we, it is necessary to say without false modesty, have fulfilled our responsibilities, and continue to do so,

for the revival of the Armenian spirit. As you know, difficult circumstances prevailed there twenty, thirty years ago. They tried to submerge the Armenian spirit. But those days are lost and gone, together with their architects.

Today the horizon is altogether bright, and the Armenian people truly feel that way.

Holy Etchmiadzin, we would like to add, together with its purely spiritual mission, continues its mission in this direction as well. Let us say for example that in this new era even the first call to the heroic battlefield of Sardarabad took wing from the heights of Holy Etchmiadzin, with a Patriarchal encyclical. And today, at this moment, as we are assembled here, a new monument rises, stone by stone, on the field of Sardarabad, which will be completed in the Fall. And that monument will become a shrine, as has the Martyrs' Monument erected on Dsidsernagapert Heights in Yerevan.

The Martyrs' Memorial and the Sardarabad Monument, one marking the tragedy, almost the extinction, of the Armenian people, while the other the triumph, the resurrection of a people on the very site where the wheel of the Armenian people's destiny turned and opened the way to a new life in our history.

We would like to counsel all our artists in the dispersion to keep their attention close to Armenia, to our people, and especially to our flowering culture. In that way every talent in the dispersion will be able to make its contribution and more and more enrich the treasury of Armenian culture.

We wish you all success, the grace and blessings of God.

May 7, 1968



*His Holiness in prayer.*



## DEATH AND RESURRECTION

*At the Monument of the Armenian Martyrs in Montebello*

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen!

Christ has risen from the dead and by His death he conquered death and by His resurrection he gave us life.

Dear faithful people, we begin our message with holy tidings, first, because we just celebrated together Holy Easter and we all are still enjoying the blessings of the resurrection of Christ.

But we also begin our message with holy tidings because at this moment our presence before this wonderful and inspiring monument of the Martyrs symbolizes the idea of the death and the resurrection of our nation and our people. Although more than fifty years have

passed since that tragedy, there is no doubt that our nation and our Holy Church in Armenia and in all the lands where there throbs an Armenian heart will never forget our martyrs. We will always come together and look for a shrine where we can light a candle and raise our prayers to heaven for the peace and comfort and justice of the multitudes of our innocent martyrs.

In the year 1915, in those dark days, an entire country was annihilated; our churches and monasteries were desecrated and destroyed and our people were thrown into the abyss of death with unutterable tortures. But, my beloved Armenians, God did not forsake us and just as Christ was risen from the dead on the third day, the Armenian people were similarly resurrected three years after the tragedy of 1915 and came into a new life under strangely similar and miraculous circumstances. The May of 1918 followed the April of 1915, at such an ominous time when a new tragedy was threatening our people, our Eastern Armenia. But the blood-soaked survivors of our people unified into one body, molded into one unbreakable fist, and thus created a second Avarayr, the Battle of Sardarabad. The Armenian people were saved from certain death by the sacred blood of their valiant sons. And as you will remember it was thus that the Republic of Armenia was declared on May 28, 1918.

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Ultimately, the wheel of Armenia's history was reversed and through victory at Sardarabad a new way of life began for our people. Indeed the last drop of blood was almost drained from the life of our people under such horrendous deprivations and misfortunes, and the country had become a land of the orphan and of mourning in those days, and was surrounded by such horrible external threats; but in reality they were heroic days.

The Armenian people were barely able to heal their wounds and dream of the future when suddenly new dark clouds began to gather over the land of Ararat: the black treaty of Alexandropol was effected, and once more through the auspicious and miraculous turn of events, the Armenian people were able to stand and continue a peaceful life in a newly created homeland, on the soil of eternal Armenia.

My beloved people, it is one of the great truths of our new history that if the Treaty of Alexandropol had been carried out, we would have lost all that was won at the Battle of Sardarabad, and May 28 would have been buried in mourning. The important and fundamental point is that in those days, as Avetis Aharonian said, "The people would stand face to face against their irrevocable destiny—either life or death." But God spared our people and the people tore that black paper into shreds and leapt onward to security, peace and safety in her own homeland and on the road to spectacular growth and progress.

My dear people, we come from our reborn eternal Motherland, the Biblical land of Ararat, and from Holy Etchmiadzin, and on this sacred occasion we bring you greetings, Armenian greetings, and the blessings of God. We brought with us those two stone crosses to be placed at the foundation of this Monument built by you, so that, as was mentioned earlier, this Monument may gain more meaning and life and sacrament as a monument of prayer and covenant.

On this occasion we cannot help but bring to you, beloved children of our people, the testimony that today, especially in the last few years, a deep spiritual awareness and a crystallization of a new national awakening have taken hold among the Armenian people there, as well as among you here, and the children of our Mother Church have been inspired by the same emotions toward our martyrs and have been with the same expectations, hopes and dreams toward a brighter future.

Now here you accept greetings from your brothers and sisters and you may be assured that they are with you in spirit now. We give you our personal assurance that on our return, those we meet, from the intellectuals to the humblest workers, will not be interested in anything else or any other happening during our journey than this memorable meeting here in Montebello. This is the true image and picture of your brothers and sisters in Armenia.

My dear people, we consider it to be our sacred duty to express our gratitude in your name and in the name of the entire Armenian community of America and the Armenian Church to the Honorable Mayor of Montebello and to the representatives of the American

government who cooperated with you and supported you in your noble project, making the erection of this Monument possible on the hospitable soil of America. We will gladly carry with us to Holy Etchmiadzin the key of the city of Montebello which the Honorable Mayor gave us as a gift, and place it among the treasures of our Cathedral, so that it will enjoy the blessings of Holy Etchmiadzin. And we shall always be praying for peace in this great America as well as for the peace, prosperity and happiness of the city of Montebello.

My dear people, such emotions stir us now, such feelings, such excursions of thoughts and dreams fill the hearts of all Armenians. As a people and as a Church, there is no reason any more to consider ourselves unfortunate, forlorn and despondent. Untold horrible storms have swept over our nation and our Church, but now we have every reason to be optimistic about our present and especially about our future. As the Patriarch of All Armenians, we wish to tell you, the Armenian people: "And there shall come universal life in brightly clad garments and you and your children will create a magnificent new dawn."

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We pay our tribute and pray for divine light and peace for the spirits of multitudes of our Armenian martyrs; veneration and blessings for the reborn Armenian people and for our eternal Armenia; and justice for the Armenian people, brotherhood for all the peoples of the world and peace for humanity, now and forevermore. Amen!

May 18, 1968



*St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral.*

## UNSHAKEN, ONE AND INDIVISIBLE

*The Words of His Holiness Vasken  
Addressed to Archbishop Hrant Khatchadourian*

We have completed our journey and will depart in a few days. We trust that God will give us strength to continue our mission.

Before leaving, however, we have deemed it our moral duty to disclose certain thoughts and sentiments for your serious consideration.

First of all, we wish to state in all sincerity that we set out from the Mother See with the thought of responding to your invitation. That spirit was evident in the letter we sent to you, concerning which we had also written to our Diocesan Primate. We came with that intention, and we may add with equal sincerity, that we were

aware of a strange feeling within, a pleasant excitement, because we were to meet in your church with our so-called estranged sons. And that was certainly most pleasing to us.

But we noted with amazement and dismay on the very first day that neither you, Hrant Srpazan, nor a representative, was present at the airport during our arrival. And later, let us say, the next day or the following days, no one approached us from your side. We sent you a message dated May 4, signed by Bishop Gomidas, expressive of our surprise and disappointment, and it was only after that, three days later, that you came to bid us welcome, which however pleased us. This is one instance.

The second instance was equally unexpected for us. Despite your having received an invitation to the consecration of the Cathedral and the banquet, you were unable to attend. We recall your objections, but we feel that this was no occasion to put forth conditions, since it was to have been a first step; it was an opportunity to establish contact, and you could have come; nothing would have been changed in your status by so doing. But you preferred it that way. This, however, is not offered by way of criticism, but to state facts. This was the second instance.

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The third instance which affected us very deeply was the editorial, in Armenian, which appeared in your official organ prior to our arrival, full of so many inaccuracies and distortions that it amounted to outright malevolence towards the Supreme Patriarchate and its historic authority. Nor was this all there was. In the same issue there was an editorial, in English—certain paragraphs of which were read to us—where that which appeared in Armenian was stressed even more severely.

These three instances simply confuse us and appear incomprehensible. If we were to be accorded such treatment, why did you send an invitation to Etchmiadzin; to be amused at our expense? Under any circumstance, we cannot reconcile one with the other. On the other hand, in the course of our entire journey we became aware of one positive fact when large numbers of the faithful from the supposedly "dissident" side displayed a warm reponse to our person and to the Mother See. Moreover, various leaders singly or in small

groups, visited us, and with such warmth, as true sons, all of which gave us much consolation. In all these we saw a healthy instinct of our people which is not led by this or that consideration but expresses directly its Armenian feeling. This appeared to us a hopeful sign. Consequently we are led to thinking that, contrary to other factors which we have stated, and which caused us disappointment and sorrow, the attitude of the people, from the spiritual and national point of view, is healthy and inspires hope.

This is why we wish to speak to you, even though we are not too certain of the outcome, but we deem it our duty. We wish, Dear Srpazan, and you, gentlemen, to bring these to your attention and to add that it would have been correct from the canonical point of view, very correct and legal as well as natural and truly Armenian, if the division had terminated here and elsewhere, and our church had returned to where it has been for centuries, and was ten years ago. There exists no reason, neither from the ecclesiastical-canonical, nor national point of view, for the subversion of a 1700-year-old setup or hierarchal order on this side of 1956.

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We have no intention of passing judgment on what already transpired during these past ten years, since 1956 or before. Those sad stories are well known. We do not wish to defend one side against the other by maintaining that our side made no error, and that all the errors were made on the other side, and we find ourselves in this situation as a consequence. We do not say that. It is likely that mistakes were made on both sides. We see no need to assign responsibility to this or that side; that is not important. It is even possible to view it as a sad page that has been turned and to view the realities of today as they are, and to strive to remedy them in a Christian manner, brotherly manner, especially viewed from the long-range, fundamental interests of the Armenian people. We are not at all narrow minded, rest assured. There exists not a trace of a penchant for authority and glory. The question here concerns neither a Vasken nor a Khoren. Our persons have no significance. For us this is not a question of vanity or ambition to the effect that all the dioceses be under our control. We have no such foolish notions, and we would feel ashamed if we did.



We are dealing here with the fundamental, should we say, life and death issues of our people and our Church. If we seriously think of the future, we cannot leave our church and people in this state. So far as we are concerned, we will strive to continue our admonitions and appeals and our efforts with gentle words so that they may eventually be heard. Neither our church nor our people can expect anything good out of this division. Much harm already has been done, and more is certain to come. The longer this division continues and becomes ingrained, the darker will become the future of the Armenian people in the dispersion, not only from the ecclesiastical point of view but especially from the national point of view, since our church unquestionably will be transformed into two churches. Words cannot change facts. We can solve nothing by repeating "cooperation." The word itself stresses even more the divided state of our Church.

There will be created a situation analogous to our cooperation with Protestants and Catholics, and already it is under way. THE BASIC QUESTION IS THE RESTORATION OF THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH. The Church certainly will be divided into two sections; one can already discern the outlines of two hierarchal authorities. In international ecclesiastical relations we have two sees, two centers, two Armenian churches—the Armenian Church of the Cilician See and the Armenian Church of Etchmiadzin. A non-Armenian can understand this situation as two churches. There were five churches invited to Addis Ababa, but since Catholicos Khoren would not consent to our participation as one delegation, we became six churches. At Geneva the situation is the same in interchurch relations. We have been transformed into two churches regardless of how we word it, whether or not we describe it as schism, the reality amounts to schism, the reality is anti-catholicate, regardless of our feelings and interpretations, and this is dangerous.

You know full well that the Armenian people have preserved their national unity through their national Church for centuries. Our people today are dispersed. If we all resided in our own country circumstances might be different; we would not be as apprehensive over many things. Under the present circumstances, however, the

existence of two churches is disastrous for us; the dispersion, dissension, and discord among our people will be more and more stressed, to the effect that we will no more recognize each other as Armenians. We will die in another ten, twenty years; others will arrive in Antelias who doubtless will feel less Armenian. Such developments are discernible even now. Whoever wishes to take a long-range view of the national life of our people twenty years hence will confirm that, if this situation continues and becomes ingrained, it is certain to end in a veritable tragedy. Assimilation and estrangement already are at work and will become even more accentuated and rapid. THE NATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH CAN BE MAINTAINED ONLY BY HOLY ETCHMIADZIN WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED ON OUR NATIVE SOIL MORE THAN 1600 YEARS AGO. No other See, irrespective of who happens to be the catholicos, can preserve the national character but Etchmiadzin.

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We know Etchmiadzin still has shortcomings, but regardless of all that, basic truths cannot be altered. In the past many terrible and awesome situations existed in Armenia, but the Armenians have never thought of separating from Etchmiadzin. For instance, the Patriarchs who served in Turkey constantly found themselves under political pressure from the Sultans to do so, for there existed a serious contention between Turkey and Russia, especially during the nineteenth century, which witnessed a series of Russo-Turkish wars, and consequently it was to the interest of the Turkish government that the Armenians in Constantinople, that is, in Turkey, become detached from Etchmiadzin. But the Armenian people and the Patriarchs of Constantinople deemed the unity of the Armenian Church above anything else, despite all the high honors that were promised them. The Patriarchs of Constantinople could have been designated as catholici since even the Jerusalem Patriarchate was under their jurisdiction. The See of Cilicia likewise was in Turkey, and there had been attempts to declare it the Catholicate of the Armenians in Turkey, so that the Armenians living in Turkey, might not have any ties with Etchmiadzin. It is impossible not to wonder how the cruel sultans failed to impose their will upon the

Armenians. One must note with admiration the tenacity with which the Armenians in Turkey were able to confront those sultans with their spiritual weapons and patriotic zeal, and to uphold and continue to submit to the authority of Holy Etchmiadzin. This is a magnificent historic example which the *Turkahais* present to us. THE FATE OF THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE AND ARMENIAN CHURCH CAN BE DECIDED ONLY ON ARMENIAN SOIL.

As a conclusion, we deem it a matter of conscience to appeal to you, Dear Srpazan, and to your council, to make these vital issues the subject of serious discussion, so that, if not immediately, at least in the near future, it may be possible to open a path for the restoration of unity. Perhaps that may not be accomplished in one attempt, we understand; it may possibly be accomplished in successive steps. Under any circumstance there must be developed a proper psychology, a new spirit, a spirit of good will in you, in us, in all of us, so that slowly we may proceed towards the realization of the desired unity. We are of the opinion that even now, during the forthcoming weeks or months, as suggested by Torkom Srpazan, conferences may be organized by both sides, and then you may confer with each other so as to open a path for the solution of basic issues. We think that this is not impossible, if that spirit is not lacking in you.

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We conclude these thoughts and proposals with the wish that God aid us all, illuminating our thoughts and feelings, and place us on the right path for the glory of our Church and the good of our people.

Before leaving we extend also to you and through you to your people, our blessings with our best wishes and fervent hopes.

May our Holy Church remain unshaken, one, and indivisible.

June 10, 1969



*At a gathering of the faithful.*

## WHERE THERE IS LOVE, THERE IS GOD'S BLESSING

*Excerpts From The Farewell Address In New York*

We have a number of obligations to fulfill. First we feel obliged to express our gratitude for the kind and courteous regard which was extended to us by officials of the United States government, facilitating our journey, offering us every possible aid in our visit to all the cities, parishes and churches in the United States, which were planned by the Diocesan Office. Moreover, warm words of friendship were addressed to us on various occasions by mayors, their representatives, and by governors both here and in Canada.

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Along with our words of gratitude, we take this occasion to pray to God that this great and magnificent land continue not only its existence but also its mission in the world, and light the paths of peace, friendship, and justice among nations.

We must express our profound and sincere appreciation also to our sister churches both in the United States and in Canada, whose high ranking leaders received us with brotherly embrace. The Episcopal Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, as well as other sister churches were admirable in their attitude towards us. The same is true also in the instance of the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, who, as in 1960, also in this instance, greeted us with the same warm fraternal love wherever we happened to be in this land.

It is our prayer that these ties of inter-church cordiality

increasingly become more profound and firm, until we reach a spiritual unity of love in the love of Christ.

We must express our sincere satisfaction to our two Diocesan primates in the United States, the Most Rev. Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and the Rt. Rev. Bishop Yeghishe Simonian, to the vicars of the Primate, Rt. Rev. Bishop Vasken Kebreslian and Rt. Rev. Bishop Vatche Hovsepian, and to the diocesan councils which collaborated with them, to all the religious bodies, parish councils, and the auxiliary bodies, women's groups, and to the Reception Committee which prepared the details of our itinerary and put it into effect in such an admirable and flawless manner, both here and in all the cities we visited.

These are all truly the object of our appreciation, and we carry with us beautiful memories of their wonderful endeavors and admirable attitude, especially the evidence of their loyalty towards Holy Etchmiadzin the Mother See of All Armenians.

Over the entire length and breadth of our journey the principal and fundamental place was occupied by your Cathedral, for the consecration of which we were invited here. It proved truly a day of glory for our church and people when we performed the consecration of your house of worship.

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As we have expressed ourselves on other occasions in other cities, we are certain that the construction of the Cathedral proved a veritable victory for the Armenian Church and people.

We had moments of profound emotion on the occasion of our visit to the Martyrs Monument at Montebello, California. Several thousand people had gathered there, despite the scorching sun. Present was the mayor of the city. Only those who were present can realize the extent of the excitement and profound emotion which was generated in the hearts of the people as the Patriarch of All Armenians brought his blessings to the Martyrs Monument and placed two sculptured stones from the Motherland, from Holy Etchmiadzin.

Often we are asked: "When will you return, Vehapar." Perhaps, it is supposed, that henceforth it may be difficult for the present Catholicos to undertake such a long journey, and one may have to

wait for the next Catholicos to come. . .However, we promise that the Patriarch-Catholicos of All Armenians may come a third time—on the occasion of the establishment of a new Armenian school!

We visited with great pleasure and satisfaction the United Nations Center and had a friendly conversation with U Thant, the Secretary General. We had heard many things about him, but became even more impressed upon seeing and becoming acquainted with him. He is truly an admirable man, a man of high moral character who has a profound appreciation of his duties, responsibilities, and his mission for the preservation of the peace of the world.

We were happy to visit the United States House of Representatives and prayed at the beginning of a session.

We were spiritually consoled by placing a floral wreath upon the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arlington National Cemetery, and then placing another wreath upon the tomb of the distinguished late president, John F. Kennedy, and on this occasion prayed that the Lord bless the American land and keep it always in peace, in prosperity, free and happy.

In the course of this journey we were able to know your life more intimately. You must be congratulated for all the successes you have achieved and for the organizations which you have created in support of your diocesan and parish authorities. We do understand that at times you realize these under difficult circumstances, and we cannot fail to appreciate your achievements.

But it is our hope and counsel that you strive to be even better organized in your diocesan, church or religious life. Of course, as Armenians, we know too well that discipline is not too perfect in our public, religious and national life.

But it is our duty to reflect upon our weaknesses and shortcomings. While preserving everyone's right to express himself freely, in fundamental issues relative to church organization and canons, you must all respect the boundaries of ecclesiastical rules and regulations, in support of your Primate and your pastors. Your Primates (including California) are extensions of the authority of the Catholicate of All Armenians. Your church life becomes more firmly

established through the cooperation of the spiritual servants with the representatives elected by the people. It is, therefore, our hope and our counsel that an internal cooperation and harmonious unity be maintained, with more diligence than we have been able to observe.

We have decided to organize, immediately upon our return to the Mother See, a committee charged with the examination of the loss of the illuminated manuscripts (in Jerusalem) and to report to the Mother See. The Committee's duty will be to report the results of its investigation of the manuscripts and articles which have historic, artistic, or monetary value, and to report the result to the Mother See. We are glad that His Beatitude Patriarch Yeghishe (of Jerusalem) will cooperate so that the aforementioned committee performs its tasks in the best possible objective manner.

As for the restoration of the internal unity of our church, it is a matter of public knowledge that the internal life of the Armenian Church has been troubled during the past ten years, as a consequence of the undisciplined and divisive actions of the See of Cilicia, at Antelias, against the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.

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The See of the House of Cilicia, as well as those of Jerusalem and Constantinople, each one independent within their historically determined boundaries, are under the high spiritual authority of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, the only head of the holy body and hierarchal order of the Armenian Church, yesterday, today and forever.

No Patriarch of the Armenian Church, no true Armenian Christian can ever be reconciled with the spirit and actions which Antelias has shown during the past decade—spirit and action which become self-evident and revealed in the Articles 32 and 33 of the new constitution of that See.

It is up to the Mother See and to us all to defend the unity of the Armenian Church and of its hierarchal order, and its head, eternal Holy Etchmiadzin. As the late writer, Hamasdegh, wrote in his letter addressed to us in 1958, "to defend Etchmiadzin means to defend the Armenian people."

The divisive policy which was maintained also after the embrace of reconciliation, in 1963, is a disservice to the Church and to the



people. If this state of affairs continues indefinitely, it may become a veritable disaster in the future from the point of ecclesiastical and national interests. We will, therefore, pray and strive tirelessly that peace and cooperation be restored with the restoration of legality, discipline and unity.

Once more we appeal from this rostrum to our dissident sons that they direct their gaze and return to luminous Etchmiadzin, the only center founded by Christ—one people, one church, and one hierarchal order.

We wait with open arms the return to Etchmiadzin of all our faithful sons without discrimination and hereby send them all our paternal love and blessing.

We wish to recall here with satisfaction the great moments we lived in New York, when a small group of excellent nationals who were gathered in response to our invitation, one day after our arrival, whose names are known to you, headed by venerable Haik Kavookjian, responded to our appeal in a princely spirit and in a short time realized, through their own means the sum of \$1,000,000.00 for your newly built Cathedral. It proved a great day for the Catholicos of the Armenians. It was a precious experience for us to come from Etchmiadzin to a distant land and meet there wonderful people who in response to a simple appeal realized a large amount so as to build an Armenian Church. We are grateful to those worthy nationals, and will carry with us their admirable memory, as well as of all other donors.

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I have a highly cherished souvenir of my first visit to Washington in 1960, especially meaningful because it confers on me certain privileges in this city. In 1960 I was presented with the key to the city, which has been kept in the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin—literally in the Cathedral itself, at the rear of the altar. I feel that the city of Washington, the capital of this great and wonderful country, thus abides under the perpetual blessing of Holy Etchmiadzin.

At this hour we are reminded of a small passage in the Acts of the Apostles, describing St. Paul's departure from the faithful in Ephesus, who had hastened to express their love and devotion to the great apostle. What sweet sentiments of Christian love were revealed



*His Holiness toward the end of his Pontifical visit.*

## MANY PRECIOUS MEMORIES

*On the Voice of America*

78

Today, when our tour reaches its end and we prepare to depart for South America, we feel it is our duty to express our warm appreciation to the Governments of the United States and Canada for the excellent hospitality they accorded us during our trip and for the cordial and respectful treatment we enjoyed from the honorable mayors, governors and their representatives.

We were deeply gratified by the opportunity accorded us to open with a prayer a session of the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. We also paid our respects to the Unknown Soldier's grave at Arlington National Cemetery where we placed a

wreath. We prayed at the grave of the late President John F. Kennedy and were deeply grieved when we saw that a new grave was opened next to his under such tragic circumstances. We share the sorrow of your people and pray for the peace of this great and wonderful country.

We were equally happy visiting the United Nations and enjoying an interview with Secretary General U Thant who left a deep impression upon us as a man with profound sense of his mission who with much spiritual suffering works wholeheartedly to preserve and solidify world peace. We pray that God bless all those who struggle for peace and justice and for the friendship of all mankind.

We prayed at the Martyrs' Monument at Montebello, offering blessings from Holy Etchmiadzin and from the reborn Motherland of all Armenians. We were similarly comforted by offering a solemn requiem service in the Armenian Church of Boston on May 26, in memory of the heroes sacrificed at the historic battle of Sardarabad. We were happy to visit the Ferrahian and Mesrobian Day Schools in Los Angeles, the first all-day Armenian schools in the United States. We gave them our blessings and prayed that similar schools may be opened in other centers with large Armenian communities.

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We have no doubt that the construction of St. Vartan Cathedral was a magnificent victory for the Armenian Church, particularly for the devout Armenian community of this country. The Cathedral in New York, built in the classical Armenian architectural style, and the churches of Detroit and Boston, are not only great architectural achievements in the life of the Armenian community; they also represent beautiful ornaments on the aesthetic scene of these famous American cities.

We believe that the Armenian religious and Diocesan community of America, through its collective efforts, will be able to contribute newer and greater achievements in religious, educational and cultural fields. We particularly exhort you to focus your special efforts on educating the younger generation, inculcating in them the Christian faith, the love of Armenian culture, the recognition of our spiritual values and the significance of our history and the preservation of these for posterity.

At this moment we feel that it is our duty to call upon our brothers who have deviated from Holy Etchmiadzin to return to the bosom of the Mother Church. We wait for their return with open arms and offer our paternal love to all of them. One people, one church, one hierarchy under the divine blessings of Holy Etchmiadzin; this is demanded by the canons of our hierarchy, our history and the fundamental religious and national interests of the Armenian people.

We will shortly return to the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. We will take with us many precious memories, especially the testimony that our faithful and loyal Armenian people of America will remain steadfast in their faith and will preserve their Armenian heritage, remaining at the same time a disciplined, orderly and loyal element in the broader life of this great hospitable country.

We will similarly carry with us the shining testimony that our children will remain loyal to the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, the centuries-old center of the Christian faith of the Armenian people and the Armenian Church, yesterday, today and forever.

God's Only Begotten Son descended, the glory of the light, in His likeness.

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Let the light of God's glory forever shine bright and free on the Holy Altar where the Holy Saviour has descended, and may it spread over all the Armenians in Armenia and the Diaspora. Amen.

June 16, 1968