

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
BY H.E. ABP. HOVNAN DERDERIAN AT THE WESTERN DIOCESE  
IN THE LAST DECADE  
(2003-2013)

His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian was elected as Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America (est. 1927) on May 3, 2003 by the 76<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Assembly, making him the 8<sup>th</sup> Primate of the Western Diocese. The election was ratified three days later on May 6, 2003 by the Encyclical of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

*“The Church in action” will be the key theme in every corner of this Diocese. New missions, projects, activities and policies will be initiated regularly. A flurry of activities will energize our parishes, our youth and our Diocese,*” noted Archbishop Derderian in his acceptance speech as the newly-elected Primate.

10 YEARS LATER:

## 1) Reorganization of the Diocesan Headquarters

*“The strength of a Diocese lies in its ability to stay on the right path”*  
(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)

- *Addition of new staff members*

The expansion of Diocesan programs and missions must take root with the staffing of trained and professional employees. In the short span of 10 years, the number of Diocesan staff has nearly tripled and presently totals 21 members, whose average age is 33-35 years.

- *Renovation of the Diocesan Headquarters building*

During the Primacy of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the Diocesan Headquarters and the adjacent area underwent complete renovation. The renovated areas included the Nazareth and Sima Kalaydjian Banquet Hall, the Paul Brothers Galleria, the Armen Hampar Reception Room, the administrative offices, the Primate’s reception room, the computer lab and the chancellor’s room. New offices and departments were established. The renovations were completed in April 2013 after which the Diocesan Headquarters was named “**Western Diocese Turpanjian Diocesan Building.**”

- *Office of the Executive Director*

At the direction of the Primate, the position of the Executive Director was created in 2006. The Office of the Executive Director is responsible for planning and carrying out all

administrative matters of the Headquarters. Presently, the Executive Director of the Western Diocese is Dn. Harout Markarian.

- **Accounting Department**

During the Primacy of Archbishop Derderian, the need to transition the Accounting Department from a part-time position to a full-time position became evident in order to meet the needs of the expanding Diocese. We are pleased to inform that the restructuring of the department proved to be effective and the department wholly serves the needs of the growing Diocese.

The Accountant of the Western Diocese is Mrs. Silva Kayayan-Kendirjian.

- **Secretarial Department**

In the last decade, the secretarial department was also restructured. The department serves to effectively fulfill the day-to-day operational process of the Western Diocese.

The Secretary of the Western Diocese is Mrs. Nune Torosyan. Mrs. Araksi Reganyan is the Secretary of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral.

- **Information Services Department**

The success of an undertaking is related to its proper presentation. With this in mind, the Information Services Department went through a complete restructuring phase. Through available resources, Archbishop Derderian stressed the importance of disseminating concise information. It is worthy to mention that the restructuring has positively impacted the way news is informed in the Diocese.

The Informational Services Department is comprised of the Armenian and English section. Archpriest Fr. Sipan Mekshian heads the Armenian department while the English department is led by Sergey Arustamyan.

- **Archives**

Shortly following his election, Archbishop Derderian sought it necessary to restructure the Archival department of the Western Diocese. To accomplish this task, new rooms were furnished with archival cabinets and proper staff was assigned to the department.

Presently, the Archival department is headed by Archpriest Fr. Hovsep Hagopian. Dn. Hovnan Vardanyan serves as his assistant.

- **Christian Education Department**

In 2005, the Primate issued a directive for the creation of an essential department within the Western Diocese namely the Christian Education Department. Aimed at providing spiritual nourishment and promoting Christian values, the Christian Education Department holds weekly Bible study sessions, caters to the spiritual needs of school students and provides

lectures/seminars for Diocesan Priesthood-Candidates. The Director of the Christian Education Department is Mashdots Jobanian.

- **Office of the Youth Director**

The Office of the Diocesan Youth Director was reorganized at the discretion of the Primate. The Youth Director manages a separate department where various youth programs and missions are organized, planned and executed. The Youth Director of the Western Diocese is Dn. Mkritich Ksachikyan.

- **Campus Ministry**

Service is one the most important virtues of Christianity and to serve implies to care, to sacrifice and essentially, to love. In turn, is more meaningful when it involves the future generation, namely college and university students. I am pleased to inform that a new department has been established at the Western Diocese. The Armenian Church Campus Ministry will be headed by Dr. Levon Petrosyan.

- **TV and Media Department**

In 2005, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian spearheaded a new project with a Diocesan television program called “The Voice of the Armenian Church.” The success of the program was echoed throughout the community. In February 2011, a television and media department was launched with state-of-the-art cameras, lighting fixtures and most importantly, a professional crew.

Presently, the Diocesan programs are aired on local Armenian Channels and are broadcast on the internet via “YouTube” and “Vimeo” platforms. Vahe Sargsyan and Aram Mousioian are in charge of the Television and Media Department.

- **The Baidzar Terpanjian Bookstore**

On June 15, 2007, the Primate presided over the official opening ceremony of the “Baidzar Terpanjian” Bookstore of the Western Diocese. The bookstore is home to numerous religious, educational and literary publications. Multimedia (CDs and DVDs) content, souvenirs and children’s publications are also available in the bookstore. Sergey Arustamyan manages the “Baidzar Terpanjian” bookstore.

- **The “Aga Sargsyan” Library**

The official opening ceremony of the “Aga Sargsyan” Library of the Western Diocese was held on June 6, 2006 and was presided by His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. The library houses over 7000 books and periodicals. The library inventory is comprised of individual donations. Additionally, a monthly budget is allocated for the stocking of books. Hayk Madoyan is the librarian.

- ***Datev Outreach***

Since opening its doors in 2012, Datev Outreach has provided numerous community awareness programs. Centered on the alarming issue of domestic violence, it has organized two major “Walks against Domestic Violence” through the neighborhoods of Glendale and Burbank. Datev Outreach has since been providing various services such as one-on-one counseling, or computer literacy courses to individuals affected by domestic violence. Datev Outreach is headed by Rev. Fr. Vazken Movsesian. Linda Zadoian has been appointed as the Coordinator of Special Projects.

- ***Diocesan Headquarters and Cathedral Maintenance***

Following the election of Archbishop Derderian as Primate, the numerous undertakings and missions contributed to the unprecedented sheer volume of work at the Diocesan Headquarters. Tamara Hambartsumyan and later Hratch Dickran were hired to maintain the Diocesan Headquarters and St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, respectively.

- ***“Zorayan” Museum***

The official opening ceremony of the Zorayan Museum of the Western Diocese was held on September 11, 2010, the day of the consecration of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral. The ceremony was presided by His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians during his Fourth Pontifical Visit to the Western Diocese. As a well known and respected venue within the community, the “Zorayan” Museum has hosted the exhibits of such renowned artists as Carzou and Pinajian. Presently, the Zorayan Museum houses precious historical and religious artifacts such as manuscripts, vestments, metals and coinage.

- ***Armenian Summer Camp***

The present lot of land neighboring the famous Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Park, serves as campgrounds for the Armenian Summer Camp. Acquired on December 3, 1987, the Diocesan campgrounds underwent a series of additions and renovations during the Primacy of Archbishop Derderian. Such additions included the building of new log cabins, the addition of the tennis and basketball courts, the boat house, “Lion’s Den,” a miniature outdoor theater, etc.

At Archbishop Hovnan Derderian’s initiative, on July 15, 2013, the Armenian Church Summer Camp was renamed “Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian Summer Camp” in honor of the former Primate. Presently, the construction of a Chapel (dedicated to the late Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, H.B. Abp. Torkom Manoogian) is in its planning stages.

- ***Diocesan Events***

In the last eight years, the Western Diocese has been transformed into not only the spiritual but also the cultural center of the Armenian community of Los Angeles. Numerous religious and

cultural events are held within the confines of the Diocesan Headquarters. These include and are not limited to lectures, cultural events, concerts, art exhibitions, banquets, etc.

- **Diocesan Publications**

Since 2003, the Western Diocese has published close to 200 pamphlets and brochures and over 100 books of which 27 have been authored by the Primate. Such volumes of literary works were unprecedented at the Western Diocese.

- **Diocesan Website**

The Western Diocese employs contemporary methods in efforts to reach out to the Diocesan faithful. The website of the Western Diocese is an informative source of communication with the faithful. The weekly newsletter reaches to over 3800 subscribers. In 2012, the website will undergo a series of changes and will include interactive content (videos, podcasts, etc.) The website of the Western Diocese [www.armenianchurchwd.com](http://www.armenianchurchwd.com) is managed by Sergey Arustamyan.

## **2) Subcommittees and Auxiliary Bodies**

*“We are all partakers in the mission of the Church”*  
(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)

As a part of the Diocesan restructuring strategy, the number of subcommittees and auxiliary bodies multiplied during the Primacy of His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian. To familiarize with their level of work, the subcommittees and auxiliary bodies are listed below:

- **Diocesan Delegates’ Assembly**

The Diocesan Assembly, presided by the Primate is the highest administrative body of the Western Diocese. Convening once a year (usually for three-day sessions), the Assembly is comprised of delegates from all parishes across the Western Diocese.

The 86<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Assembly chaired by Dn. Jeff Hazarian, convened this year.

- **Diocesan Council**

The Diocesan Council, comprised of members from the Diocesan Assembly executes the decisions made by the Diocesan Assembly. The Council also oversees the general governance of the Diocese. The position of Diocesan Council Chairs is made through an election process. The Diocesan Council is chaired by the Honorable Judge Adrienne Krikorian and is presided by the Primate.

- **Diocesan Strategy Committee**

Institutions prosper when they follow a uniquely designed strategy. The Diocesan Strategy Committee was formed by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian shortly after his election as Primate. The Committee is one of the most important bodies of the Diocese which seeks to effectively plan and pave the path to the future. The Committee is chaired by Dr. Varoujan Altebarmakian.

- **Western Diocese Endowment Fund (WDEF)**

The WDEF is one of the pillars of the financial security and stability of the Western Diocese. Income derived from the fund sponsors educational programs, humanitarian missions, building projects and many other missions. Established in 1979, the contributions to the Western Diocese Endowment Fund have increased dramatically since 2003 thus further expanding the operations of the Western Diocese. The WDEF is chaired by Mr. Ben Krikorian.

- **Ladies' Society Central Council**

The Ladies' Society Central Council is the governing body of all Ladies Societies of the Western Diocese. In the last decade, the LSCC has organized numerous executing events including retreats, cultural activities and women's day of prayer. In 2010, the Ladies Society Central Council became one of the many Godfathers of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral. It is chaired by Mrs. Gladys Saroyan.

- **Ladies Auxiliary Committee**

The subcommittee is comprised of dedicated women who actively participate not only in Diocesan events but also contribute financially for the stability of the Diocese. The Ladies Auxiliary Committee also became a Godfather of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral in 2010. The Committee is chaired by Mrs. Cindy Norian.

- **Armenian Church Youth Organization (ACYO)**

Established nearly seven decades ago, the mission of the ACYO has been revitalized in recent years. Throughout the year, the ACYO organizes numerous exciting events including retreats, pilgrimages, fundraisers, open forums with clergy and sports activities.

- **Pan-ACYO**

The ACYO as a unique youth organization was established by the late Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan in 1946. It remained a local organization existing within the confines of the North American continent. The vision of His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian to bring together ACYO members from the Dioceses of the world was realized in the summer of 2008 as they gathered for the first time in Holy Etchmiadzin, the spiritual center of the Armenian people.

The Pan-ACYO as a global ACYO body has a Central Governing board. Archbishop Hovnan Derderian is in charge of the organization.

- **Junior Godfathers Committee**

The Junior Godfathers initiative was established five years ago with two goals in mind:

- a) The Junior Godfathers Program provides an opportunity for all Armenian children and youth to bond with the church and to commit to become guardians of the faith of the Armenian Apostolic Church.
- b) The money raised from the Junior Godfathers program is allocated to various Diocesan missions.

Once the child/youth is enrolled and the acknowledgment of the donation is received, his/her name is etched on a fruit of the pomegranate tree carved on the wall of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, a symbol of prosperity that has its roots firmly planted like the pomegranate tree it represents. Presently, St. Leon Armenian Cathedral has over 200 Junior Godfathers. The Junior Godfathers Committee is chaired by Mrs. Alice Chakrian.

- **Christian Education Council (CEC)**

In the last ten years, the Christian Education Council was restructured. Today, it serves as the body in charge of the Sunday Schools of the Western Diocese. In efforts to ensure uniformity in Christian studies, a special guideline for Sunday Schools was distributed by the Central Education Council. The Council also provides financial support to newly formed Sunday Schools of the Diocese.

The CEC is chaired by Mrs. Debbie Derderian.

- **Saturday Schools Executive Council**

This body, chaired by Dr. Ellie Antreassian, trains and prepares Saturday School teachers of the Western Diocese. In Saturday Schools, children learn to read and write in Armenian. We are pleased to inform that the Western Diocese has over 500 children attending Saturday School.

- **Armenian Educational Committee**

This committee, as opposed to the previous one, works in collaboration with daily Armenian schools in the area. Established this year, the Educational Committee is chaired by Mr. Vartkes Kouroyan.

- **Archbishop Hovnan Derderian Scholarship Fund Committee**

The Archbishop Hovnan Derderian Scholarship Fund is centered on education, scholarship, and service – equipping young men and women in mind and character – to impact the world for Christ and make a difference in today’s society. By awarding scholarships to graduating high

school seniors who show exceptional promise and creativity in Armenian and Religious Studies, among other academic fields.

The Fund is chaired by Mrs. Alice Chakrian.

- **Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)**

In the last few years, the Western Diocese has worked closely with the Parent-Teacher Organizations of local Armenian Schools. The Diocese has offered guidance to the schools as it pertains to religious studies. The organization works to promote co-sponsored events.

- **Armenian Identity Enhancement Program**

The program, specifically designed for youth members between the ages 15-30, was launched in 2012. It was designed to equip the youth with a sound knowledge of the history of the Armenian Church and the Armenian people as well as to introduce them to the Armenian vibrant culture.

The essential program is headed by Dr. Levon Petrosyan.

- **Religious Retreat Committee**

The program has been designed to promote collective prayer in a retreat-like atmosphere where the faithful can strengthen their spirituality through religious lectures and the pastoral guidance of Diocesan clergy. It was delightful to witness the success of the last two retreats. Mrs. Lena Simonian is responsible for the organization of the religious retreats. Rev. Fr. Nerses Hayrapetyan is the clergy-in-charge.

- **Ambassadors of Faith**

As St. Peter the Apostle duly conveys in 1 Peter 3:13, ambassadors are those individuals who present their noble values and are equipped to answer questions with grace and wisdom. It is with this thought that the Ambassadors of Faith was established at the Western Diocese.

Mr. Arsen Danielian is the Chair of the Ambassadors of Faith.

- **Christian Study Courses**

Christian Study Courses (CSC), a mission backed by Diocesan Primate His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, was launched in July 2012. Headed by Diocesan Librarian and Ecumenical Officer Hayk Madoyan, and Sunday School and Media Department Director Vahe Sargsyan, the goal of CSC is to spread the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to promote Christian values, and to create catechists, staunch defenders of the Christian faith.

- **Disciples' Mission**

The Disciples' Mission Program of the Western Diocese functions under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate. Headed by Mr. Vahe Sargsyan and Mr. Hayk

Madoyan, its mission is to organize pilgrimages to Diocesan parishes, to create a mutual Christian bond between parishioners and to teach the history, theology, and doctrine of the Armenian Apostolic Church through means of discussions and lectures. Established in 2012, the Disciples Mission has visited close to 10 parishes and communities.

- **“Zvartnots” Cultural Committee**

Not to exaggerate, but the Western Diocese has been home to hundreds of cultural activities and events throughout the past decade. This is the vivid reflection of the livelihood of the Armenian community in the Diaspora.

Considering the sheer number of events organized by the Diocese on a yearly basis, the need to establish a formal cultural committee became evident. Dr. Simon Simonian is the Chair of the “Zvartnonts” Cultural Committee.

- **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Committee**

The darkest pages of Armenian history were written in 1915, leaving an inerasable mark in our identity. The year 2015 will mark the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Throughout the world, this anniversary will be marked with programs and events. The Western Diocese we will be commemorating around the theme of “Survival, Growth and Life.” The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Committee is led by Rev. Fr. Vazken Movsesian.

- **Central Council of Diocesan Choirs**

In order to ensure uniformity in performing the liturgical hymns of the Armenian Apostolic Church, a Central Council of professional singers and directors was formed by the Diocesan Primate. In 2007, the Western Diocese published a Book of Liturgical Hymns especially for the Choirs of the Western Diocese. Three years later, an audio CD was released for the Diaconate of the Diocese. This year, at the initiative of Dn. Stepan Gozumian, the Western Diocese released a CD of the Divine Liturgy as arranged by Komitas Vardapet.

Chaired by Mrs. Lucy Tashjian, the Central Council of Diocesan Choirs continues its mission.

- **Music Committee**

Music and song remain as the best expression of our inner world. As one of the few nations in the world, Armenians have created splendid music that is distinct and flavorful to their rich culture.

In efforts to promote and share the beauty of genuine Armenian music, the Music Committee comprised of a number of professional musicians was established by the Primate in 2013.

The Committee is chaired by Mr. Armen Guzelimian.

- **Gevorkian Seminary Alumni Association**

Some of the most brilliant clergymen of the Armenian Apostolic Church have graduated from the Gevorkian Theological Seminary in Etchmiadzin. In the distant shores of the United States, the necessity to form an alumni association of Gevorkian seminarians became imminent. The alumni association actively participates in the organizational efforts of Diocesan events. Fundraising events to benefit the Gevorkian seminary are also organized by the Alumni Association.

- **Clergy Stipend/Retirement Committee**

The goal of the committee is to provide monthly stipend to the retired clergy who have served at the Western Diocese throughout the years. The program is presently in its formation stage but it is worthy to note that recent strides have been made including the first contribution to the clergy retirement fund. The committee is chaired by Archpriest Fr. Sarkis Petoyan.

- **Christmas Ball Committee**

For ten years, the Christmas Ball Committee has played a vital supporting role for the Western Diocese. The tradition to honor and acknowledge young professional leaders in the legal, medical, educational, communication/media, political and philanthropic fields was created by the Primate ten years ago.

The Christmas Ball Committee is chaired by Mr. Raffi Kendirjian.

- **Protocol Committee**

Representing the thousands of Armenian American faithful living within the confines of the jurisdiction of the Western Diocese, the Primate sought it necessary in August 2005 to establish a protocol committee, an organizational body aimed at strengthening the ties between government officials and their constituencies. It is worthy of a mention that a number of government officials on the local, state and national level regularly attend the events organized by the Western Diocese. The Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America has become a highly recognizable and respected religious institution in the community. Mr. Peter Darakjian is the Chair of the Protocol Committee.

- **Ecumenical and Inter-faith relations**

It is well known fact that the City of Los Angeles is a megapolis of religious institutions on the world stage. Located within the boundaries of the Greater Los Angeles Area, the Western Diocese actively participates in the ecumenical dialogue and takes part in inter-faith events. Since 2003, due to the active involvement of the Primate, the ecumenical and inter-faith relations have been strengthened.

Today, the Western Diocese is represented in the Los Angeles Council of Religious Leaders (LACRL), the Southern California Ecumenical Council (SCEC), Faith and Order, Oriental Orthodox Churches, Los Angeles Inter Religious Council, Glendale Religious Leaders

Association, Ecumenical relations in Sacramento and the Arizona Ecumenical Council. Hayk Madoyan is the Ecumenical and Inter-religious Officer of the Western Diocese.

### **3) Missions in Armenia**

*“Armenia is an everlasting truth...”*  
(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)

- **Etchmiadzin Children’s Fund (ECF)**

The Etchmiadzin Children’s Fund, a mission which aims to reach out to the orphans and needy children in Armenia (up until the age of 16), is one of the dearest to the heart of the Primate. Established during the Primacy of His Eminence Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian, much of the success of the ECF has been recorded in the recent years. A vivid proof of this statement is the number of sponsored children. Initially, 250 children received financial assistance. Today, 330 children receive financial support through the efforts of kind-hearted individuals. The sponsorship level has also been increased from \$250 to \$365 (\$1/day).

The Echmiadzin Children’s Fund is chaired by Mr. and Mrs. Sayat and Hermine Oruncakciel.

- **Mer Hoos – House of Hope**

*“Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us,”* are the words of St. Paul the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans (chapter 5 verse 5.) The dedicated individuals of the Mer Hoos-House of Hope mission have instilled in the hearts of Armenian orphans this exact message of hope.

Mer Hoos’ mission is to provide opportunities for achieving a productive and secure future to many young adults in Armenia who have outgrown their childhood homes in orphanages or who come from disadvantaged lifestyles. Mer Hoos provides housing and a family environment for young women in need and reaches out to women from disadvantaged lifestyles who otherwise have no hope of receiving an upper level education, job skills training and life skills development.

- **Christian Youth Mission to Armenia (CYMA)**

CYMA was established by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian in Canada in 1992. At the time, the acronym stood for Canadian Youth Mission to Armenia. After his election to the Primacy of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, CYMA was incorporated into the life of the Western Diocese as Christian Youth Mission to Armenia and began to flourish.

The Christian Youth Mission to Armenia (CYMA) serves to unify and strengthen the Armenian community by establishing a bridge between the youth of the Diaspora and our Homeland through participation in the social, religious, professional and cultural life in Armenia.

- **Sister Church Program**

The Sister Church Program was founded on the basis to provide financial support to the churches in Armenia. Considering that the Diocese of Gougark is presently in dire need of a helping hand, the Western Diocese sought it vital to extend a helping hand to the historical churches not only to the Diocese of Gougark but also to many others.

Participating Parishes in the Sister Church Program include:

- St. John Garabed, Hollywood – Holy Resurrection (Diocese of Armavir)
- St. John Garabed, San Diego – St. John Mkrtych (Diocese of Artsakh)
- St. Gregory the Illuminator, Pasadena – St. Mary (Diocese of Gougark)
- St. Peter, Van Nuys – St. Sarkis and parish in Berd (Stepanavan)
- St. Mary, Costa Mesa – St. Mary (Tashir)
- St. John, San Francisco – St. John (Sisian)
- St. James, Los Angeles – St. Gregory the Illuminator (Goris)
- St. Kevork, Glendale – the Savior (Musa Ler borough) and Holy Resurrection (Parakar)
- Armenian Church of Crescenta Valley – St. Nshan (village of Gai)
- St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, Burbank – St. Kevork Cathedral (Tbilisi, Georgia)
- Armenian Church of Riverside and Armenian Church of La Verne – St. Narekatsi (Alaverdi)
- St. Garabed, Rancho Mirage – Diocese of Georgia
- St. Paul, Fresno – Village of Tsovinar Sunday School (Diocese of Gegharkunik)
- St. Vartan, Oakland – St. Mariané (Ashtarak)

- **Diocesan Involvement in Completed Projects in Armenia**

In recent years, a number of dedicated faithful became involved in church building projects in Armenia. Among them included Diocesan benefactors Mr. and Mrs. Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian who sponsored the complete renovation of the Harichavank monastery and the adjacent theological seminary. Others include benefactors Bedros and Anna Oruncakciel whose generosity made it possible for the building of the Conference Hall and the Gymnasium in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. St. Leon Cathedral Godfathers and Diocesan Benefactors Drs. Petros and Karine Taglyan made a generous contribution to the library of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin in memory of Dr. Yeghia Taglyan.

Lastly, with the active participation of Diocesan benefactors, more than a million dollars was raised for the Stewardship Fund of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. The funds will be allocated for the education, training and pastoral preparation of future clergymen of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The renovation of the church in the village of Berd commenced very recently. The project was sponsored late Diocesan benefactor John Stevens.

#### **4) Diocesan Clergy**

*“A clergyman, as a humble servant of the Church,*

*ought to extend to the flock of Christ an invitation to a new life”*  
(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)

The number of clergy within the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America is among the highest in the world. As communities get larger, the need for pastoral care and guidance becomes greater. The following 9 clergymen were invited to the Western Diocese for administrative or pastoral obligations:

- Very Rev. Fr. Dajad Dz. V. Yardemian (Diocesan Headquarters)
- Archpriest Fr. Dr. Zaven Arzoumanian (previously served as pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church in Pasadena. Presently, Fr. Zaven is retired.)
- Very Rev. Fr. Baret Dz. V. Yeretjian (previously served as pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church in Pasadena. Presently, Fr. Baret is retired.)
- Rev. Fr. Serop Azarian (Served as pastor of the Armenian Church in Las Vegas. Fr. Serop no longer serves at the Diocese.)
- Rev. Fr. Zaven Markosyan (Pastor of the Armenian Church in Denver)
- Rev. Fr. Hovel Ohanyan (Pastor of St. Vartan Armenian Church in Oakland)
- Rev. Fr. Zacharia Saribekyan (Pastor of St. Apkar Armenian Church in Arizona)
- Rev. Fr. Haroutioun Tachejian (Pastor of St. James Armenian Church in Los Angeles)
- Rev. Fr. Yermia Khachatryan (Pastor of St. Kevork Armenian Church of Portland, OR)

- **Stewardship Program**

In 2004, in order to address pastoral shortages as a result of retiring clergy and an expanding Diocese, the Stewardship Program of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America was re-organized by Diocesan Primate Archbishop Hovnan Derderian.

By the Grace of God and the financial support of Diocesan faithful, five (5) young clergymen have been ordained since 2008 and have taken on challenging pastoral assignments within their respective communities. These promising young priests have dedicated their lives to serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the Armenian Apostolic Church. They include:

Rev. Fr. Khajag Shahbazyan  
(Pastor of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral)

Rev. Fr. Avedis Abovian  
(Pastor of the Armenian Church of Crescenta Valley)

Rev. Fr. Nerses Hayrapetyan  
(Pastor of St. Sarkis Armenian Church in Santa Clarita)

Rev. Fr. Diran Avagyan  
(Served as pastor of St. John, San Francisco – currently defrocked)

Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan

(Pastor of St. Garabed Armenian Church in Rancho Mirage)

Rev. Fr. Mesrop Ash

(Pastor of St. John Armenian Church in San Francisco)

***Present Priesthood-Candidates of the Western Diocese***

Dn. Mkrtich Ksachikyan

Dn. Hovnan Vardanyan

Dn. Sarkis Alanjian

Dn. Sevan Palanjian

- ***Deacons and Acolytes***

The Armenian Apostolic Church is full of individuals who have chosen to serve the faithful flock of Christ with grace and humility. St. Stephen the Protodeacon is the vivid example of selfless and dedicated service to Christ and His Church. Since his election as Primate, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian has ordained a great number of acolytes, sub-deacons and deacons enriching the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America with devout servants of Christ.

Deacons, Sub-deacons, Stole-bearers – 268

Acolytes – 313

## **5) St. Leon Armenian Cathedral**

***“The vision of the Diocesan Cathedral is the crowning of our faith life”***  
**(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)**

The vision of building the Diocesan Cathedral dates back to 1927, since the establishment of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America. This vision has always brought together the faithful under the leadership of our former Primates. It is during the Primacy of His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian that this vision truly gained momentum and was realized.

The Groundblessing Ceremony of the Cathedral was held on October 2, 2007 and was presided by His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians. On September 11, 2010, the Pontiff presided over one of the most sacred rites of the Armenian Apostolic Church, namely the consecration of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, the spiritual center of the Western Diocese. Rev. Fr. Khajag Shahbazyan is the Cathedral’s pastor. Deacon Varoujan Ghazaryan is his assistant.

- ***Cathedral’s Construction and Fundraising Committee***

The Construction Committee of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral was formed in 2005 in order to manage the planning and execution of the construction process. The Committee performed its obligations flawlessly. Today, three years after the completion of the Cathedral, the Construction

Committee continues to oversee construction projects at the Western Diocese. The Construction Committee is chaired by Mr. Bob Simonian. St. Leon Armenian Cathedral Executive Committee is led by Mr. Armen Hampar.

The Fundraising Committee was in charge of providing the financial means to support the construction process of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral. Chaired by Mr. Antranik Zorayan, the Fundraising Committee organized a number of events to aid in the construction process.

- **Cathedral Ladies' Guild**

Shortly after the consecration of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, the necessity to establish a Ladies Guild, which would contribute to the Cathedral's mission, became evident.

The Cathedral Ladies' Guild, comprised of a group of dedicated women, was formed. In addition to being a "Life Steward" of the Diocesan Stewardship Program, the Cathedral Ladies Guild is also a Godfather of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral. Moreover, the Guild is also the founding body which initiated the construction of the "Holy Martyrs" monument in the Turpanjian plaza on the Diocese, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Mrs. Araxie Boyamian is the founder and Chair of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral Ladies' Guild.

- **Cathedral's "Little Angels" Saturday School**

The school was founded in September 2010 and has been widely known and respected within the community. Its enrollment grows on a yearly basis with students eager to learn their mother tongue. Presently, there are over 170 students enrolled at the Cathedral's "Little Angels" Saturday School.

- **Khachadourian Joint Choir**

Following the consecration of St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, it became necessary to form a more uniform Choir comprised of professional singers. For over three decades, the Khachadourian Choir has earned the respect of the community through the Choir's powerful and inspiring voices.

For over three years, the Khachadourian Choir has eloquently performed the hymns of the Divine Liturgy on Tabernacle Feasts and special occasions. Recently, the Khachadourian Choir became a joint choir. The Khachadourian Choir Executive Committee is chaired by Dr. Arto Ersan. The Choir is directed by Dn. Stepan Gozumian.

## **6) New and Mission Parishes**

*"The establishment of parishes within the Western Diocese is one of the most crucial missions, as with the formation of each parish, a new family is formed."*

**(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)**

Prior to the Primacy of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the Western Diocese had around 25 parishes under its jurisdiction. In the last ten years, nine church buildings were acquired and nine parishes were formed.

### **Newly constructed churches**

- St. Peter, Glendale (Consecrated on January 4, 2004)
- St. Gregory the Illuminator, Pasadena (Consecrated on September 29, 2007)
- St. Kevork, Portland (Consecrated on March 22, 2009)
- St. Apkar, Scottsdale (Consecrated on September 20, 2009)
- St. Sarkis, Santa Clarita (Consecrated on December 20, 2009)
- St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, Burbank (Consecrated on September 11, 2010)
- St. Garabed, Rancho Mirage (Consecrated on January 7, 2012)
- Holy Resurrection, Seattle (Consecrated on January 14, 2012)
- Armenian Church of Crescenta Valley (Blessed and Dedicated on August 11, 2012)

### **New Mission Parishes**

- Denver, Colorado
- Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Tucson, Arizona
- Boise, Idaho
- Palmdale, California
- Ventura County, California
- Victorville, California
- Riverside, California
- Carmel, California

It is worth mentioning that new properties were acquired for the Crescenta Valley, Las Vegas, and San Diego parishes. The adjacent property to St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church was also acquired as part of the expansion process of the parish. The Taglyan Cultural Complex was built next to St. John Garabed Armenian Church in Hollywood and the Kirkjan Hall was built in the adjacent area to the Armenian Church of the Desert as part of an expansion project.

## **7) Armenian Schools**

*“We must make it our mission to instill in the hearts of the youth the unshakable Christian faith of our Church forefathers in order that they may walk alongside God and be immersed in His love.”*

**(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)**

For most of Armenian history, the Armenian Apostolic Church has been the only source of education. Some of the most brilliant minds in Armenian history including St. Sahag, St. Mesrob, Movses of Khoren, Ananias of Shirak, David the Unbeatable, Gregory of Narek, St.

Nurses the Graceful have been educated in the ancient Armenian monasteries which at the time served as educational centers.

The Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America continues educating the youth in efforts to preserve our Christian faith, our rich heritage and our identity in these distant shores.

The Diocese is actively engaged in the curriculum of five Armenian Schools. They include AGBU Manoogian-Demirjadian School, AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian School, T.C.A. Arshag Dickranian School, Little Angels Art School and Alfred and Marguerite Hovsepian School. Religious courses are offered in the above mentioned schools. The tens of Diocesan Saturday and Sunday Schools offer Armenian classes and teach the children to walk the path leading toward God.

During the Primacy of Archbishop Derderian, the Church-School ties were strengthened. On several occasions throughout the year, the Primate pays pastoral visits to the local schools where he meets with the students, faculty and PTO.

## **8) Armenian Organizations**

*“We must always search for and find the servant of Christ who fulfills an obligation with dignity and the noblest of hearts”*  
**(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)**

The Armenian Diaspora is rich with traditional unions, associations and organizations that strive to preserve the Armenian identity while promote Armenian values.

The City of Los Angeles is no exception. Not only is the city blessed with a large Armenian population, Armenians of Los Angeles come from diverse backgrounds themselves.

As the spiritual center of the community, the Western Diocese strives to establish fond mutual relations with many organizations and associations.

The Western Diocese collaborates with the following organizations:

- Armenian General Benevolent Union
- Armenia Fund, Inc.
- Tekeyan Cultural Association
- United Armenia Fund
- Armenian Medical Association of California
- Ararat Home
- Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry
- Armenian Writers Association of California
- Armenian Bar Association
- Hye Geen Circle
- Organization of Istanbul Armenians
- Armenian Society of Los Angeles
- Lark Musical Society

## 9) Armenian Television and Newspapers

*“History is a witnessing and we are witnesses of history”*  
(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)

The public is in need of new information and sources and new steps are taken to address that growing demand. Information is essential and is greatly valued in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Age of Information and Innovation. The Western Diocese of the Armenian Church collaborates with nearly all newspapers and television channels including:

- US Armenia Television
- Asbarez Daily Newspaper
- “Nor Gyank” Weekly Newspaper
- “Nor Or” Weekly Newspaper
- Massis Weekly Newspaper
- Abaga Weekly Newspaper
- Armenian Life Weekly Newspaper
- The Armenian Observer
- The California Courier
- The Armenian Mirror Spectator

## 10) American Various Organizations

*“The United States of America has inspired us to cherish the true value of democracy and freedom as well as the universal respect of humanity as the reflection of God’s love.”*  
(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)

In recent years, the Western Diocese began actively collaborating with the following American organizations:

- The American Red Cross
- World Vision
- Glendale Adventist Medical Center
- Glendale Memorial Hospital
- University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
- University of Southern California (USC)
- Claremont School of Theology
- Loyola Marymount University
- Huffington Ecumenical Institute
- Woodbury University

## Epilogue

Dear reader, the purpose of the detailed presentation was to introduce the scope of work that has been done in the Western Diocese the last eight years under the visionary leadership of the Diocesan Primate His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian. (See preface)

***“Many questions arise as I try to recollect on my spiritual life. In my three-decade long pastoral journey, I sought to answer the following questions: How much worth did I bring to the title bestowed upon me? Did I accomplish everything that I had sought to accomplish? Did I serve my people, the flock of Christ and how effective was I in overcoming what seemed to be unbearable obstacles in my servitude to Christ? These questions have been answered by God with Whom I enter into a new covenant namely to cherish the path of pastoral service, to focus on leading a more prayerful life and to be more disciplined in daily spiritual readings.”***  
**(Archbishop Hovnan Derderian)**

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