

St. Vartan Voice

The Newsletter of St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church

Rev. Fr. Krikor Zakaryan, Parish Priest



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Fr. Krikor Zakaryan

November 2023

Angels and the Word of God

Every Sunday during the Armenian Apostolic Church's Divine Liturgy, the priest exhorts the worshipping faithful to sing together with the angels, to "boldly cry out" with the "seraphim and the cherubim." The song from the Badarak, the Divine Liturgy, is known as the Sanctus, meaning "Holy," in Armenian Surp. It is found in almost all the ancient liturgies—the source of the text is from the Old Testament book of Isaiah, itself repeated in the Book of Revelation. The song, often known in Armenian as Surp, Surp (which you can hear here), is the song that the Bible says the angels in Heaven sing continuously in praise of God. By asking us to sing together with the angels, the priest offers angelic hosts to us as an example, a source, of prayer and worship. The song also demonstrates how the Bible itself is the source of much of Armenian worship. Today, we will discuss this most unlikely of sources: angels!

Angels, while a ubiquitous aspect of Christianity, are perhaps surprising as a source in the sense usually meant in this column. To begin with, angels are rather mysterious: we portray them with wings and white robes, often with halos just like the saints. While there are many Biblical appearances of angels, there are only a few direct descriptions of angels in the Bible, and, much of our angelic imagery is the stuff of Halloween costumes. The seraphim, a type of angel, are described by Isaiah, and the cherubim are named as another group of angels, but the Bible only ever offers names to two individual angels: the Archangels Gabriel and Michael. It is these two angels whom the Armenian Apostolic Church commemorates on Saturday, an unusual twist on the celebration of saints on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursday, and Saturdays.

As Patriarch Shnork Kaloustian wrote, "the Church venerates not only saints but also the angels." In other words, on a day normally reserved for the commemoration of human saints (Saturday), in November, the Armenian Church venerates the Holy Archangels Gabriel and Michael. This means that like human saints, we see in the angels a source of spiritual inspiration, an icon of the Divine, an example to follow. While only these two angels are mentioned by name in the Biblical texts accepted by all Christians, other angels are named in the books commonly called the Apocrypha, also known as the Deuterocanonical books. For instance, the archangel Raphael is mentioned by name in the Book of Tobit. Other texts, from both Jewish and Christian writings, name individual angels, and some of these angels have made their way into Christian artistic and textual sources. One of the most famous writers to name other angels, and to offer a description of angels in general, is the famed Medieval Jewish thinker Maimonides. In the Christian theological writings, the most important description of the angels comes from an author we discussed in a previous column, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. His Celestial

Bible Readings

Nov. 5 Luke 8:17-21
Nov. 12 Luke 8:49-56
Nov. 19 Luke 9:44-50
Nov. 26 Luke 12:22-31



Hierarchy, describing nine different types of angels, is the standard Christian account of angels.

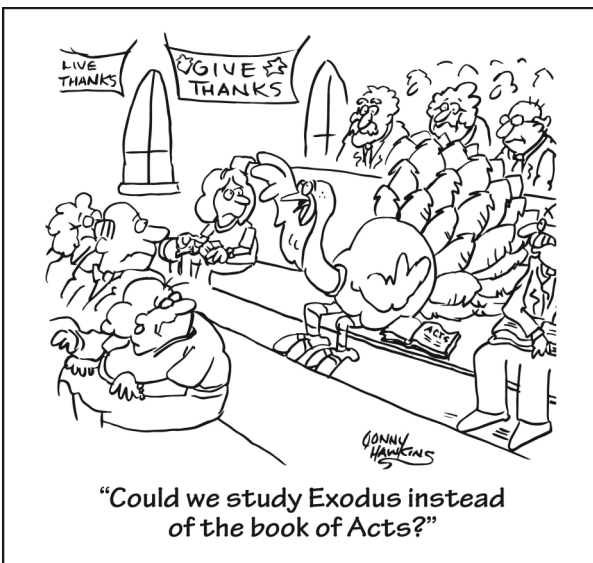
Angel means simply “messenger.” In addition to being examples of praise and prayer, in the Bible angels are those who transmit God’s message—the words of God—to humanity. Most famously, the Archangel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she would bear Jesus Christ, the very Son of God. Known as the Annunciation, and celebrated by the Church every year, at that moment Gabriel spoke for God. The Annunciation inaugurates the Gospel story, as it is the very proclamation of the imminent arrival of Jesus Christ, whom St. John the Evangelist calls the Word of God. God’s words, his promise to Mary, are brought by the messenger Gabriel to prepare for the arrival of the Word of God into the world. While angels do many things in the Bible, such as dine with Abraham, praise God, and inspire prophets, we see here, in the words that announce the Incarnation of the Word of God, the incarnational logic at the heart of the meaning of the angel as messenger.



The Incarnation is the heart of Christian teaching, the idea that God became human, flesh and blood, in the person of Jesus Christ, in order to be sacrificed for humanity’s sins and ultimate salvation. Never separate from the Crucifixion and Resurrection in Armenian theological thinking, the Incarnation is the first step in what is called the economy of salvation. While all of the Gospels highlight Christ as God-become-human, it is John the Evangelist who offers a sophisticated theological account of the Incarnation. In the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ is called the “Word of God,” using a Greek word Logos. The idea of the Logos is full of philosophical baggage. It is a term used by Plato, by the Alexandrian Jewish interpreter of Scripture Philo, and later by neo-Platonic philosophers who would influence Christian thinking. Logos can mean “word,” but it carries other connotations, including the Divine Plan for the world or a kind of rational principle. We will return later to Christian and Armenian Christian reflections on the idea of the Logos, in Armenian rendered as pan/ban. Today, we emphasize that in the Gospel of John, the Incarnation, the coming of God into the world as a human being, is making present and material the Word of God, the Divine Logos. If that is true, then the work of the angels as messengers is also a kind of incarnation, a making present the word of God. Indeed, if, as Arpi Nakashian writes in her discussion of angels, “Christ Himself is the Message” that an angel as a messenger brings, then the incarnational aspect becomes even more explicit: angels make present not only the words of God, but the Word of God.

The Incarnation understood as the indwelling of the Logos in the world as Jesus Christ is the source of Christian salvation. Reflection on Logos as both the person of Jesus Christ and as a complicated philosophical principle is the source, the spring from which so much Christian theology flows. Indeed, if Logos encompasses language and rationality, then Logos, the Word of God, Jesus Christ, is not only the source, but the very possibility of theology. Angels, as the messengers who present God’s words and announce The Word, can then themselves be understood as sources for Christian living and theology.

By EDACNA



St. Vartan Voice Via Email

If you would prefer to receive the monthly St. Vartan Voice newsletter via email, rather than via the United States Post Office, please contact the church office at stvartanoakland@aol.com.



Join the Choir

All Are Welcome

The St. Vartan Choir is looking for volunteer singers. If you would like to become a member of the choir, please contact Choir Director Armena Petrosova at arminestudio@hotmail.com or text (925) 212-2744.



Donations

St. Vartan Church Parish Priest and Council gratefully acknowledge the following donations:

Armenian Coffee—Sylvia Gozurian

Leg of Lamb—Harry Yaglijian, Dinorah Diamond and Thomas Terzian, John and Janet Schmid, Suzanne Diers, Samuel and Arpine Alikian

Food Festival Donation—Charles and Ophelia Menzigian, Susie Garriott and Family

Games Booth—Suzanne and Ed Vasgerdsian

Stewardship Fund—Ana Dalmeida Apkarian, Seta Azizian, Ray and Reyhan Shepherd, Vaughn Hovanessian, Ara and Angel Azizian

In Honor of Karen Mener—Frederick and Ardemis Tajirian

In Memory

† **Annabelle Taylor**

Earl and Bonnie Hamlin (For Food Festival)

† **Deceased members of the Sherinian Family**

Carole Jouroyan

† **Lena Avakian**

Seza and Dana Dominguez

† **Alice Sarafian**

Vartan Berberian (Priest Discretionary Fund), Lou and Candis Dokos, Edward and Kristian Minasian (Orphan Fund), June Chatterjee (Orphan Fund) Vahan Manoogian (Armenian Humanitarian Aid), Brian and Cynthia Der Matoian (Orphan Fund), Steven Donikian (Orphan Fund), Mike Kilijian, Ray and Reyhan Shepherd, Hasmig and Anto Cingoz (Fr. Mesrob Sarafian Religious Education Fund), Lucille Dolab (Orphan Fund), Seta and Nazaret Jindoian

† **Antranik Avakian**

Seza and Dana Dominguez

† **Judy Sharafian and Margaret Sherinian**

Judy Toomajian (Sarma making supplies and ingredients)

† **Seta Tcherkoyan**

Don and Lisa Manoogian (Ladies Society), Nora and Harvey Hanoian (Ladies Society), Mark and Margaret Shirin (Armenian Humanitarian Aid), Lori and Andy Hill, Jill and Don Eskender, Regina Garabedian, Hilda Mener, Aris and Zarmine Aghazarian, Sonik and Hagop Hakimian, Ara and Angel Azizian, Vartan and Arlene Hovsepian (Ladies Society), Jack and Tammy Papazian, Ed and Suzanne Vasgerdsian, Nurhan, Mary and Steven Donikian, Araks Aghazarian, Sylvia Alexanian, Sarkis and Ann Sarkisian, Carol and Harry Dokouzian, Harry Sherinian (Orphan Fund), Ray and Reyhan Shepherd, Stephen and Marisa Atamian Sarafian (Orphan Fund), Mae Kaljian, Edward and Karen Sarafian, Seta and Nazaret Jindoian, Carole Chang (Lawrence Chang Retaining Wall Fund)

† **Deacon Vahe Mener**

Tamar Gugasian

News From Our St. Vartan Family

Condolences

A funeral service for **Seta Tcherkoyan** was held at St. Vartan Church on October 20, 2023.

Our condolences to her daughters, Kathi, Patti (Jerry), and Kirsti; granddaughters, Stacey, Caeti, Nicole, and Krista; great-granddaughter Francesca; brother Harry Sherinian Jr., sister-in-law, Diana Shirin; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Send Your Christmas Greetings

You can send a Christmas Greeting in the December issue of the St. Vartan Voice newsletter to all your family and friends at St. Vartan Church. Call the church office at 510-893-1671 or email stvirtanoakland@aol.com before November 14, 2023 to place your greeting. Suggested donation is \$30.



Save the Date

St. Vartan Sunday School
Sunday, November 26, 2023

Religion Lessons,
Language Lessons,
Children's Message by Fr. Krikor
& More



ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA WELCOMES NEW WESTERN REGION DIRECTOR AND GRASSROOTS ASSOCIATE TO THE STAFF



David Ojakian & Bettina Saraydaroglu

The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) is pleased to welcome David Ojakian as its Western Region Director, and Bettina Saraydaroglu as its Grassroots Associate.

The Assembly's recent Advocacy Summit, where over 300 in-person meetings were held on Capitol Hill, was bolstered by David and Bettina, who helped mobilize community advocates to brief Members of Congress on the grave humanitarian crisis in Artsakh.

"The Summit could not have come at a more crucial moment given the tragedy our Armenian nation is experiencing with genocide, ethnic cleansing, and forced relocation of the Armenians of Artsakh due to Azerbaijan's genocidal aggression," said David. "Through our work at the Assembly, we must continue

to rally our community to be a voice for our brothers and sisters of Artsakh and do everything possible to ensure robust aid for them and sanctions against Azerbaijan."

Also participating in previous Advocacy Summits as a student at The George Washington University, Bettina emphasized the important timing of this Fall's conference and the Assembly's efforts.

"The Summit came at a time when the Armenian people needed us most," said Bettina. "I was proud to stand united with advocates from across the country in sounding the alarm and the urgent need for the U.S. to take decisive action."

A decades-long activist in the Armenian American community and a leader on regional, national, and international levels, David has served the Assembly's Northern California Regional Council as a grassroots volunteer and participated in the National Advocacy Conferences in Washington, D.C.

His professional background in marketing and sales, including a recent role in marketing communications with Cisco Systems' global sales team, is coupled with his non-profit management experience.

In his role as Western Region Director, David will be responsible for leading the Assembly's outreach and grassroots advocacy efforts in the Western Region, as well as briefings and events across the region. He will also focus on coalition building with Armenian and non-Armenian organizations alike.

"I'm grateful and honored to join the Armenian Assembly as the Western Region Director and I look forward to utilizing my experience and my passion for advocating for Artsakh and Armenia in this new role," said David, who earned his Executive MBA from Santa Clara University and his B.S. in Business Administration and Marketing Management from California State University, East Bay. "There are great challenges before us, which makes this role and the work of the Assembly even more vital."

A graduate of The George Washington University where she double majored in International Relations and Geography, Bettina is a former participant of the Assembly's flagship Terjenian-Thomas Internship Program, where she interned for the Armenian National Institute (ANI) and subsequently served as the Intern Coordinator. In her role as Grassroots Associate, Bettina will assist with advocacy engagement, outreach, and social media.

Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny added: "At this critical time, the Assembly is expanding our staff and is proud to welcome Bettina and David. Together, we will continue our important work."

Established in 1972, the Armenian Assembly of America is the largest Washington-based nationwide organization promoting public understanding and awareness of Armenian issues.



David Ojakian and Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan leading advocacy trainings during the Assembly's Advocacy Summit

We're Fundraising with See's Candies!



Help us earn money for our organization and make the holidays even sweeter.

See's CANDIES

We have partnered with See's Candies to add some sweetness to your 2023 holidays. From now through December 1st you may visit our online shop and buy delicious See's Candies to support our church.

St. Vartan will receive 15% profit for all gift cards and a minimum 20% profit for all candy and merchandise. Scan QR code to order.



Thanksgiving Riddles

- 1) What do Hippies put on their Thanksgiving potatoes? *Groovy.*
- 2) How did Albert Einstein celebrate Thanksgiving? *He was very thankful.*
- 3) Where did the Pilgrims come from? *Their parents, of course!*
- 4) Which side of the turkey has the most feathers? *The outside.*
- 5) How did the Mayflower show that it liked America? *It hugged the shore.*
- 6) What can you never eat for Thanksgiving dinner? *Breakfast or lunch.*
- 7) What always comes at the end of Thanksgiving? *The letter G.*
- 8) Why did they let the turkey join the band? *Because he had the drumsticks.*
- 9) What are the feathers on a turkey's wings called? *Turkey feathers.*
- 10) Why didn't the taxidermy turkey want seconds? *He was already stuffed.*
- 11) How do you make a turkey float? *You need two scoops of ice cream, some root beer, and a turkey.*
- 12) What do you call a gobbler who thinks he knows everything? *A smirky turkey.*
- 13) If the Pilgrims were alive today, what would they be most famous for? *Their age.*
- 14) How does a Turkey drink her wine? *In a gobble-let.*
- 15) Why do turkeys always go, "gobble, gobble"? *Because they never learned good table manners.*
- 16) If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring? *Pilgrims!*
- 17) What smells the best at a Thanksgiving dinner? *Your nose.*

St. Vartan Church Stewardship

Support your Church.

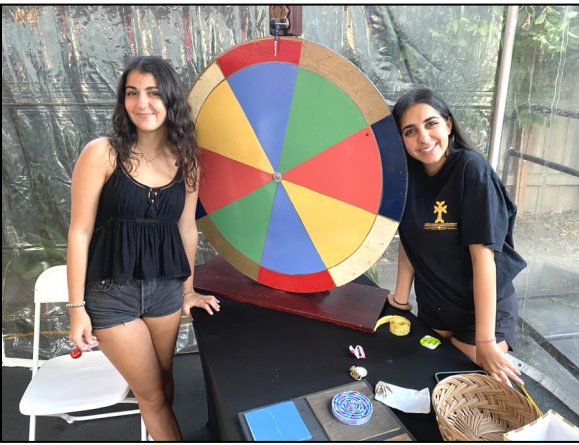
Become a Steward of St. Vartan today!

St. Vartan Armenian Church presents the Stewardship Program with the goal of developing and growing our Church. Participation in the Stewardship Program is open to any individual or family. The goal of the program is to fund the church's development programs and carry out parish projects and objectives.

Please donate online at <https://www.stvartanoakland.com/stewardship> or scan the QR with your cell phone camera.



St. Vartan Annual Food Festival October 6-7, 2023





Parish Visit by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese



On October 22, 2023 St. Vartan Church welcomed His Eminence, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, who led the Divine Liturgy service that Sunday. The service was followed by Acolyte Ordination, a Gars Scouts Ceremony, the St. Vartan's Spirit Awards ceremony, a cultural performance, and complementary lunch and fellowship.

Avetis Varshavsky and Mikael Avanesian were ordained Acolytes by His Eminence, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian. Congratulations and blessings!



The 2023 St. Vartan Spirit Award winners were presented with their awards on Sunday, October 22, 2023 by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and Fr. Krikor Zakaryan. Award winners are Steven Donikian, Yeghia Apkarian, Sevan Jindoian, Nazaret Jindoian, Kim Bardakian Demirjian, Annette Kevranian, Karen Mener, David Ojagian, and Stephen Sarafian. We congratulate and thank them all for their dedication and service.

Thanks, Appreciation, and Gratitude from Hye Café.

Thanks and appreciation to all who contributed to the success of the Hye Café. We want to take the opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to our helpers who worked diligently in the weeks leading up to and during the festival. From purchasing the ingredients, preparing the food or boxing and serving at our booth. Without the help of this incredible team, it would not have been possible to be as successful as we were at the food festival.

A big thanks to all of our Hye Café heroes! Ani (Agavni) Nayman & Elizabeth Markarian’s hard work went above and beyond. And we could not have done it without: Stacey Shartzter, Ana Apkarian, Anoush Krikorian, Armine Azizian, Nora Hanoian, Nelly Kargodorian, Regina Garabetian, Harvey Hanoian, Debbie Maturo, Yn. Anoush Zakarian, Beth Broussalian, Gail Kezerian, Hilda Mener, Ardemis Tajirian, Alex Z. and Wartkes Hagopian. At the Café; Arman, Marissa, Artun, Nicole, Maral, and Anto Cingoz, Arek Kismetian, Serli Holluksever, Idalina and Ana Apkarian, Eva (Yeva) Muradyan, Aret Aramyan and our cashiers, Joseph Apkarian and the great Dicko Shahvekilian.

Even when the power went out on both Friday night and Saturday, our fearless team was able to keep everything moving and serving our community.

Many more thanks, appreciation and gratitude again to all of you guys. Together, we made a GREAT team! We look forward to working with you all again next year!

With love, Seta Jindoian, Hasmig Cingoz and Anto Cingoz



St. Vartan member Lisa Manoogian reunited with a high school classmate, the current US ambassador to Armenia, Kristina Kvien, at her class reunion on October 21, 2023. Pictured are Lisa’s friend, Darlene Chardukian, Lisa, and the Ambassador.

**Daylight Savings Time Ends
November 5, 2023
Don't Forget
to Fall Back**

St. Vartan Ladies Society Luncheon & General Meeting

Thursday, November 16th—noon at church hall

Lunch will be free as a special “Thank You”
for everyone’s hard work during the St. Vartan Food Festival!

We will also have a special harvest craft that you can take home!

Please RSVP to Lisa Manoogian by November 12, 2023 so we have
enough supplies for the craft at 925-698-6399 or lisamno@yahoo.com

Come and enjoy the fellowship of others. Everyone welcome !



Theme: Strength in our Roots

ST. VARTAN CULTURAL COMMITTEE
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO

The Annual Cultural Show

November 11th, 6:30-10:00PM
at St. Vartan’s Armenian Apostolic
Church (650 Spruce Street, Oakland CA
94610)

Tickets: \$15 for members and
\$20 for non-members (kids
under 10 are free)

Venmo: @asa-na

Ed ASA



**St. Vartan Ladies Society
Annual Christmas
Luncheon and Raffle**

“A Taste of Italy”

Thursday, December 14, 2023

12 Noon

John Marukian Church Hall

Luncheon tickets \$25

Raffle tickets—\$20 for a pack of 25

RSVP by December 10, 2023

by mailing check to

Nelly Kargodorian

420 La Casa Via, Walnut Creek,

CA 94598

Check payable to St. Vartan Armenian Church

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The St. Vartan Voice

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The deadline for all articles is the fifteenth of each month.

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Mas Committee: Sylvia Gozurian, Elo Markarian, Hilda Mener
Church Custodian: Wartkes Hagopian

Morning Service—Sundays 9:30 am
Divine Liturgy Service—Sundays 10:00 a.m.

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