

ARCHBISHOP HOVNAN DERDERIAN



The Life



WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

3325 N. GLENOAKS BLVD., BURBANK, CA 91504

TEL.: (818) 558-7474 FAX: (818) 558-6333

EMAIL: INFO@ARMENIANCHURCHFWDCOM • WWW.ARMENIANCHURCHFWDCOM

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The Life

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of the establishment of the Western Diocese of the
Armenian Church of North America

2017

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**Dr. & Mrs.
VICKEN AND SABRINA SAHAKIAN**

**In Memory of
Dr. VAROUJAN SAHAKIAN**

*“Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God”.*

(Matthew 5:8)



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PREFACE

In this latest publication in a series of the Primate's reflections, His Eminence shares with the reader his insight on life, God-man relationship, Christian identity, a prayerful life, the Church, Priest and Priesthood, Biblical themes, and Christian living. Living in times when the secular lifestyle dominates almost every facet of society, Archbishop Derderian opens his heart to the reader to share the abundance of wealth and the treasures that are deeply rooted in the spiritual realm of a Christian. He identifies and elaborates on topics that are essential in preserving and more importantly, promoting a true Christian lifestyle. Offering pastoral guidance, the Primate speaks not only to an adult audience but equally to the youth, the future torchbearers of the Armenian Orthodox faith. He reflects on inspirational quotes of such influential Church figures as His Holiness Karekin I, the 131st Catholicos of All Armenians, His Beatitude Archbishop Yeghishe Derderian, the 95th Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, renowned social rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Most Reverend and the Right Honorable Michael Ramsey and Rowan Williams, the 100th and 104th Archbishops of Canterbury, respectively, and the newly canonized St. John Paul II, the 264th Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.

On a more personal level, in "A Reflection Dedicated to Mothers," Archbishop Derderian shares his admiration and deep respect for his *Diramayr* Janet. In "The Time of My Exile" His Eminence reflects on a spiritual journey realized in solitude. Throughout the journey, Archbishop Derderian keenly observes people based solely on empathetic listening and analysis of body language. He reveals a softer side in "The Growing Pain of Loneliness" wherein the spiritual

leader reminisces on the loneliness of the heart. *“In as much as a priest’s life is heavily engaged in the life of the community, there comes a time when loneliness becomes the growing pain of the heart. Words cannot do justice to express the depth of the pain of loneliness.”* He relies on his sincere relationship with God for solace and consolation. Undoubtedly, such revelation truly requires tremendous courage and fearlessness.

The Primate’s collection of reflections, as a valuable addition to one’s library, will not only guide and inspire but will also encourage and strengthen all generations of faithful.

Humbly,

Sergey Arustamyan
January 2017

THE GIFT OF LIFE

Life is a gift of God. However, we ought to be responsible towards life so that it is not wasted. Life needs to be protected in its fullest sense. Love for life should be reflected in our faith life in action. Every word and action needs to be taken into consideration not to harm life itself. God has graced us with the gift of life and has also put in our hands the Book of life so that our acts are designed according to the divine plan. For if man is created in the image of God, then our way of life needs to abide with the law of God. Man's life should be a continuous journey with God. The opposite will cause harm and destruction, as we will be emptied from the divine love and wisdom. Like a child who does not hold the hands of the parents can fall, the same also applies to us if we refrain from holding the hands of God.

September 26, 2014

LIFE IS A JOURNEY IN THE SEARCH OF GOD

From beginning to end, human life is in a constant state of search. To some of us, that is the search of God. There are those who, through inner conflict, reject the presence of God in their spirituality. Doubtlessly, this group is suffering, even without realizing it, for they have lost a piece of their soul and are no longer in dialogue with God.

Our spiritual search takes place on two levels. The first level is that of our rational life, and the second is related to our inner life. In both cases, our education begins from childhood, and they grow together. Therefore, parents have a duty and responsibility to teach their children at an early age to secure their rational and spiritual needs, so they can learn to recognize God.

LIFE IS A MYSTERY

Moments of solitude are vital in the life of every person. They help us to pose the question about life, as to what mystery engulfs it. The most faithful person at times had moments of doubt. However, when we are sincere in our inquiries we then are able to firmly restore ourselves in peace.

Indeed, for mankind, life is a mystery that's impossible to understand given the immense complexity of the Universe. How can it be that God entrusted us to guard and protect the incomprehensible beauty of Creation?

If humanity was able to grasp all of this, then our spiritual life would be at its highest level.

In my personal life, often I have been confronted with turbulent situations. However, I thank God for leading me to the harbors of peace. It is enough to have only a drop of prayer in your daily life, and the journey of your day will be luminous. Thus, we then secure in our journey the companionship of Christ, embarking on the path of life, which was graced upon us by our Lord himself.

LIFE IS A CHALLENGE

The life that we all live and enjoy is certainly a challenge, which comes to us with many surprises. What is most vital is that we keep our focus of our spiritual life on God, which helps us to live a purposeful life.

There is an inner conflict within our spirituality. On the one hand, we walk with God, while on the other hand we lose God within us and serve the evil.

We are all graced with the inner spiritual strength to live a morally uplifting life and to lift up our hearts to God. In order to succeed we then ought to look into the account of our stewardship which is life itself.

LIFE IN A FLASH

How can we define life. Life is the reflection of God's love granted to us. Those who understand the deep meaning of this precious gift lead their lives to God. It is at that very moment true life sets a new journey when we attain spiritual values.

Life filled with divine love is like a shining diamond which transpires us the infinity of life.

December 15, 2011

Burbank

“BUILD A COMMUNITY WITHIN YOU”

Life is God’s most precious gift. One has to live life wisely and prudently. We are all accountable to God for this precious gift. We cannot waste such a gift, as we are partners with God in creation. Partnership begins inwardly. When we build a community with our inner being, we then are able to grasp the true meaning of life and the depth of what has been entrusted to us by God.

God has graced us with multiple gifts, which we ought to reveal and exercise. People who guard and protect the beauty of the world are certainly those who have built a community within themselves. They are the true partners of God in the creation of the world. We ought to reflect upon the privilege with which we are graced. The good that we do obviously reflects God’s love for all.

July 8, 2014

GOD IS THE DESTINY OF OUR LIVES

Each time when we willingly or unwillingly commit an act which is not pleasing to God, nor acceptable to humanity, we then certainly feel in the depth of our spirituality that we are emptied of the presence of God. The late Pope John Paul II defined this spiritual discomfort or "little death." The true interpretation of this statement is the lack of joy within our inner being. It is the absence of God within us, which deviates us from our path toward God, the destiny of our lives.

The life of man, which belongs to the Creator, is the most valuable life. This gift ought to be lived according to the divine calling, for according to the message of the Apostle, we are created in the image of God. Thus we are not free to do what the mind dictates us to do. This however does not in any way prevent us from being a creator. God has granted us free will. Led by prayer, we must empower our acts, if we wish to be the ultimate perfection in the creation of God.

Throughout our lives, let us take small steps in our journey towards God. Each day which begins with a prayer, nourished by the Word of God, and is concluded with a prayer, indeed transforms our spirituality, and thus we are able to spread light and blessings to all.

BE WITH GOD

The ultimate purpose of our being and life is to establish an intimacy with God, which is indeed possible. This needs to be reflected with awe and with the conscience that we all belong to God, which is conditioned by faith. This thought has been well defined by the late Archbishop Michael Ramsey (Archbishop of Canterbury). His philosophy clearly indicates the vision that the ultimate reason of our life's journey is to establish a close relationship with God. And this bond needs to be deeply rooted in the bond between God and man.

GOD - MAN
RELATIONSHIP

IDENTITY

Identity is a key role of our God-given lives. Identity is conditioned with the bonding to our natural roots, history, culture and value. A trend of thought in our new age suggested or had the inclination to state that at some point the world may eventually lose the vital role of the identity aspect. However, the reality tells us that humanity cannot secure to its existentialism with the essential ingredients of identity, which actually explain our being.

The aspect of identity in the life of a nation reflects the beauty of diversity. When we look at the nature, we then admire the diversity of colors and all in it.

June 12, 2015

“INNER DIVIDEDNESS”

The human being often experiences the “inner dividedness.” This inner state of spirituality is the direct result of our alienation from God and the people of the world. The closer we are to God and the people of the world, the closer we are to a peaceful life. For it is safer to live with God and journey with the people of the world.

The human intellectual capability cannot possibly answer to all despair and anguish. One has to have God in his inner being to feel protected and guarded to dispel all the fiery darts and darkness, which often storm the peace of our soul and create “inner dividedness.”

God fights against all the strangers who disrupt our inner peace. Thus, our journey with God is vital and spiritually empowering not only to our selves but equally uplifting for the people surrounding us.

July 8, 2014

THE DEFINITION OF A PERSON

History has never given a finite (complete) answer to this question, which would satisfy humanity. Since we are all diverse with our nature and aspirations. This also reflects the omnipotence and mightiness of God. Man and humanity are the performers of miracles on the stage of history. The more people the more infinite is the power of God.

The existence of humanity reflects the love of God and inspires us with the spirit of the creation. This alone is sufficient to understand as to why man is the perfection of creation.

A COMPLETE INDIVIDUAL IS UNITED WITH GOD

This thought has been shared by Bishop Sahag in a sermon which he has delivered on May 18, 2013 at St. Leon Armenian Cathedral. The truth of this statement needs to be grasped. Our human nature and character is reflected if and only when we have established a close affiliation with God. In other words, humanity is lost when we no longer walk with God and show no desire to do the will of God. Our life has to be a life united with God so that we reflect from within our spirituality the very image of God.

HUNGER FOR GOD

Most of the Church Fathers have often and in many ways have used this statement to express their bond with God and have also urged their flocks to draw their lives close to God. As we look at today's world, we then understand the significance of their message. For the people who do not pray to God, and accept God in their hearts, the not only alienate themselves from God but deprive themselves from the good works which could otherwise have been fulfilled with their own hands and thus becoming the holy hands of God.

Hunger for God. This ought to be the inner instinct of each human soul. For it is only through our inseparable bond with God that enables us to create and above all to become partners with God in the creation of the world.

September 26, 2014

THE HUMAN PERSON IS THE BEARER OF THE DIVINE NATURE

This is a thought reflected in the writings of Abp. Desmond Tutu: "Each of us is a God-carrier." How can the human person bear in himself/herself God and be the bearer of the divine nature? The Church Fathers have become the foundation of the Church for they have carried God in their spirituality. We, therefore, cannot be indifferent. For the person who is indifferent is emptied from the inner desire to see God.

"Each of us is a 'God carrier'." This is a powerful message which reawakens within our spirituality all the gifts graced upon us from God. Thus the human person is the storage of divine love and wisdom. This thought is also reflected in the following statement "We are no divine..."

The human person is the spiritual product of God's love. Humanity is the image (reflection) of God's Dream, which ought to have a purpose.

If we are a carrier of God, we then bear the responsibility to serve through God's gifts. This state of soul and mind can be attained only through prayer. Prayer thus is the journey, which leads us to God.

THE GREATEST OF ALL SINS

The human person has always wished to acquire the ultimate (to the extent that greed has tainted our souls), and at times humanity has desired to be equaled to God with their aspirations...However, having been baptized in the baptismal font, we are sanctified from our original sin and have put on Christ.

This is the greatest of all sins: to equate ourselves to God. God is the ultimate and the omnipotent. We all know well and grasp the reality that humanity is created by God to be the perfection of creation, however, we are weak and imperfect in the eyes of God. God is the source of life, and we are privileged to be with the divine blessing, for which we give glory to God.

This faith is born within us through our baptism, as we put on Christ.

“THE GOD IN ME GREETES THE GOD IN YOU”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Certainly each of us carries within our spirituality the presence of the Almighty God. Thus, as spiritual beings, we ought to live our lives in such a unique way that it may enlighten the lives of those around us. As we are created in the image of God, then our lives need to radiate the love and the wisdom of God.

As we look at the life of the world, therefore, it becomes clear to us that the person who is emptied of God's presence commits acts, which are non-pleasing to God and the people of God.

Therefore, a person's life needs to be cultivated with prayer and with acts of faith, so that we may become carriers of God. And more so, it is the mission of the human person to become the light in the life of the world. For as Christ leads our lives through His sacrificial life, thus, our lives undoubtedly need to reflect the light of the Gospel of our Lord.

SPIRITUAL IMPERATIVES

Spiritual Imperatives are writings which reflect genuine encounters/dialogue with God or simple narrations which clearly mirror my inner spiritual state. I was encouraged to adopt this method of writing as I have been tremendously inspired by Henri J. M. Nouwen's book titled "The Inner Voice of Love" (A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom).

Henry J.M. Nouwen, a giant in spiritual writings, shares with the reader the turbulent waves of his inner being. What is most fascinating is that in sharing his pain and turmoil, he rediscovers his true identity. In his own words, he "reclaims his identity." The more I have read Nouwen's "The Inner Voice of Love," the more I discovered comfort and peace within my inner soul, but above all, I penetrated deeper into the layers of human spirituality.

Here, I start my spiritual journey. A journey with God, yet often feeling alone.

July 8, 2014

“WE CAN BE HUMAN ONLY TOGETHER”

Human relationship is the most complex phenomena. When we are self-centered, willingly or unwillingly, and careless in our relationships with people, we then become the cause when people are deprived of peace and prosperity.

"We can be human only together." This message instills within us the vision to embrace and apply spiritual values with our fellow brothers and sisters, with respect and love for one another. Peace is conditioned with true love and respect between individuals and nations. Peace is the divine grace, which must be applied in our daily lives.

HUMANITY IS REFLECTED IN SELF-EXAMINATION

People who have the courage to enter into the depth of their souls through prayer and who have the wisdom to self-examine themselves are humble in their nature, for on the one hand they are the ones who are capable of valuing their blessings and advantages, while on the other hand, they also are brave enough to accept their weaknesses. Christ, our Lord, the Son of God, having led a prayerful life, lived a parallel life of humility.

Self-examination is a necessity, so that we, as humans may constantly renew within us the God-created creature, who is created in the image of God. Thus, it is through prayer that we remain on the path leading towards God. Above all, those who continuously walk towards God are actually those who are eager to fulfill the will of God.

August 27, 2012

REAL FRIENDS

“Real friends find their inner correspondence where both know the love of God.”

The love of God graces our lives with innumerable miracles. When we chose to enrich our inner being with the love of God, we not only bring joy and peace to our hearts, but above all, establish a genuine correspondence between friends.

The love of God guides us all to a dignified life. When we become the bearers of God’s love, we then enlighten the lives of our friends and the people of the world. The world would have been a better place for all if only people would have chosen to correspond with the love of God. However, it is never too late to correct our behavior and become real friends in corresponding with one another with the love of God.

July 8, 2014

BE THE LIVING GOSPEL

“As we take time to be still and to be in God’s presence, the qualities of God are transferred to us.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

These powerful words should be grasped in our daily lives during our prayers and dialogue with God. In doing so, we put on divine nature and ingredient in our spirituality.

We are called to be the living Gospel, for we are created in the image of God. God has also graced us with heavenly gifts, which inspire us to lead a pleasing life.

When I pray, then I see God. When I pray, then I live the newness of God, and the cleansing of my soul.

December 11, 2011

A NEW JOURNEY WITH GOD

Each day in our God-given lives sets a new journey with God. Each day thus challenges us with a new vision and task to become a partner with God in the creation of the world. Humanity is called to respond to God's call to take on the task of transforming the world according to God's will and design, in a world where the love of God dominates and the people of God embrace one another with divine love, dignity and respect and above all in applying the virtues of the teachings of our Lord in our relationships with the people of God.

Therefore, each day as we set a new journey with God, we experience the rebirth of our souls. God continuously graces us with a new day, which empowers us to create a world where the love of God and the wisdom of Christ direct all things.

September 26, 2014

TOGETHER THEY MAKE THE MOSAIC

“None of us is alone in this world; each of us is a vital piece of the great mosaic of humanity as a whole.”

(Pope John Paul II)

The message of the Pope clearly indicates the equality of all people, each gifted with a talent and all of us together being part of the great mosaic of humanity as a whole.

I have often used the image of a mosaic, where each stone plays a special role. None of the stones can be more precious than the others. Together they make the mosaic and the beauty of the picture. In life also all people are equal and important, each with a task and role to play. Once we put distinction amongst the people of God, we then disrupt the peace and the beauty of the great mosaic of humanity as a whole.

September 26, 2014

WE ARE NOT ALONE

"I now know that while I felt completely abandoned, God didn't leave me alone."

God never abandons us nor leaves us alone. Like a child who runs away from the parents, we often do the same willingly or unwillingly knowingly or unknowingly.

Prayer is the doorway to our spiritual life, which leads us to God. The very moment we begin to pray the doorway is opened and the journey is set forth with God. This is the moment when we all feel protected by the Almighty. We ought not to try to explain this unique experience in words. For words can make no justice. The reality of God's presence cannot be measured in words. However, that can be read in the life of those who have been touched by the miracle of not being abandoned.

July 9, 2014

A WORLD CITIZEN

The human being undoubtedly should cherish to be a world citizen, which aims to show love to humanity. People who cannot love the people of God regardless of their color and race, cannot love their own nation.

During my multiple trips around the world, I learned to love and respect all people. Our identity is a gift from God. We cannot detach ourselves from the identity. However, the beauty of the mosaic of the picture of the world is deeply rooted in our love for all.

December 15, 2011

HOLLYWOOD IS NOT THE PARADISE

To those who have dreamt to see Hollywood should know the reality that Hollywood is not the paradise. For those who have experienced Hollywood are the ones who have felt the misery of loneliness. For it is in Hollywood where people are alienated from God. It is in Hollywood where people feel the spiritual poverty which they carry with themselves. However, even though we are emptied from the dialogue with God, it is at that very moment when God holds from our hand and leads us on the journey to Heaven.

December 15, 2011

LET US CHERISH OUR GOD-GIVEN TALENTS

“Humanity can survive only in partnership with People who cherish their God-given talents. They are the true benefactors.”

People who live with the God-given talents are those who feel the strong bond with God. People who focus their prayers on God are those who could actually reflect God in the lives of others.

In the darkness of night there is a light in me. I focus my thoughts on the light within my spirituality. My soul is in search of God, for I want to end the day under the protection of the Almighty God, for I know the dawn will bring joy to my heart.

June 2, 2012

CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

“Truly, truly I say to you. He who believes in me will have eternal life. I am the Bread of Life.” (John 6:47-48)

Christ our Lord, the Son of God, is the Bread of Life. He is the Bread for our souls. The Son of God is the spiritual Bread which enlightens the life of humanity with the divine and external truth and leads humanity towards God. And why do we ought to follow Christ and His teachings? This question cannot be addressed in one statement. One must enter into the depths of the mystery of the Incarnation to further understand God’s teachings.

The first and foremost fundamental truth about the Incarnation is that Christ descended from Heaven for the fulfillment of the law. In other words, the love of God was exposed, which also paved the road to eternal life.

The second truth about the Incarnation is that with His descent from Heaven to Earth, the Son of God illuminated as with the truth, the humanity from the creation has always embraced with the divine spark and was enabled to carry the vision to create. The vision was recovered within us through His Incarnation and the road was paved ahead of us to be united with God.

Finally, the mystery of the Incarnation protects and guards us from all adversaries. This having in mind as we read the gospels, we then are able to quench the thirst of our spiritual life, and grasp the truth of the words of our Lord – “I am the Bread of Life.”

2007

CONTEMPLATING CHRIST'S LIFE

...But to be Christ himself, we must see ourselves in him...

Follow the instructions of the Gospels of Christ. This certainly is an important spiritual act, which inspires us to learn the life of our Lord. We ought to acknowledge Christ and make the commitment to live like Him. For it is at this very moment that we become ambassadors of Christ.

“MAN’S LIFE OUGHT TO BE A CHRISTIAN LIFE”

This needs to be the direction of our lives. A Christ-like and Christ-centered life is the path paved for us in the Gospel. The messages that radiate from the Gospel cultivate our spiritual lives with nobility. There, within Holy Scripture, we meet the Son of God, who shares with us His mission and the call we receive from Him to live a Christ-like life.

The human person can live a Christ-like life when we develop a prayerful life, with the reading of the Gospel. The apostles followed their Master. They failed often but they constantly renewed their lives to be faithful to the notion of living a Christ-like life.

Thus let us adopt the kind of life offered to us in the Gospel. The more we dedicate ourselves to prayer, the more our lives become Christ-like. For it is only by walking this path that we encounter God and hear the Word.

WE CANNOT AVOID FAILURES

“Each day in many ways, we fail to live out our Christian ideals. Each time we fail, we cause a little ‘death’ or pain and sorrow; in someone and in ourselves.”

John Vitek

The human person due to his weak nature cannot avoid failures. Often during the course of countless encounters we cause a little “death” or pain and sorrow, in someone and in ourselves. At times our failures are the result of careless behavior which causes pain to our friends. In all cases, we can correct our behavior in a moment of silence and prayer and turn the little “death” into enriching, life-giving, and spiritual uplifting experience for the people surrounding us. The dignity of the human person is rooted in noble acts which brings us closer to God and helps others to draw closer to God.

September 26, 2014

CHRISTIANITY IS NOT PHILOSOPHY

"I think a normal person is one who works for human betterment and believes that this is the bottom-line assignment that we were given by our Creator who sent His Son to explain this to us."

Antoinette Bosco

God created man in His own image and instilled in him His spirit. This truth leads the human person to enrich his life with moral responsibilities with the fulfillment of acts of faith for the well-being of humanity. This I say for we are created by God and in His image.

Therefore, it is vital for each of us as Christians to grasp the depth of the responsibilities entrusted to us by God to bring our goodwill and services for the well-being of humanity. This is the ultimate reason of the Incarnation. And as we read and study the Bible and learn the life of Christ through the Gospels, we certainly take all of the steps, words and messages equal to prayer, for they all nourish our souls.

Christianity is not philosophy. Christianity is a journey of life based on the very life of Christ. Thus the true Christian is one who fulfills his God-given life with faith in action to bring peace and progress into the life of the world.

2004

CULTIVATING THE SOUL IS THE MOTTO OF CHRISTIANITY

“To build a house, as a shelter against the cold of winter and the dark of night is certainly a noble act. To build a soul however is a journey towards God. The spirit of God is the basis of fulfilling the mission of writing a book, which could also pave the road to Heaven.” Yeghivard

These are the words of the late Patriarch of Jerusalem Abp. Derderian, who points out the notion that in the life of society the most sacred mission is the cultivation of souls.

The human person is certainly capable of building monumental edifices; however, great is the person who grasps the importance of building a soul with the love and wisdom of God. The human soul, which is filled with the love and wisdom of God finds in itself the inner strength, the vision to get closer to God and Heaven. All of us need to adopt a similar life to bring peace into the world.

If we are intelligent enough to shelter ourselves against the cold of winter and the dark of night, we also need to protect our spirituality against the odds of this world, which alienate us from God. The destiny of humanity is God. This is also the truth and more so, surrendering life itself into the hands of God.

December 15, 2012

“KHORHOORT KHORHEEN”

For Christians, the sacrificial life of Christ is the *Khorhoort Khorheen* (mystery of mysteries) which the human being cannot explain or perceive through the mind alone.

Faith is the ultimate key which enables us to live the very presence of God within us. Above all it gives us access to the descent of the Only Begotten Son from Heaven and paves the way for us to begin our journey towards God.

The Incarnation of the Son of God is the Golden Bridge between God and humanity. We need to open our hearts to see the living God, this beginning our spiritual journey, which is the ultimate purpose of the life of a Christian.

A NEW FLOWER

In our hymns, Christ, the Son of God, is described as the New Flower whose Incarnation increases within our spirituality the divine light and wisdom that lead us to God.

Two thousand years have since been recorded in the history of the world. Two millennia ago, the Resurrection of Christ, our Lord shaped the course of a new life for the people of the world so that we may become the holy hands of God and live a God-like life.

WHO ARE THE SAINTS?

“It is not doing good in the world that makes a saint; he does often good, but so do many people whom we would never call saints. No, the saint is one who has a strange nearness to God and makes God real and near to other people. He embodies the parable of the corn of wheat that falls into the earth and dies.”

Archbishop Michael Ramsey

To do a good deed is ultimately a fundamental act for a person who claims to be faithful. However, sainthood is not conditioned by the good deeds we do in our lifetime. The saint is the person whose journey of life has been destined towards God, and has sought venues to live the presence of God in their spirituality.

Thus, every Christian should have the aspiration and the vision to be a saint. These are people who strengthen the foundations of the Church. Christianity paves the road towards God, to the doorway, which leads to God. Therefore, we all have the calling from God to enrich the lives of our fellow friends with the vision to search for God.

September 10, 2001

Holy Etchmiadzin

LET US BRING BLESSINGS

“Now there was perhaps never a time when the religious life was more significant in Christendom and in the world than today. If God calls and God disposes gifts, the call and the gifts are true and valid in their own right because they are God's; but yet we are able to see how God's call and God's gifts can answer the problems and needs of different epochs in history.”

Archbishop Michael Ramsey

The world today is challenged with critical issues. Moral and spiritual values are constantly declining, which help humanity to cultivate a God-pleasing life. September 11, 2001 is a reminder of this reality, which clearly has shaken the world. I firmly believe that the person who has lost God and has no fear in God can act in such a way which may cause harm to the life of the world. While the person who fills his/her life with prayer can only bring blessings in the life of humanity. These are the people who should be considered partners in God's work - who through their good acts glorify God.

*September 30, 2001
Holy Etchmiadzin*

RENOUNCING THE OLD SELF

“At heart prayer is a process of self-giving and of being set free from isolation. To pray is to enter into a relationship with God and to be transformed in him.”

The true meaning of Transfiguration would not have been grasped if we did not make the more to adopt a new way of life. Transformation conditioned by prayer gives us the courage to strip us of the old self and put on the new person, which is the God-given.

Prayer in the life of a person is the very moment of spiritual recharged. When we are engaged in prayer, we then feel in the depth of our spirituality the movement of new life. And the source of new life is God, who fills our lives with a new vision with aspiration.

This process of inner spiritual movement cannot be explained in words. For words can never make justice to transpire the state of our spirituality.

*October 1, 2001
Canada*

SERVICE IS THE GREATEST PREREQUISITE IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

Today's Badarak and the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the Ladies Society of St. Mary Armenian Church empowers us all with the rich history of this community, wherein the ladies have taken on a leadership role through their services rendered to God and the Church.

In the certificates, I expressed a thought in appreciation of individuals who were chosen to be honored on this historic occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the ladies society of St. Mary Armenian Church.

"Service is the greatest prerequisite in the life of a Christian." our Lord humbled Himself from the Heaven to Earth and enriched our souls with the vision of giving.

Based on the same thought, St. Francis of Assisi conveys to us all an uplifting message: "For it is in giving that we receive."

The message has truly been the guiding light of the Ladies of St. Mary Armenian Church. We remember in our prayers the founders and all those who are no longer with us, but continue to inspire us through their services. They and all those who continue to be part of the Ladies Society certainly have cherished in their hearts the vision and mission of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Dearest ladies, you have understood well that in giving, in serving, we follow the life of Christ, our Lord and the reward that we receive in the birth of the Church, being an inseparable part of Christ's body.

THE PRESENCE OF THE ALMIGHTY

“God dwells there among men, and that their service surpasses the worship of all other places, for we cannot forget that beauty.”

God dwells in the depth of our souls. Once we confess our sinfulness, it is at that very moment the light of God enters into our being. It is at that very moment when we feel within us the presence of the Architect of life. We then set the new covenant with God and embark on a life’s journey with the Almighty.

December 12, 2011

PRAYER - PRAYERFUL LIFE

INVITATION TO PRAYER

“Prayer is the movement of God to man, and of man to God, the rhythm of encounter and response.”

Prayer is a movement in our spirituality, which leads us to God, and thus we feel the very presence of God within us. However, this movement becomes valuable when our relationship with God is unbroken in prayer. Our relationship with God leads us to the newness of life.

The praying person needs to transpire the notion of unbroken relationship with God to others. The prayerful life of our Lord should always be for us the leading example. He taught His disciples how to stand in prayer, as He Himself prayed in their presence. I remember the years of my childhood when my mother led me and my brothers in prayer before going to bed. She also prayed with us. To this day, I am inspired with her vision to put prayer in our hearts.

THE NECESSITY OF PRAYING

"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you, unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test."

(2 Corinthians 13:5-6)

Prayer is a necessity in our lives. Through the power of prayer, we enter into the depths of our souls and there we see the true image of our inner being, as to how much we are capable of living the Christian faith.

Through the reading of St. Paul's Epistle, we are reminded of the truth that God is ever present within us. Prayer helps us to understand this truth and then continue to live our lives with God.

As we make this search in the depths of our souls, we also need to raise the question as to how true we stand for the protection of our history and culture, which are also precious gifts from God.

"The silence rooted in our prayerful life is the moment when we listen to the voice of God and turn it into the echo of our community."

The prayerful life is the gift which needs to be deeply rooted within us. Through a silent moment of prayer, we are able to listen to the Word of God. Prayer is the gift, which empowers us to walk towards God and feel in the depth of our hearts the new journey with Christ.

SOMETHING IS BEING BORN

“When you pray it is clear that something in you is dying and something is being born.”

Prayer is the strongest tool in our spiritual life. Christ our Lord prayed often throughout his ministry and taught his disciples to follow him to lead a prayerful life. When we pray, we literally pull ourselves out of anguish and despair and live a meaningful life. In prayer, we embark on a journey with God. As we pray, the old self dies and the new person is born.

Prayer is a necessity, which should be exercised unceasingly. In my personal life, I have benefited constantly each time I have knelt and prayed to God and have dispelled from within me the old self and put on the new person in Christ.

Therefore, enter into the depth of your soul and there you will meet God, the source of your new life.

July 8, 2014

THE PRAYER OF ST. BASIL

“The human person is the one who fulfills the will of God. The human person is created in the image of God. To do the will of God instructs us to be good and perfect as our Lord.”

These are the words of St. Basil which ought to become the prayer of our soul. However, we not only have the noble mission to follow the instructions of the Church Father, but also to inspire many with the same spirit.

“We need to uproot the sinful life from our spirituality and adopt a prudent life, to be a mediator near the saints, to be kind, peacemakers and merciful for the needy, enlightened with acts of virtues, living a life with the love of God, with faith and hope, with total love for God and humanity...”

These words of prayer by St. Basil need to mirror our inner soul. The prayer inspires us to see God. These words help us understand our history and lead us to a new dawn of life in Christ.

PRAYER LEADS US TO THE NEWNESS OF LIFE

We all know well that countless reflections and interpretations have been dedicated to prayer and yet many will follow. To know God is to know one's own true self, the ground of one's being." This statement has inspired me, for when we establish our lives in prayer, we then certainly uplift our lives towards God.

Each Christian ought to live in constant prayer. For a life led by prayer becomes the glory of God. This implies that God has put His trust in us and we ought to live life with faith and prayer so that God is reflected in our prayers and throughout our lives. Prayer has been the constant companion of Christ. The Son of God was transfigured in prayer and has paved for us the journey towards transfiguration.

TRUE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

“To pray is to descend with the mind into the heart, and there to stand before the face of the Lord, ever-present, all seeing with you.”

John Carpathios

“It takes great effort and struggle in prayer to reach that state of mind which is free from all disturbance: it is a heaven within the heart, the place, as the Apostle assures us, where Christ dwells in us.”

These two statements define the true purpose of prayer. For it is only through praying that we see God. In prayer we illuminate our personal life, the life of the faithful and the family.

The person who leads a prayerful life is able to see in him the birth of the new person. For prayer becomes the mirror of our inner life, and thus, we reject the old self and put on the person in Christ.

PRAYER IS THE KEY THAT OPENS THE DOOR TO THE SOUL

Since my early childhood, prayer has been a close friend to me, which I have felt in the depth of my soul. Prayer is the electricity of my inner spiritual being as is the blood in our veins.

Prayer bears much fruit when it becomes the constant movement of our soul. The more we pray, the closer we are to God. The more we pray the closer we are to the people of God. Thus let us transform our lives and strengthen the lives of our fellow brothers and sisters.

“PRAYER IS LIKE AN ARROW”

“Prayer is like an arrow. It is always capable of flying, or reaching its target, of piercing through resistance, but is only flies if it is shot from a good bow by a strong hand. It only hits the bull’s eye if the archer’s aim is steady and accurate. And what our prayer lacks is often this strength of spirit, the sense of the seriousness of our situation.”

(Anthony Bloom – “Courage to pray”)

The prayer which is born within our hearts reaches to its destination when it is comprised not only from words uttered from our lips but rather a deep focus on God. Thus, prayer requires total attention and target point so that it may be productive and influential. Christ, the Son of God, prayed and was transfigured and enlightened the minds and the souls of His disciples. If prayer was a necessity for Christ, then it is also a requirement for the enrichment of our spirituality.

PRAYER IS...

Prayer is the oxygen of our spiritual life.

Just as our physical bodies are in dire need of oxygen which cleanses our blood and nourishes our bodies, so is our spiritual life in need of prayer. The ultimate example of a prayerful life is the life of Christ, the Son of God. Let us follow Him.

When prayer is no longer the movement of our inner being...

As we look at the life around us in today's world, we obviously witness the painful reality that prayer is no longer the movement of the inner being of many. When we pray, we are kinder people. When we pray, we then reflect the words of Christ. When we pray, we adopt a unique kind of journey, for we become companions of Christ. When we pray, we then become peacemakers.

Prayer is the Journey of Light.

Blessed is the man whose daily life is led by prayer, for that person is walking towards God. Each time I enter into the House of God there I hear the voice of God and listen to the messages radiating from the Gospels, but above all, I enrich my soul with the presence of the saints who lead us to the newness of life.

“Stay awake, stand in prayer and do not be led into temptation.”

When we pray, we ultimately distance ourselves from temptations. Christ has clearly conveyed to us the message in the following words: "Stand in prayer and stay awake, for prayer distances us from sinful life and temptations" (Matthew 26:41).

Prayer is the destiny of our lives paved for us by God and led by the messages of the Gospel.

Pray unceasingly. The more prayer becomes the movement of our souls, the more luminous is our soul. The more prayer radiates from within our souls, the more we are capable to inspire our fellow friends. Thus let us make prayer the journey of our lives.

Prayer is the mirror of our soul and inner being.

When we pray, we then are capable to enter into the depth of our souls, there to receive the real image with which we live. Truly, prayer is the mirror of our soul.

“To be in solitude in prayerful life is to meet God and make God the mirror of our life.”

When we are in solitude and prayer, we then are in a meeting with God, and in God we see the depth of our soul. In our daily life, solitude and prayer is a blessing for through

these tools we renew our spirituality and put our life back on track in search of God.

“When you pray it is clear that something in you is dying and something is being born.”

Prayer is the strongest tool in our spiritual life. Christ our Lord prayed often throughout his ministry and taught his disciples to follow him to lead a prayerful life. When we pray, we literally pull ourselves out of anguish and despair and live a meaningful life. In prayer, we set a journey with God. As we pray, the old self dies and the new person is born.

Prayer is a necessity which should be exercised unceasingly. In my personal life, I have benefited constantly each time I have knelt and prayed to God and have dispelled from within my self the old self and put on the new person in Christ.

Therefore, enter into the depth of your soul and there you will meet God, the source of your new life.

July 8, 2014

“LETTING GOD DO IN US”

“...Something is going on in us, the landscape is being changed. Prayer, more and more, is not something we do, but what we are letting God do in us.”

Archbishop Rowan Williams

When we speak of prayer surely it is not something we “do” or something we build or create. It is certainly a spiritual state which starts with words addressed to God and “letting God do in us.” God enters into our spiritual being and as we progress in our dialogue with God, we then gradually feel the change in the depth of our hearts, souls, and minds. Then the change turns into transformation, when we feel the presence of God as we start walking with Christ and promising a life similar to Christ, imitating Christ.

February 21, 2016

London

THE KEY WORDS FOR PRAYER

The four words that St. Paul uses for prayer are supplication, commitment, intercession, and thanksgiving.

These are certainly key words each time we pray to God. We put our trust in God with a request to accept us. This is the moment when we surrender our lives into the hands of the Almighty. We then make a commitment to rediscover our true self through the intercession of the saints. Above all, in each prayer we praise God and thank Him for the gift of life and the ability to see the beauty of the creation. It is exactly at this moment that the praying person reawakens in the self the most fascinating characteristics of our Christian identity, that we all are privileged children of God.

February 21, 2016
London

“PRAYER HEALS RELATIONS”

St. Gregory of Nyssa

“Prayer is about reconciliation, justice, and how it changes your attitude to other people and the world. Prayer is not a narrowly private activity; it is about your belonging in the body of Christ, and in the family of humanity. If you understand what is going on when you pray, then the world changes.”

Archbishop Rowan Williams

The words of the Most Rev. Rowan Williams do not speak about philosophy but rather about a state of spiritual life. In these words, one can grasp the level of depth of the Archbishop's spirituality.

"Prayer is all about reconciliation justice and how it changes your attitude to other people and the world." The human being needs to pray constantly (unceasingly) and tirelessly with a joyful heart. For as the human being is weak in nature, thus unceasing and tireless prayer is a must condition to secure our close relationship with God and mankind.

People who pray allow Christ to enter into our own being and then it is Christ who prays in us and uses us to change the world. In this kind act of commitment, prayer becomes a purpose-driven dialogue with the Creator and the world wherein we live. Therefore, prayer guides us towards God and empowers us to be a friend to God.

*February 21, 2016
London*

“YOU PRAY, BECAUSE CHRIST IS IN YOU”

Archbishop Rowan Williams

When you pray, it is Christ who speaks to us and through us to the people of the world. When we deprive ourselves from prayer we then are alienated from God. Those who pray are the ones who seek God and fulfill the will of God.

“You pray because Christ is in you.” The words of the Archbishop are truly inspiring as he shares with us his spiritual experience. The ability to converse with God is an inborn spiritual state. Words are the fuel in the engine. Once we recite the words of the prayer, our Lord has taught to us, we then set off a journey towards God.

February 21, 2016

London

INTIMATE FRIEND OF GOD

“The heart of Christian prayer is getting over the idea that God is somewhere a very, very long way off.”

“God has decided to be an intimate friend and He has decided to make us part of His family, and we always pray on that basis.”

Archbishop Rowan Williams

God dwells in us. The human spiritual texture possesses God and the divine nature. We often lose God. As we begin the journey through a prayerful life, we then see God in the layers of our spirituality. And as we walk with God, we then realize that every step that we make reflects the will of God.

The ultimate level of spiritual life is the very moment when we feel that we have become an intimate friend of God and part of His family.

As I write these reflections, I feel a change of heart within me. I am no longer alone but only in solitude. I have found a time to rediscover my inner peace and there I stand in the presence of God in whom I put my trust.

*February 21, 2016
London*

PRAYER AS A REFLECTION OF GOD'S LOVE

“When you reach the doorway of the heart then you have ultimately at the gates of Heaven.”

When we pray, we open our souls to God and address our words to God. It is exactly at this very moment that we are able to listen to the life-giving messages of God. Christ our Lord led a similar life and paved the journey of prayerful life for His disciples.

When we pray we then are filled with the presence of God. Prayer is a necessity. As the earth needs the heat radiating from the sun, so does our soul need the divine strength of prayer. For the praying individual is sanctified, is spiritually transformed and has the inner drive to make his life the Holy Hand of God.

The person who is emptied of prayer is also emptied of God. The life which is born in prayer becomes the reflection of God's love. The life in prayer brings forth peace and light.

LET US GLORIFY GOD

“When men glorify God, they do not add to His glory, they acknowledge it.”

Archbishop Michael Ramsey

The core of our prayers we offer is the glorification of God. The same has also been the leading thought of our forefathers. The late Archbishop Michael Ramsey shares with us an inspiring reflection, which we ought to take into consideration: “When we glorify God, they do not add to His glory, they acknowledge it.”

The above thought in itself is the theology of the Church. Truly when we glorify God in our prayers, we then are deepening within our spirituality the bond with the Creator and visit to live a life with moral principles. Thus, when we glorify God in our prayers, we are renewed inwardly. This thought is beautifully summarized in the prayer of St. Nerses the Graceful:

*“The renewer of the old self, renew my spirit
and enrich my soul with the newness of life.”*

*September 10, 2001
Holy Etchmiadzin*

THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH

The Church embodies in itself an immense mystery. The Church leads humanity to the doorway of the knowledge of God. It is in the Church that the faithful lives the very presence of God. The Church graces upon us the special gift to instill within us the vision of the spiritual rebirth. This gift, however, is given to those who lead a prayerful life with God. There are two kinds of churches, one being the physical church constructed by people while the other is the spiritual church born within us, which brings together the dispersed faithful to unite as the living Church in Christ.

May 5, 2012

THE CHURCH GIVES LIFE

Life is conditioned by the very presence of the Church. It is the sanctuary wherein we enter to relive our lives as we stand in the presence of God. There we feel the inner transfiguration of our souls, the very change.

To me personally, the Church is my life, there I find the peace of my mind and soul. It is also in the Church where I am inspired to lead a life of servitude. The Church instructs us to build our lives on God, for the life rooted in God can only reflect the love and wisdom of the Almighty.

December 15, 2011

Burbank

THE CHURCH IS THE MOON
AND CHRIST IS THE SUN REFLECTING
THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

This statement is an expression by the Church Fathers. What we see in the statement is the co-relationship between the moon and the sun. Thus humanity and the world resemble the moon, which acquire their light from Christ, as is the case for the moon which takes its light from the sun. This thought imposes on us a moral responsibility, so that we may become apostles, in taking the light from Christ and spreading the same light into the world.

For the Church Fathers, the life of humanity is in the dark without the co-relationship with Christ, as is also the case for the moon, which cannot illuminate the dark of night without the co-relationship with the sun. The world and humanity reflect the light of Christ, the divine love and wisdom, as also needs to be the case with the moon, which reflects the light of the sun in the dark of the night.

Humanity is graced with the privilege to be the bearer of the light of Christ, but more so, the responsibility to share the same light with the people of God.

April 7, 2013

ORGANIZED COMMUNITIES STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

The whole notion of community derives from apostolic times. When we read the Gospels, we come across the birth of communities which came into existence through the visitations of Christ our Lord accompanied by His disciples.

The New Testament is the very book wherein we find the compilation of pastoral letters by the apostles addressed to the early Christian communities. Those pastoral letters serve as basis for today's church and help us all to apply all the methods as presented in the letters in the organization of our parishes. This act is the reflection of our faith. The presence of the Church is conditioned by the presence of living churches. The communities are the root of the Church.

September 11, 2001
Holy Etchmiadzin

GRACING REMISSION OF SIN: THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The mission of the Church needs to be explained thoroughly. The basis of all interpretations is the sacrificial life of Christ, our Lord. We all are reminded the words of Christ our Lord during our baptism in the holy font that spiritual rebirth is a necessity. With the baptism, the Christian is filled with divine gifts, which enable us to constantly renew our spirituality.

The Church's mission is to lead the human person to a pure life, a sanctified life. Thus, we will become the light in our community.

*August 7, 2005
Burbank*

VISIBLE SIGN OF GOD'S EMPOWERING GIFT

"The Church is the visible sign of God's empowering gift of presence to us and our growing presence to God."

The Church is the very presence in our lives, which reflects the spiritual strength sprouting from God. A life nourished by the divine spiritual strength will be the precious gift to God.

The Church is God's big dream. We are the movement in the Church and it is the will of God that our lives turn into the bridge towards God led by Christ.

August 25, 2013

THE CALLING OF SANCTITY

The Church is the path, which leads us to sanctity during which the saints are companions to us. For it is through their sanctified lives the divine light radiates and inspires us to live with the love of Christ and be followers of the exemplary lives of the saints.

When our lives are graced with prayer, we then bear within us all that is holy and strive to cultivate our lives with sanctity. And this is exactly what the Church Fathers had in mind when they established the Feast Day, so that through the celebration of feasts of saints we may lead ourselves to the very moment of transformation, during which time we renew within us the person and make the commitment to live in Christ and thus become the source of inspiration to all to live a life of a saint.

Most of the saints of the Holy Church are being celebrated for their exemplary lives. They continue to inspire us through their humility, sacrificial lives and often martyrdom. Saints are those who have looked at the crucifixion of the Lord and worshipped the divine and the eternal in the person of the Son of God.

The Church teaches us to ask for the intercession of the saints who would lead us towards God.

September 29, 2012

THE CHURCH REFLECTS THE TRUTH

Indeed, when we look around in today's world, we then reaffirm that the Church reflects the truth about spiritual values, which surpasses all materialistic values. The Church is the divine institution, which gathers us all, and therein we live the very presence of God, the author of the creation.

The Church is the institution, which needs to be the destiny of our lives. In the Church, we preach the Word of God, wherein we also cultivate the spiritual lives of the faithful with divine love and wisdom. The Church, as the divine institution deepens in our spirituality the very understanding that we are the temple of God.

Therefore, we urge all parents to teach their children the Word of God and the messages radiating from the gospels. It is important that parents lead their children to the Church since their childhood to prevent them from evil thoughts, which disgrace their Christian identity at a later age. Christ, our Lord is the foundation of the Church. Thus, let us make the Church the stronghold of our lives and God will be reflected in our words and actions.

August 12, 2012

SPIRITUAL LIFE AND ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE

When we speak about strictly spiritual life, that may apply primarily to the monastic life, where people follow a certain discipline to cultivate a spiritual life, led by solitude and prayer. In the Church's life, monastic institutions have played a vital role in strengthening the foundations of the Church and thus replenishing the spiritual reservoirs with divine strength.

Now when we speak about ecclesiastical life that is primarily related to the administrative life, where we apply the messages of the gospels; where the prayerful life of a Christian individual becomes the catalyst in the formation of a community. Therefore, both spiritual life and ecclesiastical life complement for the sustenance of the mission of the Christian Church.

August 30, 2013

THE CHURCH IS THE EMBODIMENT OF DIVINE WISDOM

Indeed, the Church embodies in herself the divine wisdom, for the architect of Church is God, our Lord. And what is visible in the hand of the Almighty God is humanity, which responds to God's will and thus becomes the living Church. Therefore, when we speak of the Church, it is the entity which radiates divine wisdom. This reality inspires us all to become the living church.

November 15, 2013

CONNECTED TO THE CHURCH

This needs to be the motto of each of us as Christians. For those of us who are connected to the Church, our entire life will be transpiring the teachings of Christ. And in doing so, we turn the Church to be the root of our lives. When we disconnect our lives from the Church, we are then depriving our souls from divine love. The connection to the Church needs to be established in our lives from early childhood.

November 15, 2013

THE GREAT MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The Church's primary role and duty is the preaching of the Word of God. An entire life cannot be sufficient to spread the Word of God as recorded in the Bible. However, this mission of preaching the Word is fulfilled when the faithful members pray together and become partners in God's work.

December 16, 2013

THE CHURCH'S TASK: TO TRANSFORM PEOPLE

The Church is pledged to influence society and to criticize society.

Christ Himself lived and died and rose again in a world full of social abuses, including the appalling abuse of slavery. But Christ's chief method was not to attack institutions, but to transform people. And there can be no substitute for the impact of Christianity upon people at their deepest level, always remembering that a person never lives in a vacuum; he is always engaged in a bundle of social relationships, both private and public, and these relationships all need to be Christianized.

So the Church's mission to change lives cannot be separated from its critique of wrong attitudes in society.

January 4, 2013

THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

“Our Church is a force which safeguards our national identity. Yes. However, not in the sense that a feeble branch supports a dilapidated nest but in a sense that the stump supports the tree.”

Karekin I

The most inspiring words of the late Catholicos Karekin I convey to us a strong message. This message of spiritual revival is addressed to us, so that we may be able to turn our Church into the life giving source of spiritual energy for our faithful.

Certainly, our Church is an institution which guards and protects our nation. However, the role and mission of the Armenian Church should be seen and foreseen throughout the journey of our nation. When we speak of the Church, it does not only represent the past, but equally the present and above all the Armenian Church foresees the acts of faith in the forthcoming generations.

*October 6, 1998
Vancouver*

PRIEST AND PRIESTHOOD

THE VISION OF ST. BASIL FOR PRIESTHOOD

- 1 Pray for those who are alive and present and also for those who are absent for some reason from the Divine Liturgy*
- 2 Keep in peace and tranquility those couples who had been entrusted to us*
- 3 Look after the children*
- 4 Teach the youth*
- 5 Strengthen the elderly*
- 6 Encourage the hopeless*
- 7 Re-unite those who are separated*
- 8 Return the lost sheep to the One, Universal, Apostolic and Holy Church*
- 9 Free those souls which are enslaved*
- 10 Protect the widows*
- 11 Sponsor the Saints*
- 12 Free the imprisoned*
- 13 Heal the sick*
- 14 Pray for all people especially for those who are suffering. Pray for those who love us and for those who are filled with hatred towards us. Pray for those who have requested prayer even if they may be on the wrong path in the eyes of God.*
- 15 Remember the poor.*

The vision of St. Basil is a prayer for us all. Each time when we read the vision embodied in his words we then distance ourselves from the framework of time and guided by the Almighty God, we nourish within us the life of the priest whose journey of life should be a reflection of total dedication. The priest is the person who takes upon his

shoulders countless responsibilities and duties and we are reward solely by God.

The prayer of St. Basil reflects his vision which is based upon the life of Christ, our Lord. When we apply the fifteen messages, we then reflect Christ in our lives.

September 3, 2004

“O, LORD, OPEN OUR EYES”

These are the words of two blind men, who on the road to Jericho have uttered and have requested from Christ to enlighten their blindness. These words should also be the prayer of our inner being, so that we may be able to speak to God and enlightened by the blindness of our physical eyes and the eyes of our souls.

I personally have lived these words especially since 1970, the year I was enrolled as a student of the seminary. These words have been the prayer of the Catholicos Zareh I, which vividly express his passion and love for the Armenian Church. To this day, I feel the impact of these words in my inner being, which help me quench the thirst of my soul, and above all lead me to walk towards God, so that in God and in the presence of God I may be able to open the blindness of my soul.

We ought to reread these words and enrich our souls with the strength of these words. As priests, we must feel the thirst of the divine light, for we are called to serve the Lord and the Church.

The faithful of the Church today are in dire need to communicate with the priests and learn the life-giving Word of God. The late Catholicos felt in the depth of his heart God's call and opened the doors of his soul so that these words of the two blind men may be heard loud and clear in the course of our fulfilled lives.

May 24, 1993

Montreal

THE GROWING PAIN OF LONELINESS

In as much as a priest's life is heavily engaged in the life of the community, there comes a time when loneliness becomes the growing pain of the heart. Words cannot do justice to express the depth of the pain of loneliness. However, the priest is also the person who has the unique relationship with God, which makes him strong and committed.

During my last trip to Armenia, I read Henry J. M. Nouwen's "A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom." The book is a remarkable collection of testimonials, which in many ways responded to my inner spiritual anguishes. What has astonished me the most is the realization that no one should ever be ashamed of sharing their failures and the abyss of their emotions. Profoundly brave are those who are able to show their colleagues their weakness. It is exactly at this point when we regain our spiritual strength and start a new journey with God.

July 7, 2014

“THE TIME OF MY EXILE”

In the past few years, every journey in my life has been “a time of exile.” However, ‘exile’ in my own dictionary has a positive connotation. For every journey has become a walk with God, a time for spiritual growth and retreat and living with the people of the world.

What I would very much like to share with my friends and the reader is that throughout my journeys, although I rarely had the chance to converse with people, I grew spiritually simply by observing people and listening to their words and analyzing their body language.

I would strongly urge my readers to experience “the time of my exile,” a time of prayer and solitude, walking with God, journeying with unknown people and rediscovering your true soul and being. Only then, can one feel and live thoroughly the spiritual joy and inner comfort, which words cannot explain.

July 8, 2014

TWO HOLY ALTARS

Sacrifice yourselves at the Holy Altar of God

Sacrifice yourselves at the Altar of people

The priest is called to sacrifice his life on the Holy Altar of God as well as the altar of the people. Filled with the love of Christ, I am always spiritually reenergized to live a meaningful sacrificial life. Life becomes connected to God when we serve the people of God.

October 12, 2003

Burbank

PROPHETS TO ONE ANOTHER

“The role of the prophet...in the Old Testament...is to act and speak to call the people of Israel back to their essential truth and identity. They act and they speak for the sake of a community's integrity...One of the very comfortable roles we have to play in the church is to be prophet to one another – that is, to remind one another what we are here for.”

Archbishop Rowan Williams

A priest must consider himself to be a prophet sent into the life of the community. Priesthood is a calling which needs a prayerful life. Enriched by the messages radiating from the Bible, the priest plays the role of a prophet *“to remind one another what we are here for.”* Surely all of us have a responsibility for one another. There lies also the beauty of the Christian community, wherein God is seen and His presence is felt through the lives of the saints.

*February 22, 2016
London*

THE PRIEST IMITATES CHRIST

“The priest...builds bridges between God and humanity.”

“In the Old Testament, a priest is somebody who interprets God and humanity to each other. A priest is somebody who builds bridges between God and humanity when that relationship has been wrecked: somebody who by offering sacrifice to God recreates a shattered relationship.”

Archbishop Rowan Williams

The priest through his life imitates Christ. Priesthood thus is a holy calling, which should be lived and fulfilled with reverence. In many ways the priest plays a key role to bring the people closer to God as well as people to each other.

The priest is the person who speaks to us about God and teaches us to abide by the divine laws. The priest heals relationships but above all restores our bond with God. Therefore, priesthood needs to be lived thoroughly, as the person who responds to God's call he then in many ways "plays God" in the life of another person.

*February 22, 2016
London*

THE FATHER CONFESSOR

How do we define the role of the confessor? In simple words, the Father confessor is the person who feels the presence of God and through the many years of pastoral experience leads those who wish to see God and have the moment of transfiguration in their lives.

The Father confessor is the person who leads the praying person. In this dialogue, the father confessor is the teacher who first listens and then advises. It is imperative that each priest have a Father confessor, who shares his wisdom knowledge the experience of faith life with a younger priest, who has chosen the journey of priesthood as his way of life. The priest must cultivate his life with a Father Confessor, through Bible readings, prayers and service. All of these should be reflected in continuity.

September 13, 2012

BIBLICAL THEMES

THE WORD OF GOD THE EVERLASTING TRUTH

Just like the builder who builds his home on unshakable foundations, we also need to build the home of our life in applying the Word of God, the rock of our lives"

"...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock." (Matthew 7:24-25)

PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The notion that preaching the word of God is the responsibility of God has to change. We all are ambassadors of Christ and the proclamation of the Word of God needs to be a shared responsibility. In all sectors of life, the notion of shared responsibility, be it in the governmental sector, in the school system, hospitals, etc., all of these sustain through infrastructure and dialogue.

The same applies to the Church, which is charged to guide the people with the Word of God. The mission of the Church needs to be a shared responsibility as it is directly related to the task of spiritual transformation of the human soul and mind.

Christ our Lord taught us to imply and fulfill the beauty of shared responsibility as He chose His disciples and entrusted them to be partners in His missions.

September 26, 2014

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

This is a biblical message so that we may always cherish and respect our parents. Those who fail in their duties tend to forget the very fact that our parents are the representatives of God in our lives.

Ararat Home is a blessing in the Los Angeles community. For many decades, hundred of our elders have been given the affectionate care and love. On the occasion of the expansion of the new wing, we extend our warm regards to all without exception. We pray to the Almighty God to protect “Ararat Home” in order that the noble institution may continue to be the little Armenia where our elders will be graced with outstanding care.

February 8, 2014

THE PSALMS

“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”

(Psalm 119:105)

The Book of Psalms in the Bible is the sole book which in its entirety is a compilation of prayers addressed to God while the rest of the Bible also speaks to us about God, the Son of God and the life of His disciples. The human being created in the image of God immensely needs the constant relationship with the Creator and through the prayers to make the commitment to be always faithful to the divine messages throughout the journey of His life. For the divine messages are the light in our lives.

The gospel conveys to us the most empowering message of living the faith. One particular passage is Luke 8:40-57.

“Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. And Jesus said, “Who was it that touched me?” When all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!” But Jesus said, “Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.” And when the woman saw that she was

not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher anymore." But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

The words of our Lord is not only addressed to the ruler but equally to all of us who often are challenged in life. For it is only through faith that we conquer the temptations. The same also applies to nations. Putting our faith in action would strengthen us in our journey. I say this with all sincerity for I have always been enriched by living the gift of faith in my life. The same also have been visible in our nation's life.

Armenia is the land of miracles, for our ancestors have lived the Christian faith and have conquered the impossible. Certainly the words of our Lord have touched their hearts and they have blessed us with their sacred legacy: "Do not fear, but only have faith and you will live."

FORGIVING HEART

“The Gospel of Christ teaches us to uphold the Spirit of forgiveness. Thus, we shake off the weight which darkens our conscience.”

The Gospel of Christ, our Lord instructs in the way forgiveness. The person who holds firm in his/her being the spirit of forgiveness is the individual who truly lives a life of a Christian. Those who have a forgiving heart are the strongest amongst us, who can overthrow the burden of darkness and live a merciful life.

This is the lesson we learn in the prayer our Lord has taught us: “And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

“THE GOSPEL IS THE STORAGE
OF NOBLE IDEAS”

“The Gospel is the storage of noble ideas. Those who open their souls to the light of the Gospel can actually transfer Heavens in their being.”

Archbishop Yeghishe Derderian

People who lead their lives with the light of the Gospel constantly feel in the depth of their hearts the very presence of God. People who focus their mind and soul beyond the skies hear the voice of God in themselves.

June 2, 2012

STAY AWAKE

“Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.” (Matthew 24:42)

We ought to heed to these words unceasingly, in order to secure the journey of our lives towards God.

If we want to stay awake, we then ought to live a prayerful life, for prayer illuminates our mind and soul and sanctifies our very being. The purpose of life is to establish a journey towards God.

However, we cannot set a specific time as to when and at what juncture of life we meet God. For a Christian, our journey needs to be a continuous one, which would then secure our meeting with God, helping us to listen to the Word of God and apply it in our everyday life.

“Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.” Matthew 24:42

This is the spirit of the Gospel of Christ, our Lord.

LESSON OF HUMILITY

“...For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

(Luke 18:14)

This is the lesson of humility. Throughout history, humanity has always been eager to be equaled to God.

Those who have exhibited this desire have obviously lost the spirit of nobility and have distanced themselves from a peaceful life.

How do we explain and define prayer and the presence of God in our spirituality? Those who live a prayerful life are the ones who seek courage to correct themselves and make the commitment to lead a life according the message of the Gospel.

HUMBLE YOURSELF

“...The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:26-27)

The Gospel of Christ our Lord enriches our spirituality with messages conveyed that lead us towards God and help us understand the significance of moral values.

Christ’s message instructs us to live a life of humility, for great are those who live a humble life and are servants of all. The richness of our lives is conditioned by a life lived with humility.

This particular passage from the Gospel according to St. Luke, represents the life of humanity of all ages. That which disrupts us all is the same dispute which arose amongst the apostles. “Who is the greatest?”

Great is the one who becomes the servant of all. For us Christians, Christ is the supreme model of humility who has humbled Himself through the Incarnation and has led us toward the divine light.

CHRIST-LIKE LIFE

“But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.” (John 3:21)

- To exercise the truth is the reflection of our faith.
- To lead a Christ-like life.
- As we live a Christ-like life, we then are led towards the source of light, which reveal the nature of our works if they are the reflection of the will of God.

Service in the life of a Christian, in the context of our worship life, is truly the expression of our faith, and in other words the revelation of truth. Faith must be applied in all of our acts wherever we lead our ministry.

We need to reread the message of Christ our Lord as recorded in the Gospel according to St. John. *“No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not*

come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.” (John 3:13-21).

“I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE”

“For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” (John 6:5-52)

The bread to which Christ refers is truly His teaching and the journey of His life and sacrifice on the Cross. The bread that we consume daily is vital for our physical bodies. We ought not to forget that the soul ought to be fed with the Word of God, which is given to us. The Bread descended from Heaven for the salvation of our souls. In Christ we see in the Incarnation of the Son of God, His sacrificial life, the divine light. Let us consume the Bread from Heaven and walk with Christ throughout the journey of our lives.

THE ABUNDANCE OF LOVE AND CHOOSING THE GOOD

“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.”

(Philippians 1:9-11)

The teaching of love is incomplete when we are deprived of the power of faith. True life is conditioned with the journey lived in Christ. For in following Christ we give ourselves the chance to experience the abundance of love within us, and thus make the choice what is good and God-pleasing.

The life of the world would have been better if only the world follows Christ to be the true Teacher.

December 10, 2011

“I CAN DO ALL THINGS IN HIM WHO
STRENGTHENS ME”

(Philippians 4:13)

Christ, our Lord and the Son of God brings to us all the divine love and wisdom. And those who are in communion with Christ feel the presence and the spiritual impact of God. For people who are alienated from God and have lost the spiritual strength are unable to overcome the challenges of life. And when we speak of challenges, we ought not to categorize challenge aspects which can be grasped as evil or temptation, but equal the aspect of success which can lead us to greed when humility does not accompany to our successes. Therefore, the close we come to Christ, the deep we feel the vitality of living a humble life with a loving and caring heart.

December 13, 2012

LIVE A HOLY LIFE

“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.” (1 Thessalonians 4:7-8)

The apostle instructs us to become the bearer of God and the illuminator for His people.

Herewith I share with you the message of the late Patriarch Malachia Ormanian.

- Guard your family with love.
- Respect the relationship you share with friends.
- Be mindful not to pursue unjust acts.
- Continue to live a merciful life.
- Cherish school and education.
- Enrich your life with moral values.
- Do not ignore the message of living a faithful life.
- Exercise humanitarian spirit.
- Guard and protect the House of God.
- Acknowledge and live a prayerful life.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

EMBRACING MORAL VALUES THAT LEAD TO A NEW LIFE

The world certainly has been progressing in science and technology. However, the same pace of progress cannot be justified in the attainment of the spiritual sphere. It has become apparent the spiritual values have been trampled. For Christians, the Gospel of Christ is the source for spiritual values, which constitute the truth eternally. The Gospel of Christ will be the burning bush for all ages.

Our understanding of spiritual values will only grow with prayer. Each time we make the commitment to evaluate our lives, we then realize that the level of our bonding with God is lived. Saints were the people of God who not only chose to live a prayerful life but have also inspired the people surrounding them to find their way toward God.

*October 1, 2001
Canada*

BE KIND AND PERFECT

“I have the moral obligation to speak to you and introduce to you the will of God: to be kind and perfect.”

“We ought to uproot from our inner being the sins...and adopt a prudent life, to be holy and a mediator, to be kind and merciful towards the poor and rich spiritually with virtuous life, to show love, faith and hope and implement total love towards God and the people of God. For the source of all virtues sprouts from sincere faith.”

These are the thoughts of St. Basil, which renew our spirituality. Each of the statement should mirror our inner soul. These words transpire life and sanctity and call on us to establish a spiritual reawakening. Each of the words of St. Basil represent to us history, but above all, the vision of a new dawn.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

“...And yet every 3.6 seconds someone dies of hunger and three quarters of these are children under five. If we realized that we are family, we would not let this happen to our brothers and sisters.” - Abp. Desmond Tutu

This is the reality in which we live. Together, we have the responsibility to correct the failures of humanity. If each of us shares this same thought with our fellow brothers and sisters, we then are able to increase the number of peacemakers and increase the number of people who, in their unique ways, can lessen the pain and suffering of humanity, hunger and poverty. Above all, they can save the children who are the joy and the beauty of the world.

The mission of the Church calls on us all to follow in the example of the Good Samaritan. Then only we can say it loud and clear that we have embraced the Christian calling in our actions.

INTIMACY WITH GOD

“Being virtuous is not sufficient to be declared a saint. The life of a saint is not conditioned by the performance of noble endeavors...A saint is an individual who has a special intimacy with God and brings others ever closer to the Almighty.”

Michael Ramsey

These worlds radiate the wisdom of the great Anglican leader, the late Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey, who inspires us with his vision of Sainthood. Thus, it is not sufficient for us to become closer to God in our relationship. What is more vital is that through our lives we ought to inspire other fellow human beings to become closer to God. This must be the very calling of the Christian priest throughout his ministry.

THE ABUNDANCE OF GOD'S LIGHT

“Almighty God, I surrender my being into your hands. I have put my hope and in the cross, O eternal king. I fervently ask in my prayers the intercession of the saints to uplift my heart to you. You are forbearing and compassionate towards all. Do not abandon me as I am a sinner yet I have put my hope in you. Guard me under Your precious cross in peace.”

These are the words of prayer of St. Nerses the Gracious, which we consume as the spiritual bread to transform our inner spiritual life. Led by these magnificent words, we lead our steps toward Christ and enrich our whole being with Christ, our Lord. Through His prayerful life, Christ graced upon us the gift of transformation. As we read the gospels, we then grasped clearly that Christ led His life to prayer as an early stage as He entered into the temple and there He met with the teachers of the law. He then was baptized and went into the desert, so that His prayerful life in solitude may be an example for us. In solitude and prayer, He was transfigured in the presence of His disciples and inspired us to attain the true significance of prayer and solitude.

2007

FAITH LEADS TO SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Faith enables us to make the impossible possible. Blessed are those who have built their lives on the rock of faith. Faith is not based on thoughts and philosophy. God is the root of our faith. And ultimately faith leads us to God. When we live the faith we then are able to journey into the depths of our souls and being. Those who live the Christian Faith can only chose the truth. Faith is the source of our vision. People of faith can actually move mountains. Thus we are called to live with faith. For living the faith ultimately leads us to a life with Christ.

August 27, 2012

CHARITY

Charity is one of the most valued virtues of Christianity. Charity is the direct reflection of faith and love. The person who does charity fills the hearts of people with joy. As servants of Christ and the Church, charity must be one of our fundamental duties reaching out to people in need. In doing so, we literally meet Christ, for Christ dwells in our humble souls.

The world today witnesses the poverty and hunger of hundreds of thousands of children who die being deprived of basic nourishment. If only we would have focused our prayers on the lives of children, the world would have been a better place.

In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul reminds us of our obligation to care for the poor. When we speak of Christianity, then this is a clear message which radiates from the life of Christ and the Gospels. Our faith should be reflected in action. And no child should die as a result of hunger. The suffering of hungry children is the shame of humanity. Statistics show that the world in which we live reminds us of the clear reality that a child dies due to hunger every 30 seconds. Thus, let us take on the responsibility to save the life of a child and to remember the poor in our prayers. It is only then when we fulfill a divine mission.

September 11, 2012

THE CROSS - THE BURIAL

We worship the Cross and we glorify the Burial. The mystery of the cross is great and incomprehensible for the human mind. The spirit of Christianity is condensed in the Cross. For close to two thousand years, our ancestors have praised the mystery of the cross and have been led by the power of the cross.

We bear the cross in our hearts, for we are fully convinced that in Christ we have a new life. In the cross personally see our own selves and equally so we see the image of our nation. Then we realize that the cross we bear is vis a vis, the crucifixion, is almost unnoticeable.

Christ, our Lord, through His crucifixion has conveyed to the world the clear message that His sacrificial life is the reflection of the Divine love for the salvation of humanity. And most importantly through His crucifixion, He trampled death. Thus as we worship the cross, we then embrace the cross in our souls.

*March 23, 2013
Seattle*

FAITH MOVES MOUNTAINS

These are the powerful words of Christ, our Lord. As we listen to the essence of these, we then understand that one should not grasp the significance of these words literally. For when Christ speaks of moving the mountains, He is referring to the inner change of our spirituality. The change which is much needed to feel the birth of the new person within us. For moving the mountains is an easier task than changing ourselves.

The peace of the world, the progress of life is conditioned only through humanity. And Christ conveyed to the world the most inspiring and spiritually uplifting message of forgiveness. Forgiveness should be reflected in the life of all Christian, but above all in the life of the priest, who is obliged to mirror Christ. The priest who cannot forgive cannot be a witness of Christ and thus cannot be considered a priest.

“Faith moves mountains.” The Christ, who is capable of fulfilling this message, certainly should be considered the architect of our lives.

*May 17, 2013
Glendale*

THE CALLING OF WITNESSING

Witnessing is a calling in a religious context. And those who profess to have the calling of witnessing also have the responsibility to respond with a life lived with faith.

Privileged are those who have the calling of witnessing, for they are the ones who aim to live their lives with Christ and to become practically witnesses of the Lord, His life and messages. How can we actualize the calling of witnessing as Christians? In other words, which are the rules to become a witness of Christ?

The first and foremost rule to be accounted as a witness is our ability to acknowledge God. To do so requires the education of the Bible and to live the in very presence of God through prayer. The second rule to be accounted as a witness is to turn our lives into the reflection of the divine messages, so that God may be glorified.

This is also the ultimate role and mission of the Church. And more so, during the Divine Liturgy, we are in communion with the life of the person of Christ, so that we might make the journey of Christ's life into the journey of our own lives. Thus, let us always be mindful of the message, that we are called to be witnesses of Christ. And we ought to respond to this divine calling in faith, with prudence and courage, so that we might live an enlightened life for the glory of God and for the visible Church, wherein the privileged are those who feel the presence of God and through prayer open their minds, souls and hearts to receive the divine gifts.

May 27, 2013

A REFLECTION DEDICATED TO MOTHERS

Mother's Day certainly is one of the most outstanding amongst all other festive days, for it helps us think about the love and compassion of our mothers which cannot be equaled. A mother's love reflect the immensity of the ocean. Thus the love of our mothers cannot be measured, which also illuminate the path of our lives and spreads love and blessings. The love of all mothers cannot be explained or condensed in words, for words cannot possibly express the full strength of our spirituality, which embodies itself in the love we receive and cherish from our mothers.

To me personally, this topic is a sacred one, for I personally would not dare to share in words what I feel and live in my own spirituality for my mom. However, I can assure the reader that I was able to reflect my love and dedication in silence and certainly without words. The soul has its own ways of expressing itself. God is the one and only who listens to the words of our hearts.

When our mothers hold and embrace us as children and for the rest of their lives, we feel the divine presence. Their love is unshakable. It is at this moment when we feel the birth and rebirth of life.

May 11, 2014

LIFE IN ABUNDANCE

Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains." (John 9:39-41)

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

The message of Christ, our Lord does not necessarily speak to us who are physically blind. Rather He speaks to those who are blind in their moral lives. They who receive the divine gifts and yet those not willing to share them and enlighten the lives of others.

The Pharisees, having heard the words of the Lord were offended and came to Christ with this question "Are we also blind?" Christ answered. "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains." Therefore, the message of Christ, our Lord is clear and sound, that all of us are called to be the bearers of the love and wisdom of the Almighty God, yet we cannot keep them or hide them, but share and fulfill them in our daily lives.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

June 2014

THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE MARTYRS

The order of the rite of sanctification is vital in the life of the Church, which needs to be performed through an act of worship. The sanctification of the Holy Martyrs elevates our Church to a higher level of presence in the family of Christianity, for one and half million Armenians chose to give their lives witnessing Christ in martyrdom. Through the sanctification, we convey a message that the martyrs have adopted the way of the cross as the most vivid act of faith in action. Throughout centuries, our history has witnessed numerous acts of faith.

The enactment of martyrdom can be reflected in this expression: *“A life sacrificed for Christ and for our Motherland.”*

November 12, 2014

THE MYSTERY OF SOLITUDE

Solitude is an important commitment, which an individual makes with a specific purpose. The importance of solitude is reflected in a moment when we give ourselves the chance in a timeframe to see the image of our spirituality. This moment of spiritual reawakening starts when we set the journey into the depths of our souls. For often, the human being and circumstances surrounding us can influence us and impact our way of thinking and perspectives. Thus, in solitude, we not only make an analysis of the course of our lives that we have actually adopted, but more so, make the promise to begin a new life. This spiritual exercise becomes productive when we lead ourselves into the continuous journey of solitude, as must be the case with the prayer.

June 12, 2015

GOD'S INFINITE LOVE

“God, the Lord of all creation, does not make his presence felt by force of arms or by the temporal power of his followers, but by the nobility of his infinity love.”

The very presence of God is felt and lived through His infinite love, which is reflected in a most unique way in the parable of the Prodigal Son. In this parable, we meet the most compassionate father who represents God, Himself. The greatest divine act is forgiveness. Humanity should never fail to exercise this noble act by the power of their spirituality. For if we fail to follow in the example of the compassionate father figure as represented in the parable, we are then emptied of our Christian Spirit. Often we tend to forget what the gospels are conveying to us.

Christ Himself forgave the sinners and paved for them the journey of New Life. Thus, the Church needs to be led in this same spirit. If we adopt the spirit of the parable of the Prodigal Son, which compels us to have a loving, caring and compassionate heart, then we are truly able to turn the Church into the House of God.

PEACE TO ALL

Often we tend to forget that we live in a world where millions of people are deprived of peace. There are also nations whose children have never enjoyed the sweetness of peace, for they have been in the constant conflict of political unrest and destruction.

To be the architect of peace is a privilege. As we become a witness of Christ, we then carry the mission of Christ our Lord and thus bring peace into the lives of people.

People who cause pain and suffering to those around them, through their evil acts, crucify Christ, the Savior. Thus, let us live a Christ-like life and enrich our lives with the spirit of the Glorious Resurrection.

THE LOVE OF GOD

“Real friends find their inner correspondence where both know the love of God.”

The love of God graces our lives with innumerable miracles. When we chose to enrich our inner being with the love of God, we not only bring joy and peace to our hearts, but above all, establish a genuine correspondence between friends.

The love of God guides us all to a dignified life. When we become the bearers of God’s love, we then enlighten the lives of our friends and manifest people in the world. The world would have been a better place for all if only people would have chosen to correspond according to God’s love. However, it is never too late to correct our behavior and become real friends by corresponding with one another with the love of God.

July 8, 2014

TRUST IN GOD

“...And you sanctify us all who put their trust in you.”

People who put their trust in God are those who lead their lives to sanctity.

These are words of wisdom from the Divine Liturgy. When we fill our hearts with the love of God, thus putting our trust in God, we then are exercising our Christian duties and responsibilities.

“Faith moves us to play our full part in the changing times and in the problems of humanity.”

Faith plays a significant role in the life of a Christian. It is through the strength of our faith that we lead a life toward God. This journey also helps us understand that we all belong to God and thus we are also the chosen apostles to preach of God. The person who lives with Christian faith is capable of transforming his or her life for the better.

SPIRITUAL RECHARGE

“It is important for you to control your own drawbridge. There must me times when you keep your bridge drawn and have the opportunity to be alone or only with those who you feel alone.”

Solitude is vital in the life of every human being. Solitude is the time and place, when and where we meet God and clearly see our inner self.

I have personally benefited enormously each time I have submitted my life to solitude. This may not be the easiest task, but as we walk through the journey of solitude, we then reach out to our destiny - face to face with God, seeing God, listening to God and living the spiritual rebirth.

Therefore, control your own drawbridge. For this will be the time for spiritual recharge.

July 8, 2014

“CALM BOTH YOUR LION AND YOUR LAMB”

“The art of spiritual living is to fully calm both your lion and your lamb.”

The inner spiritual life can be like a furnace when emotions cannot control our behavior and thus logic and wisdom fail to overpower the lion living within ourselves. Truly, the art of spirituality needs to be reflected in the harmony of your lion and your lamb.

Often we experience fierce conflict within our inner spiritual life. This conflict takes place within our being when we chose to abandon God and take refuge in our limited wisdom. Returning to a state of equilibrium becomes a journey with God, a practice in the art of spiritual living. This can only be attained when we fully calm both “our” lion and “our” lamb.

July 8, 2014

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Being Humbled Before the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord

The forty days of journey from the Feast of the Nativity to the day of the Presentation of our Lord to the Temple has a unique significance in the life of a Christian. For if our lives have been blessed with the Miraculous Birth of Christ, our Lord, then with the Presentation of the Lord to the Temple we are reminded to turn our lives into a precious gift to the glory of God.

Thus, the forty-day journey in the life of the Christian has a greater significance, which should aim for the spiritual renewal. For we can only present ourselves to God when we have fulfilled the promise of enriching our lives embracing Christ.

January 26, 2003
Holy Etchmiadzin

MILESTONES IN OUR LIVES

The human being needs to establish milestones in our God-given lives, for they symbolize the birth of New Life. I have personally cherished the vision of establishing milestones in my life to live spiritual rejuvenation. Milestones do not intend to erase the past. Milestones should begin with God and with a new covenant.

People who live a prayerful life can give birth to milestones. One has to remember the words of Christ, our Lord. "Pray unceasingly and tirelessly."

June 29, 2012

LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF ALL JOY

God is undoubtedly the source of love in the life of a priest. The priest also encounters giants in life, whose spirituality inspire us with the love of God, which also transform inwardly.

The giants whom we meet in our lives unexpectedly urge us to humble ourselves in the service of the people of God. Often they are unaware of the spiritual impact they leave on us. I am blessed to have met a giant, a noble soul who has blessed my life.

December 12, 2011

“DREAMS NEVER FADE AWAY.
DREAMS SEEK NEW BIRTHPLACES”

Dreams are the travelers in eternity, which infiltrate in our souls. Dreams lead the realities of life to light, which aim a destiny. Dreams are like the fire beneath the ashes, which flare up at the very moment when God and man meet and embrace each other.

December 12, 2011

SELFISHNESS KILLS THE SOUL

God created the world in a most unique and harmonious way, wherein we all are called to love and care for one another. The gift of love and care needs to be shared unconditionally. The opposite to this is selfishness and disrespect which kills the human soul. The late Pope John Paul II extends to us the remedy:

“The human being has a deep-rooted tendency to ‘think only of self’...One chooses to follow Christ, on the other hand, avoids being wrapped up in himself and does not evaluate things according to self-interest.” (World Youth Day XVI)

Obviously, it is not the easiest task to avoid selfishness in a world where greed dominates. However, the beauty of life relies in our relationship with Christ, who guides us to live a life as instructed by Him. Then the world would be a better place for all.

September 26, 2014

THE MYRRH - BEARING WOMEN

Indeed, those who attend the Easter Eve Liturgy are privileged to be considered as the Myrrh Bearing Women, the first evangelists to pronounce the Victorious Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Beloved faithful live your faith thoroughly and resemble the myrrh-bearing women who took upon themselves the duty to become the messengers and preach the Resurrection of Christ.

August 27, 2012

THE TRUTH OF FREEDOM

The world has misunderstood the true meaning of Freedom. Freedom in reality does not imply to do all that we see in today's life. People in general who have lost the respect for the gift of life have abused their spirituality and body as the temple of God through intolerable acts. Freedom has a religious interpretation which we all ought to exercise in a turbulent world. The charismatic Pope John Paul II in his address to the youth in Saint Louis, Missouri sets forth an inspiring message:

"Freedom is not the ability to do anything we want, whenever we want. Rather, freedom is the ability to live responsibly the truth of our relationship with God and one another."

Therefore, all of us must exercise the truth of freedom in accordance with the interpretation of the Pontiff.

September 26, 2014

SOLITUDE IS WHERE WE MEET GOD

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Solitude is vital in the life of every human being. Solitude is the time and place, when and where we meet God and clearly see our inner self.

I personally have benefited enormously each time I have my life into solitude. This may not be the easiest task, but as we walk through the journey of solitude, we then reach to the destiny - face to face with God, seeing God, listening to God and living the spiritual rebirth.

Therefore, control your own drawbridge. For this will be the time for spiritual recharge.

July 8, 2014

“C’EST LE REGARD QUI FAIT LA RÉALITÉ”

Indeed, the human person is the greatest among all the creatures of the universe. The rays of the sun turn life giving within us. The human person, through his thoughtful life brings new life into the world and establishes truth and reality.

“C’est le regard qui fait la realite.”

This statement has been a leading thought in the message of the late Catholicos Karekin I. If we do not uphold a thoughtful life, we then chose to be blind towards life. While if we chose to live a thoughtful life, we then are able to be builders of life and more so, to be the architects of the truth.

The life of humanity is a mystery in the context of university. And those who are able to enter into the depths of their souls institute vision and perspective in their God-given lives. More so, those who perceive the reality that life itself is given to be the bearer of the divine gifts, in sharing their talents their lives become richer spiritually.

Therefore, man has to live a unique way so that God speaks through us. The beauty of the universe is perfected with the presence of creative humanity. Thus, man who is the ultimate creation of God, is also the spirit of the universe.

May 8, 1997

Montreal

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD

The moving rite of the opening of the doors on Palm Sunday symbolizes the second coming of Christ. This is a fundamental article of our Christian faith. The Christian must prepare for the Second Coming of the Christ with a spiritual renewal prayerfully. The just will see the Second Coming of Christ. In order to respond to God's call, we ought to purify our souls and listen to the inner voice of our souls.

August 27, 2012

BE AWAKE

“Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

(Matthew 24:44)

We should constantly heed to these words of Christ, so that we may be able to lead our steps towards God and through the path Christ our Lord paved for us. One is the condition set for us, namely, to live a prayerful life, which enlightens our soul and minds and sanctifies our entire being. We ought to be awake, for life, itself is a journey towards God. However, the day and the time is not set so that the whole journey becomes a prayerful life. For Christ, the human person is expected to be in constant relationship with God in listening and spreading the word of God.