



YETTEM ԵՌԵՄ

Հրատարակութիւն Եղեմի Ս. Աստուածածին Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ

A Publication of St. Mary Armenian Church Yettem, California

Rev. Fr. Mashdots Keshishian, Parish Priest

March 2022

Great Lent is the longest fast of the Armenian Apostolic Church and will encompass all of March this year. Yet Great Lent (Մեծ Պահպ/*Medz Bahk* in Armenian) is not merely a period of fasting, but rather is a **penitential** period, a time set aside for us to reconcile ourselves with one another and with God. Penance, one of the **sacraments** of the Armenian Church, has a negative ring to our contemporary ears. At its heart, though, penance is the process whereby Christians recommit themselves to God and to each other, to contemplate their lives and the place of God in them, and ultimately to be reconciled with God. Of course, as Christians, we know that the ultimate reconciliation, the sacrifice of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, on the Cross and His Glorious Resurrection three days later has already occurred. As individual Christians, baptism is our acceptance of that ultimate reconciliation. However, we all surely know that, as St. Paul says, we all sin and all fall short of the Glory of God—even after our baptism. Penance, then, is the thoughtful, meditative process by which we reconcile ourselves to God and one another even in the full knowledge of our salvation through baptism by the Resurrection of Christ.

It is no coincidence that the longest period of penance in the Armenian Church calendar, Great Lent, leads us directly to Easter. If Easter, the celebration of Christ's Resurrection for the forgiveness of sins, the healing of the whole world, and our reconciliation with God is the ultimate reconciliation, it makes sense that we should undertake our own process of reconciliation, of penance, to help us prepare for the great mystery of salvation at Easter. This dynamic was intimately understood by the early Church. Often, in the first centuries of Christianity when many adults converted and needed to be baptized, their baptism would happen on Easter. The period of Lent leading up to Easter was, for these "neophytes," both a time of penance and a time of instruction. What would it mean to be a Christian? How should one act after baptism? What, exactly, is that great mystery of God-become-Man, dying on the Cross, triumphing over sin and death through the Resurrection, for the salvation of the world?

Catechism is the name we give to this preparatory instruction before baptism. Perhaps we think of catechism as a distinctly Catholic practice—many of our friends probably took catechism classes as children leading up to their first communion—but the idea of catechism has a long history in the Armenian Apostolic Church as well. According to the historian Agathangelos, whose *History*

(Continued on the back page)

Parish Notes

ALTAR FLOWERS DONATIONS

February 6th – Richard Yahnian and Family, David and Jennifer Yahnian and Family, and Renee Yahnian and Family in memory of Sylvia Yahnian

February 13th – The Family of Reba Ananian

February 27th – Michael and Ted Tellian and Family in memory of their mother Elizabeth Tellian

February 27th - Marilyn Zerounian, Lori and Carl Abajian, James Zerounian and Tracy, Janel Zerounian and Joseph in memory of Pete Zerounian

HOKEHANKIST REQUEST

February 6th

Sylvia Yahnian

Forty days after her passing,

Requested by

Richard Yahnian and Family, David and Jennifer Yahnian and Family, and Renee Yahnian and Family in memory of Sylvia Yahnian

February 13th

Reba Ananian

Four years after her passing,

Requested by her family

February 27th

Elizabeth Tellian

Six years after her passing,

Requested by

Michael and Ted Tellian and Family

February 27th

Pete Zerounian

Sixteen years after his passing,

Requested by Marilyn Zerounian, Lori and Carl Abajian, James Zerounian and Tracy, Janel Zerounian and Joseph

HOKEHANKIST DONATION

(January 24, 2022 – February 20, 2022)

For Repose of Greg Davidian's Soul

January 30th – Margie, Annie, Sara, Gregory, and Skylar Davidian, and Shirley Dawson

For Repose of Sylvia Yahnian's Soul

February 6th – Marilyn Zerounian and Family

For Repose of Reba Ananian's Soul

February 13th – Shari Ananian

THANK YOU'S

We would like to thank Judy Skaff for serving on the Parish Council for the past seven years while continuing to stay very active in Ladies Society and Ways and Means.

Thank you to Charlie Davidian for pruning the trees around the flag poles and transporting the brush to Sark Davidian, Jr's burn pit.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to ***Arlen and Alina (Hokokian) Pilavian*** on their marriage, Saturday, February 5, 2022, that was held at Holy Trinity in Fresno. Arlen is the son of Pierre and Melissa Pilavian, and the grandson of Rose Marie Margosian and Lena Kalfayan. Alina is the daughter of John and Vicki Hokokian.

INSTALLATION OF NEW OFFICERS

Parish Council – Myron Sheklian/Chair, Davy Vartanian/Vice-Chair, Adrienne Poochigian/Rec. Secretary, Gerard Garoian/Treasurer, Lisa Krause/Advisor, Mari Louise Menendian/Advisor, George Ouzounian/Advisor

ACYO – Dustin Vartanian/Chair, Pete Safrazian/Vice-Chair, Ani Valencia/Recording Secretary, Melina Peters/Treasurer, Tracy Valencia/Advisor

Ladies Society – Mari Louise/Chair, Margie L. Davidian/Vice-Chair, Donna Torosian/Rec. Secretary, Janel Zerounian/Corr. Secretary, Gina Ananian/Treasurer, Renee Ananian/Advisor, Janice McWilliams/Advisor,

Sunday School -Tracy Valencia/Superintendent, Linda Farsakian-Wall/Teacher, Debbie Sheklian/Teacher, Margie A. Davidian/Accompanist

Ways and Means – Margie L. Davidian/Co-Chair, Judy Skaff/Co-Chair, Alan Farsakian/Rec. Secretary, Tina Peters/Treasurer

SOUPER SUPPERS

Soup will be served from 5:30 to 6:15. Lenten services will begin at 6:15 PM.

Wednesday, March 2nd

Wednesday, March 9th

“Nature and Fasting” by Dr. Christopher Sheklian

Wednesday, March 16th

Wednesday, March 23rd

Wednesday, March 30th

Wednesday, April 6th

PARISH COUNCIL CORNER

This year, our parish will celebrate another anniversary. In Yettem, we cherish the opportunity to celebrate anniversaries.

Our church was the fifth Armenian church established in North America and the third in California. First was Our Savior Church in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1889, followed by Holy Trinity in Fresno in 1895, Holy Cross in Union City, New Jersey in 1899, and St. Gregory the Illuminator in Fowler established in 1902 and consecrated in 1910. St. Mary Yettem was established in 1909 and consecrated in 1911.

On June 12, 1945, the first wooden church that served this community well for many years was destroyed by fire. Although tragic, plans were made immediately to rebuild an even better church. Construction started in 1946 and was completed in 1947 – SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO. During this coming year we will share more information about the building of the magnificent church sanctuary that we appreciate today that was consecrated on November 16, 1947.

The architect selected to design our current church was Lawrence Cone. Lawrence Karekin Condrajian was born in Istanbul on July 20, 1888. In 1911 he emigrated to the United States. He changed his last name to Cone in the mid-1920s. In 1912, a Fresno architect encouraged him to design the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church. Cone was Fresno's first Armenian architect. Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church was the first church built in the tradition of Armenian church architecture in the United States.

Armenian church architecture has long been recognized as the first church architecture to reflect a unique style. In designing this church, Cone followed very closely the style of old Armenian churches in Armenia and Turkey from the fourth to seventeenth centuries. (Etchmiadzin Cathedral, 4th century; St. Hripsime church, 7th century; and Aghtamar Holy Cross church, 10th century)

Although there are older churches in the United States used for Armenian services, Holy Trinity, and St. Mary Yettem are unique in that the older churches were either existing church structures not built for Armenians or built by Armenians with no reference to Armenian church architecture.

St. Mary Yettem is indeed unique in many ways!

Myron Sheklian
Parish Council Chair



LADIES SOCIETY NEWS

The Ladies Society held our Executive Board and General monthly meetings February 5. Thank you to Debbie Sheklian for chairing the luncheon committee on short notice. We were finally able to enjoy the menu planned by Margie L. last month which didn't happen – Covid again.

We all know the bazaar in December was a spirited, resounding success. Due in large part to everyone's generosity in donations and bids at this event, the Ladies Society was able to fulfill over two-thirds of our yearly obligation to the Parish Council already.

We are hosting a mid-Lenten luncheon, called a Meechink (meecheen [միջին] means median in Armenian). We invite all to join us in the church hall after church on March 27 to enjoy this special fellowship.

Women's World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement of Christian women. Although the essential purpose of the day is for prayer, the day can also provide women with an opportunity to strengthen their ties with other Christian women as they pray together. For us, our Ladies Society Central Council is hosting Women's Prayer Day on March 2 this year. The guest speaker is Der Vasken Movsesian. His theme is "Loss and Resilience." We can drive down to Burbank or meet at our church hall at 10:30 and watch via Western Diocese Facebook page. The flyer appears in this bulletin.

We are trying to schedule the ever-popular Paint Nite. Gina Ananian is pursuing artists who hold these events. They guide us to produce our own paintings. It's great fun. Gina may be able to plan this with a new artist whose business goes by the name of Lushy Brushy. (Not made up.)

Birthdays celebrated in March are Annie Davidian, Elizabeth Ananian, Linda Farsakian-Wall, Michelle Ananian, and Lucille Margosian.

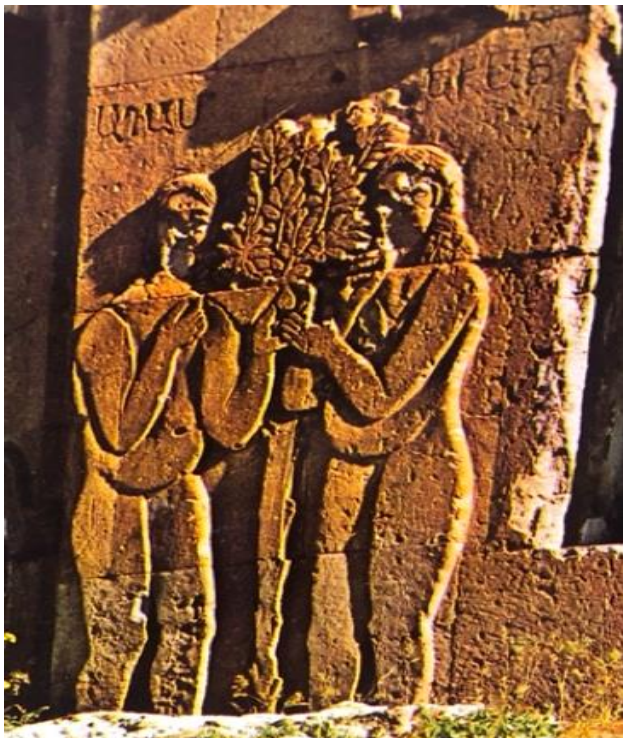
Mari Louise Menendian
Ladies Society Chair, 2022

NATURE AND FASTING

In the fifth century, the Armenian Catholicos Hovhannes Mandakuni wrote a beautiful treatise called “On Love and Sanctity Whereby Creatures Prosper.” There, he compared the fruit from the Tree of Life to communion, the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Filled with the images of flowing water and green, blooming, life in the Garden of Eden, Mandakuni’s text connects the importance of fasting to the renewal not only of our souls but to the health of the whole world.

While we often think about fasting in connection to deprivation, or perhaps with St. Gregory the Illuminator as a process that helps calm the storms of our lives, there is another line of thinking about fasting in the Armenian Church: one that focuses on renewal. Remarkably, this renewal is described not just as a relationship between humans and God, but as a renewal of the whole world!

On **Wednesday, March 9th**, Dr. Christopher Sheklian will give a talk on “Nature and Fasting” following the Peace Hour in the sanctuary of St. Mary Armenian Church of Yetteem. The is a meditation on our Lenten practice of fasting and the connection of fasting to nature and the renewal of the whole world, drawing on the ancient wisdom of the Armenian Church.



ACCIDENT

On Saturday February 5, 2022, shortly after most of the participants left the Ladies Society meeting, a drunk driver slammed into the northeast corner of our sanctuary staircase.

The driver was traveling at a high rate of speed southbound on Road 144 and failed to notice the stop ahead and a car waiting at the intersection. The driver then swerved further to the East blowing past the stopped vehicle, across Ave 384, plowing through the cyclone fence and bushes and then coming to an abrupt stop when hitting the cement steps leading into the vestry. A female passenger in the vehicle was taken by ambulance to the hospital for a broken foot. The unlicensed and uninsured driver was not injured and was arrested with a blood alcohol level of .15.

The Parish Council will be working with our insurance company (\$1000 deductible) to authorize and then make the necessary repairs. We will also continue our work with Caltrans to plead for additional safety measures to protect our property.



ACYO

ACYO meeting will be held on **Sunday, March 27th after church services.**

WAYS AND MEANS

The Ways and Means next meeting is not until **Thursday, April 28th via Zoom at 7 PM.**

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council's next meeting will be held via Zoom on **Thursday, March 24th at 6 PM.**

MEECHINK (MID-LENT) FELLOWSHIP

Ladies Society will be hosting a Meechink fellowship on **Sunday, March 27th after church services.**

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School meets on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, September – June. All children welcome!

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Can you speak Armenian? Armenian Language classes are held on **Tuesdays during Lent at 7 PM.** The short 15-20 minute classes will be on Zoom and will teach simple conversational Armenian. Please call the church office or Der Mashdots for information and/or sign up.

RAFFLE

Our second church raffle of 2022 will be held on **Sunday, February 27th after church services.** The drawing will also be streamed on Facebook. 474 St. Mary Yettem Raffle tickets have been sold to date. These are great odds to win something. If you would like tickets, contact Tina at (559) 967-2593 by phone or text.

BULLETIN SPONSORSHIP

If you would like to sponsor either the weekly bulletin for a minimum donation of \$25 or the monthly bulletin for a minimum donation of \$200, please call the church office at (559) 528-6892.

ALL services are livestreamed on our webpage at www.stmaryyettem.org. Click the link on the "camera tab" to watch services. The Holy Badarak is streamed on our Facebook page each Sunday beginning at **10:15 AM.**

NEW ST. MARY FACEBOOK PAGE

We are in the process of moving our church Facebook account to a new location to better serve the needs of our parish. You can search the new site by searching SaintMary YettemChurch. We hope that you will friend us on our new page soon. The old page will be shut down after Easter.

DONATIONS

Expenses continue during this difficult time. Checks may be mailed to the church office, or you may access PayPal through the St. Mary Yettem website (www.stmaryyettem.org). You may donate for General Donations, Yughakins, Pledges, Membership Dues, In Lieu of Flowers, or pay for Altar Flowers you have ordered for the church altar.

Please inform Father Mashdots of those who may be sick at home, hospitalized or may need special prayers. Der Hayr is available for pastoral care, spiritual guidance, and support.

COOKBOOK

A second edition of the "Treasured Recipes from the Garden of Eden" has been made available. These cookbooks make a great gift. If you are interested in purchasing a copy, call the church office at (559) 528-6892 or Debbie Sheklian at (559) 733-4417. The cost of the cookbook is \$30 or \$30 plus shipping if mailed.

ST. MARY MEMORIAL WALL

The St. Mary Memorial Wall was started in 2001 and has been a huge success. Currently there is **space for 28 additional names** at a **donation of \$200/name.** Contact Jim Soxman: ph. 559-936-2227 or email: jimbeasoxman@sbcglobal.net.

PAYPAL

You may access PayPal through the St. Mary Yettem website (www.stmaryyettem.org) and click on the "Donation" button on the bottom of the Home Page. You may donate for general donations, yughakins, hokehankists, pledges, membership dues, in lieu of flowers, or pay for altar flowers you have ordered on behalf of the church

MARCH 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Souper Supper at 5:30 PM Lenten Service at 6:15 PM	3	4	5 Ladies Society meeting in the Majarian Hall at 11: 30 AM
6 2 nd Sunday of the Lent (Expulsion)	7	8	9 Souper Supper at 5:30 PM Lenten Service at 6:15 PM/Dr. Christopher Sheklian	10	11	12
13 3 rd Sunday of the Lent (Prodigal Son) Sunday School Children Sermon 3 rd Raffle drawing Daylight Savings	14	15	16 Souper Supper at 5:30 PM Lenten Service at 6:15 PM	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19
20 4 th Sunday of the Lent (Steward)	21	22	23 Median day of Lent Souper Supper at 5:30 PM Lenten Service at 6:15 PM	24 Parish Council meeting via Zoom at 6 PM	25	26 Forty Martyrs of Sebastia
27 5 th Sunday of the Lent (Judge) Sunday School Ladies Society (Meechink) Mid-Lent Fellowship ACYO meeting after church services	28	29	30 Souper Supper at 5:30 PM Lenten Service at 6:15 PM	31		

9

Sunday Schedule:

Morning Service (Matins) 9:30 AM
Divine Liturgy 10:15 AM

Office Hours

**Tuesday – Friday
9:30 AM to 2:30 PM**

Father Mashdots can be reached at:

559-528-6892 – Office
559-528-6897 – FAX
818-293-9098 - Cell



Ladies Society Featured Member

Bea Mikaelian Soxman

Beatrice (Anahid) Mikaelian Soxman was born May 11, 1941, in Visalia, California. Her parents were Hacher and Takouhi Mikaelian, who themselves were from Chomaklou, Turkey, coming to Yetem to be among so many of their compatriots from the same village. Bea was their youngest child. She spent her childhood on the family farm in Monson helping box raisins, irrigate, as well as other farmer chores. She could be seen, at the age of 9, driving a tractor to the Monson store to pick up items there.

Bea attended Armenian School in Yetem, the Monson-Sultana School, and Dinuba High School. She played clarinet in the Dinuba High Band. She could always be found attending the Yetem Sunday School classes. She sang in the church choir and was a member of ACYO. After high school she attended Fresno State College and graduated in 1964 with a major in business. While at Fresno State she met Jim. Romance blossomed, and they were married in the St. Mary Armenian Church, Yetem, shortly after graduation. The couple both started teaching at Orosi High School three weeks after the wedding.

Jim and Bea welcomed two daughters, Donna in 1969, and Tracy in 1971. Bea took the next few years off from teaching to care for the girls but returned to teach at Mt. Whitney High School in Visalia. When Golden West High School opened, she moved there to become Business Department Chairperson. She finished her educational career as Vocational Director/Administrator for the Visalia Unified District. Bea was always a strong supporter and advocate for vocational education. She has shelves full of awards and certificates of recognition and appreciation for service to students and the schools. These honors come from the California Assembly, Visalia School District, Golden West FFA, and others for her work in advancing career education for students.

Her leadership talents were not confined to education. The church was the main recipient of her dedication to serve. She was a Sunday School Superintendent, a member of AGBU, Mr. and Mrs. Club, Ways and Means, Ladies Society, and of course, the Parish Council. She served many years as Parish Council Chairperson and could always be found at church functions making sure everything went well.

Bea's extended family are pillars of the Yetem community. Her mother Takouhie was sister to Haig Sheklian. Bea has admirably followed in her footsteps and carved her own path along the way. She brought her husband Jim Soxman into the fold, and he has embraced the Yetem community and church and contributed in incalculable ways. Her daughters Donna and Tracy continue her legacy.

How fortunate we are to have Bea among us all these years. Beatrice Anahid Mikaelian Soxman was truly an Armenian Daughter of Yetem.

Women's Prayer Day
Wednesday March 2, 2022 10:30 AM
St. Leon Cathedral



Under the Auspices of his Eminence
Archbishop Hovnan Derderian
And Hosted by
Ladies Central Council Committee

Guest Speaker Rev. Fr. Vasken Movsesian to Address
This Year's Topic "Loss and Resilience"



Church Services Will be Followed by Fellowship And a Group Picture





Saint Mary Yettem ACYO

Annual Easter Luncheon

Sunday, April 17, 2022

Immediately following church services in the Majarian Hall

**Delicious 'Filet' Beef Kebab
Salad, Pilaf, Green Beans, Cheese Borag,
Bread, Dessert and Beverages**



Adults: \$20 per adult

Children 10 and under: \$15 per child

For Reservations:

Call the Church Office—(559) 528-6892 •

E-mail—lunches@stmaryyettem.org

Reserved Seating is available with your advance payment

Fill out the bottom portion (front and back) and
send with your payment by Tuesday, April 12, 2022 to:
ACYO—936 W. Hemlock Avenue, Visalia, CA 93277



ACYO Easter Luncheon—Reservations with Advance Payment

NAME _____ Phone # _____

_____ **Yes, I will attend the ACYO Easter Luncheon.**

Adult Ticket(s): _____ @ \$20 = \$ _____

Children Ticket(s): _____ @ \$15 = \$ _____

My check is enclosed Payable to St. Mary ACYO for \$ _____

A table of Eight (8) can be reserved—if more seats are needed on the table please specify.

Please list the people you are paying for
and/or would like to sit with on **the back of this paper.**

Are you lucky?? Tricky Tray Basket Raffle

“Unique, Fun and Useful” items
will be available to try your luck!

\$15.00 for 26 tickets

If you would like to donate a basket for the Tricky Tray

Please Call/Text/E-mail — Lauren or Ani Valencia

Lauren—559-349-4647 • Ani—559-779-7705

laurenvalencia@mail.fresnostate.edu • anivalencia19@gmail.com

-OR- bring your item(s) the day of the luncheon!

- Basket Ideas -

Movie Night

Coffee Lovers

Dinner Out on the Town

Cross/Religious

Gift Cards

Bakers Delight

Princess/Barbie Items

Cars/Tractor Items

Armenian Treasures

Easter Luncheon—Table #1.

1. _____

5. _____

2. _____

6. _____

3. _____

7. _____

4. _____

8. _____

Easter Luncheon—Table #2.

1. _____

5. _____

2. _____

6. _____

3. _____

7. _____

4. _____

8. _____

Sponsored by the St. Mary Yettem
Ways and Means Committee



Palm Sunday

BAKE SALE

After Church Services

Sunday, April 10, 2022

Choreg

Simit

Nazook

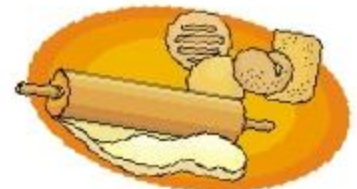
Gata

Kataifi

Bread Sticks

Plus many more

Homemade Baked Goods



****SUPPORT the Ways and Means Bake Sale****

**Donations of any Armenian Baked Goods or
Specialty Desserts will be greatly
appreciated and accepted
the day of the Bake Sale.**

Text or Call Judy Skaff—(559) 799-1198

(Continued from the front page)

of Armenia provides the details of the well-known story of St. Gregory the Illuminator and the conversion of Armenia in 301 A.D., the first mass conversion of Armenians to Christianity was preceded by a long sermon of instruction given by St. Gregory: a catechism! This catechism, one of the foundations of Armenian Christianity, is available as a stand-alone English translation by Robert Thomson, published by St. Nersess Armenian Seminary as *The Teaching of St. Gregory*. Reading the foundational catechism of the Armenian Church during the penitential period leading up to Easter would make for a beautiful Lenten practice.

Early Armenian Christian theologians understood the intertwined importance of catechism and penance in the period leading up to Lent so well that they did something quite remarkable with the Armenian Church calendar. Every day of the year there is a set of readings from the Bible. The calendar of readings sets the Gospel reading we hear every *Badarak* on Sunday, but it also has readings for the rest of the days of week. During Lent, there is a beautiful extra devotional practice hidden just under the surface of the daily readings. For many of the days of Lent, the daily Bible readings are the same readings used by the fourth century Bishop of Jerusalem, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his own *Catechetical Lectures*. These sermons, delivered during Lent of 349 A.D., are the most famous example of catechesis, preparing people for baptism on Easter, in the history of the Christian Church. When the early Armenian translators and theologians set the Armenian calendar, they embedded the readings St. Cyril used for his sermons in the calendar of readings for Lent. So, in addition to *The Teaching of St. Gregory*, we have another possible devotion for Great Lent: we can read the sermons of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, alongside the Bible readings for the day, on the day of Lent when those readings are given in the Armenian Church Calendar. St. Cyril's sermons can be found online (<https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3101.htm>) or in several nice, published books. To see exactly how the sermons line up with the Armenian Calendar, visit <https://vemkar.us/prayer/calendars-and-catechesis/>

May all our Lenten journeys be fulfilling, as we prepare ourselves, through catechesis and penance, to encounter the great mystery of salvation, the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday!

Dr. Christopher N. Sheklian – Postdoctoral Researchers, Radboud University - Netherlands

St. Mary Armenian Church
P.O. Box 367
Yetter, California 93670
Return Service Required

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No.1