



# YETTEM ՄԳՄՍ



Հրատարակութիւն Եղեմի Ս. Աստուածածին Հայաստանեայց Եկեղեցւոյ  
A Publication of St. Mary Armenian Church Yettem, California  
Rev. Fr. Mashdots Keshishian, Parish Priest

## November 2023

Why are we supposed to give thanks for everything?

In a very practical section of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he encourages his readers to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18). In the immediate context, he had exhorted them to rejoice always (verse 16) and to pray without ceasing (verse 17). These are recognizable characteristics of a person who is encouraged and growing in his or her faith. The first two are easy enough to understand, being joyful and prayerful are not complex ideas. But Paul's instruction that the Thessalonian believers should give thanks in everything presents a unique challenge.

It is worth noting that Paul doesn't tell them to give thanks for everything. The preposition used in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 is the Greek *en*, which is best translated by the English preposition *in*. Paul isn't telling them they must be thankful for the difficulties they were encountering; instead, he is challenging them to be thankful in any circumstance. Paul recognized that the secret of contentment isn't found in circumstances. Rather, there is contentment in recognizing it is Christ who strengthens us for whatever we might face (Philippians 4:11-13).

It is also evident that God allows things in our lives to help us grow to be more like Christ, in fact, that pursuit (Christlikeness) is the primary purpose God has for us in sanctification (being set apart or holy). If God works all things together for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28) and that good is that we would be more like Christ (verse 29), then we can expect that He even uses hardship in our lives to help shape us to be more like Him. Because He works for that purpose in our lives, we can be filled with gratitude, knowing that there is purpose even in the difficulties we can't understand.

(Continued on the back page)

## **Parish Notes**

### **CONDOLENCES**

On behalf of our St. Mary Parish family, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Charles (Buck), Lori, Chareena and Chloe Sarabian on the recent passing of Buck's mother, **Virginia Sarabian** on Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Services were held on Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at Holy Trinity in Fresno. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Sarabian family.

### **CONGRATULATIONS**

Our St. Mary Parish family would like to congratulate John and Brooke (Bedrosian) Lopez on the birth of their son, **Brody Bedros** who was **born** on **October 5<sup>th</sup>**. Proud grandparents are George and Gail Bedrosian and Juan and Mayra Lopez.

### **ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS**

October 1<sup>st</sup>

**The Nunes, Kazarian, Zakarian,  
and Fernandes Families**

in honor of their parents and grandparents,  
Abe and Margaret Kazarian

October 8<sup>th</sup>

**Mari Louise Menendian**  
in memory of Jim McOmish

October 15<sup>th</sup>

**The Sheklian Family,  
Richard, Kohar, JoAnn,  
Michael and Brenda**  
in memory of their parents,  
Hamayag (Haig) and Bertha Sheklian

October 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Jim Soxman, Donna, Tracy, and their families**  
in memory of Beatrice (Anahid) Soxman

**Myron and Debbie Sheklian**  
in memory of Rosie Sheklian

### **MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS**

**DeAnn Farris**

in memory of Sark and Sylvia Davidian,  
son, Garitt Davidian, and  
Harry and Anna Kaloustian

**Rich and Janice McWilliams**  
in memory of Laura Davidian

### **HOKEHANKIST REQUESTS**

October 1<sup>st</sup>

**Abe and Margaret Kazarian**  
requested by  
The Nunes, Kazarian, Zakarian,  
and Fernandes Families

October 8<sup>th</sup>

**Jim McOmish**  
eight years after his passing,  
requested by Mari Louise Menendian

October 15<sup>th</sup>

**Bertha Sheklian**  
five years after her passing,  
**Hamayag (Haig) Sheklian**  
fifty-nine years after his passing,  
requested by The Sheklian Family,  
Richard, Kohar, JoAnn, Michael and Brenda

**Sylvia Davidian**

eight years after her passing,  
**Yervant Derderian**  
sixty-one years after his passing on October 15<sup>th</sup>,  
requested by  
Margie L. Davidian and Kathy Ashford

October 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Beatrice (Anahid) Soxman**  
forty days after her passing,  
requested by  
Jim Soxman, Donna, Tracy, and their families

**Rosie Sheklian**

five years after her passing,  
requested by  
Myron and Debbie Sheklian

**Oganes Oganessian**

**Hakop Oganessian**  
**Vartuhi Oganessian**  
**Bedros Stambouljian**  
**Lucine Stambouljian**

requested by  
Anoush Oganessian

October 29<sup>th</sup>

**Rosemary Kutumian Redman**  
four years after her passing,  
requested by her loving girlfriends,  
Kohar and JoAnn Sheklian

**HOKEHANKIST DONATIONS**

(September 25<sup>th</sup> - October 26<sup>th</sup>)

October 15<sup>th</sup>

**For Repose of Sylvia Davidian's Soul**

Margie L. Davidian and Kathy Ashford

**For Repose of Yervant Derderian's Soul**

Margie L. Davidian and Kathy Ashford

October 22<sup>nd</sup>

**For Repose of Beatrice (Anahid) Soxman's Soul**

Robert and Debra Agnew and Family

Rose Marie Margosian

Pierre and Melissa Pilavian and Family

Darrell and Tina Peters and Family

David and Patti Sarabian

**For Repose of Rosie Sheklian's Soul**

Myron and Debbie Sheklian

**For Repose of Oganeg Oganessian, Hakop**

**Oganessian, Vartuhi Oganessian, Bedros**

**Stamboulian, Lucine Stamboulian Souls**

Anoush Oganessian

**RAFFLE**

Our November raffle drawing of 2023 will be held on **Sunday, November 12<sup>th</sup>**. The drawing will also be streamed on Facebook. Thank you to our Ways and Means Committee for this great fundraiser for our church.

**BIBLE STUDY**

Bible Study will resume on **Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>** via Zoom at **7 PM**. Please contact Father Mashdots at the church office if you have questions. The reoccurring Zoom link for these meetings will be: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81370674288?pwd=VjFMSEpQWHJkaXNMYzNlNlNWYlOTVTQT09>  
Meeting ID: 813 7067 4288  
Passcode: 000070

**WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

The Ways and Means Committee meeting will be held via Zoom on **Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 PM**.

**LADIES SOCIETY**

The Ladies Society **Keshkeg/Elections** meeting will be held on **Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup>** in the **Majarian Hall at 11:30 AM**.

**PARISH COUNCIL**

The Parish Council's next meeting will be held via Zoom on **Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM**.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday School meets on the **second and fourth Sundays** of each month, September-June. All children are welcome! If you have any questions, please call **Adrienne Poochigian** at (559) 679-8452 or email: [alskaff@gmail.com](mailto:alskaff@gmail.com)

**CHRISTMAS DECORATING**

If anyone would like help with Christmas decorating, inside or out, please call the church office at (559) 528-6892.

**WEEKLY EMAIL UPDATE**

If you would like to have your email address added to our weekly update email blasts, please call the church office or email [sonya@stmaryettem.org](mailto:sonya@stmaryettem.org).



Tired of that old boat? That tractor not run like it used to? Need to get that old car/truck out of your driveway? Donate them to our church. Donating is easy. Pick-up is free. Call Linda Farsakian-Wall at 559-786-1419 for details.

**BULLETIN SPONSORSHIP**

If you are interested in **sponsoring a monthly bulletin** or a **weekly bulletin**, please call the church office at (559) 528-6892. **Sponsorships are a good way to remember or honor family members or friends. Sponsorships for the weekly bulletin are \$25 or more and a \$250 minimum donation for the monthly bulletin.**

**ST. MARY MEMORIAL WALL**

The St. Mary Memorial Wall was started in 2001 and has been a huge success. The original wall is completely filled. **Two new columns** were recently **added**. This will make room for an **additional 96 names** at a **donation of \$250/name**. Contact Linda Farsakian-Wall: at (559) 786-1419 or email: [linda.hyewall@gmail.com](mailto:linda.hyewall@gmail.com)

# ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH

NOVEMBER 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Bible Study via Zoom at 7 PM	2 Ways and Means Committee meeting via Zoom at 7:00 PM	3	4 All Saints' Day The Ladies Society Keshkeg/Elections luncheon meeting in the Majarian Hall at 11:30 AM
5 24 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Enthronement of H.H. Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians Daylight Savings Time ends	6	7	8	9	10	11 Holy Archangels Gabriel & Michael Veteran's Day
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Sunday School Children's Sermon Raffle Drawing				The Parish Council meeting via Zoom at 6 PM		Sts. Andrew & Phillip, Apostoles
19 Barekendan of the Fast of Advent	20	21 Presentation of the Holy Mother-of- God to the Temple	22	23 Thanksgiving Day	24	25
26 Sunday School	27	28	29	30		

**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

## Stewardship is a Badarak

*I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. (Phil. 4:18).*

One day, an angel appeared to a man and said: “Tell me, what can I do for you?” The man answered, “Show me the Wall Street Journal one year from today so I will know where to invest and become a multimillionaire.” As strange as the request was, the angel snapped his finger, and out of nowhere, a Wall Street Journal issue from the following year appeared. The man eagerly started to flip the pages, taking note of all the stocks and their future values. But then something unexpected happened when he flipped to another page. It appeared as if lightning had struck the man, his facial expression changed, and tears began to roll from his eyes. On that page, what he came across was his own obituary.

How would we act, and what would we request if we met an angel willing to fulfill any wish we had? Would we ask for gold, silver and wealth, or perhaps for something entirely different? Money is undoubtedly essential in securing the safety and well-being of our families. And, of course, it is quite normal to turn to God for help and guidance in times of financial crises and hardship. But how often do we pause and reflect on the spiritual importance of money in our life and not what God can do for us but instead, what we can do for God.

In reading from St. Paul’s letter to Philippians, we find an interesting perspective of money and stewardship, one that probably we have not considered before. In his letter, the apostle thanking Philippians for their financial contribution and stewardship calls it “a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God” (Phil. 4:18). The ancient classical Armenian translation uses the word ‘Badarak’ here, calling their sacrifice and stewardship “Պատարագ ընդունելի” Badarak ountuneli. But wait a minute, how exactly is our stewardship a fragrant offering, a badarak acceptable and pleasing God?

Badarak is the celebration of God’s ultimate sacrifice, when His only begotten Son was crucified for the salvation of humanity. It is an eternal reminder that God gave His very best, His own son for us. Our stewardship is transformed into a fragrant, God-pleasing Badarak when we contribute from the financial resources we work so hard to earn. Both Badarak and stewardship are called to be joyful encounters with the divine. We rejoice during Badarak when Christ is revealed among us through His life-giving body and blood and we are invited to give, pledge and support joyfully the ministries that proclaim the Gospel in the life of our community. Badarak and stewardship are both corporate acts in nature. We come together every Sunday to pray together for each other, and we also give together for the same common good and goal that supports the mission and ministries of our parish. Badarak and stewardship are both instruments of Divine mercy. We are healed and made whole through the Eucharist, and through our stewardship, we ensure that our church remains relevant and vibrant for all the members of our community by spreading hope, love, and healing to everyone in need and support.

Fr. Vosgi



# Christmas Bazaar



**Ladies Society's  
Annual Holiday Bazaar**  
*Sunday, December 10th*  
following Divine Liturgy



**Live auction!  
Bake sale!  
Kufta sale!  
Lunch!**



*Thank you to all for your support!*



# Making Kofta for the Bazaar



(Continued from the front page)

In Romans 5:3 Paul uses even stronger language than he uses in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 he explains that we can exult or rejoice even in suffering because of what the suffering produces in us. Suffering brings perseverance, perseverance develops proven or tested character, character that has been tested develops hope; and God's kind of hope never disappoints. If God can use suffering and trials that way, to help us mature, then those experiences are worth it. Like Paul encourages the Corinthians, the momentary afflictions we encounter in this life are producing what he calls an "eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17). Paul adds that the sufferings we encounter today are nothing compared to the glory we will see in the future (Romans 8:18). In other words, it is all worth it.

If we have this kind of big-picture perspective, we can give thanks in everything because we understand how God is using those things in our lives to grow us now and in the future. Jesus illustrates the principle for His disciples in John 16:21: the pain of childbirth is exceedingly severe, and during labor it might not seem worth it at all. But when a mother holds her newborn, she is no longer considering the pain but only the joy that has been produced. In the same way, we can give thanks in all things, knowing that the difficulties, hardships, and sufferings are like the pains of labor, and that the outcome of proven character and certain hope is like holding the newborn baby. There is power in understanding what God has revealed about how He causes us to grow. His methods may be painful at times (see Hebrews 12:7–11), but the outcome is the peaceful fruit of righteousness. When our perspective is informed by His Word, giving thanks in everything makes perfect sense.

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P.O. Box 367  
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