

Diocesan Delegate Report

The 115th Diocesan Assembly took place May 4-6, 2017 in Palm Harbor, FL and was hosted by St. Hagop Armenian Church in Pinellas Park, FL. St Sarkis was represented at the Diocesan Assmebly by Fr. Ghevond Ajemian as pastor, Lusine Meeks as chairwoman of the parish council, and Dn. Daron Bolat as Diocesan Delegate.

The Diocesan Council presented the strategic plan, which included deepening the faith experience of our Armenian church community. This will be achieved by enhancing the worship experience, providing outreach to all members of the Armenian community, and promoting a the biblical concept of stewardship among the parishes. The council reported that in 2016 there was a shortfall of \$119,114.00. The development plan was also discussed which included a campaign to increase the endowment of the diocese by \$10 million to ensure the financial health of the diocese going forward.

The auditing committee raised concerns regarding the inventory and insurance of donated artwork by Arshile Gorky. The artwork was donated to the Diocese and is currently on exhibit at the Gulbenkian museum in Lisbon, Portugal.

A presentation was made by the Diocesan Creative Ministries team, which produces short films to educate people about Armenian Christian Faith. As of the assembly, the videos had 43,000 views on Facebook. The website www.breadandsalt.org was introduced, which has videos and other educational materials.

New business included a presentation of the committee to research the National Ecclesiastical Assembly. There was also discussion regarding bylaws proposed by the Holy See of Etchmiadzin to have universal bylaws for all dioceses of the Armenian Church worldwide. There were concerns from some delegates about whether or not the diocese complying with international bylaws could potentially risk the tax-exempt status of the Diocese with the State of New York. There was a motion made to engage an independent law firm to determine how changed to the diocesan bylaws as proposed by the Holy See of Ethmiadzin may affect the nonprofit status of the Diocese. The motion passed.

Lucine Meeks made a bid for St Sarkis to host the 2020 diocesan assembly. Daron Bolat spoke in favor of the bid stating that smaller Parishes, especially those that are geographically further from the Diocese like St Sarkis, don't feel a part of the diocese. The opportunity to host an event with such significance would provide a great chance to make the Parish feel like part of the Diocese and for the Assembly to know that our Diocese does not just encompass the New York area. The bid was approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dn. Daron Bolat