

## NEWS FROM ALL OVER

NEW MATERIALS READY FOR YOU THIS MONTH are the following: "Hayr Mer Coloring Packet" for children young enough to enjoy coloring, contains fifteen illustrations of the phrases of the prayer to be colored, plus the Armenian letters to be traced or colored in, with transliteration in smaller letters and on the back of each page some suggestions for an adult to discuss each picture with the children. This lovely packet was created for the CRE by Barbara M. Hovsepien, a former CRE member who teaches church school at St. Mary Armenian Church in Livingston. Thank you, Barbara. (Order the packet from the Diocesan Bookstore—price \$1.25).

"Set of Six Puzzles" for 5th and 7th graders. Word puzzles (5 copies of each) plus answers and explanation. Reviews material in *Time with God*; useful for all three grades. \$1.50 from the Diocesan Bookstore. There is also a set available for 8th grade and above.

"The Priesthood", our newest adult education pamphlet. 5¢ per copy from the Bookstore.

TWO MIDWEST PARISHES (Racine and Cleveland) have had a fruitful experience in using the adult education program prepared by Deacon Michael Chevian, called "The Christian Community." Average attendance at the weekly sessions in both parishes has been about 25, with participants requesting more such programs.

A FIRST GRADE TEACHER, Mrs. Mary Ann Gelenian, would like to hear from anyone who can offer suggestions of projects involving making models of an Armenian Church, figures of a priest and deacon, or anything that would help young children learn about the church and the services. She would like any ideas for projects to accompany her textbook, *Living in God's World*. Write to Mrs. Gelenian in care of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, R.I. 02908.

Gregory's release, of course, began the momentous events of the conversion of Armenia. At interesting figure here is Drtad, who had such a complete and wonderful change of heart. Students might be interested in comparing him to St. Paul, who had been a persecutor of Christians but, at one moment of confrontation with Christ, became His ardent follower.

### 28th—Feast of the Catholic Church of Holy Etchmiadzin

Etchmiadzin was built on the site where St. Gregory had a vision of Christ, indicating the place where He wished the church to be built. Etchmiadzin means "where the Only-Begotten Descended".

But this feast celebrates more than the construction of a building, as is shown by the word "catholic", a most important and widely-

misunderstood word. In the Nicene Creed we say that we believe in "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church." Catholic here means both universal and also complete, lacking nothing. The one Church of Christ has those qualities.

Christ wanted His Church to be united, but human weakness has caused divisions in the Church on earth. When the huge split came between the Eastern Church and the Western Church, the Western Church with its center in Rome declared itself to be the one true Church and took the word "catholic" to describe itself.

This of course is not correct, because the West has separated itself from the East and cannot be the one true Church—the one true Church is the whole Church, united. So as Christians we must pray for the unity of all Church members, and in celebrating this feast we remember that Etchmiadzin and the Armenian Church are part of the one true Church of the Creed.

## MAY FEAST DAYS....and teaching suggestions

### 4th—Ascension of Christ

Read the account of this event in Acts 1:1-14 with the students, and point out that we celebrate it forty days after Easter because the Bible says that this is the number of days during which Jesus appeared to people after the Resurrection.

Ask them how they think the disciples felt when Jesus ascended: sorry they would not see Him, eager to start their work, apprehensive about the difficulties that probably they knew lay ahead?

You might also want to look at the Creed, which tells us that Christ ascended “with the same body”, and that He will come with the same body. Students should know that this coming again refers to the Second Coming; the next time Christ comes He will be recognizable, in the same body, but He will come as judge of the whole world, with the glory of the Father. All will know who He is; all will be judged by Him.

### 14th—Pentecost

Read about Pentecost with the students in Acts 2:1-21. This, of course, was the real beginning of apostolic preaching and hence of the Christian Church. There are several important aspects to Pentecost; choose the ones you want to discuss according to the age level of the students you’re addressing:

First, we see that the principle of *people hearing the Word in their own daily language* was established when the Church was. It is curious how often we forget that principle today.

Second, the “speaking in tongues” here was so that people could understand; it was not unintelligible.

Third, when we call the Armenian Church apostolic it is partly because the power of the Holy Spirit given to the apostles is also given to the Church which they helped to establish by their work. We believe that the Holy Spirit is present in the Christian Church, which is why we come together there and try to bring others to the Church.

Young students may be intrigued by the idea of the Church being “born” on Pentecost, and could plan a celebration for this day.

### 21st—Prophet Elijah

For information on Elijah, check the fifth grade CRE text, *Time with God*. Notice with students that the Old Testament prophets are given feast

days in the Church, because they are so important. (This of course is because they were preparing people for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.)

It might be a good opportunity to review what a prophet is: a person who gives God’s message, sometimes a hard job because people don’t want to hear it. Make sure students know that a prophet does not “predict the future” like a fortune teller; when a prophet tells what will happen it is more like the kind of thing we mean when we say something like, “If little Johnny doesn’t learn now that he can’t always scream and get his own way, he’ll be very spoiled and unpopular when he grows up.”

### 22nd—Saint Rhipsime and her Companions

### 23rd—Saint Gayane and her Companions

Under the reign of the Emperor Diocletian in Rome, Christians were persecuted and routinely tortured. A group of Christian maidens, under the guidance of their leader Gayane, fled to Armenia in order to escape these persecutions. Among them was the unusually beautiful Rhipsime, whom King Drtad fell in love with and asked to marry him. Consecrated as she was to God’s service, Rhipsime refused, knowing that she could not marry a pagan. Drtad’s violent anger at her refusal increased when Gayane would not encourage her to meet his demands. Both women and their companions were put to death by his order.

Here is what the Church sings about the virgins: “The pure virgins, who waited for the bridegroom, are adorned with crowns. They arise like the sun, and shine forth like the day-star.” This *sharagan* shows that the Church knows the joy of love for Christ, even at the cost of martyrdom. These martyrs had a greater crown than Drtad’s.

Girls with the names of these martyrs celebrate their name days.

### 27th—St. Gregory’s Deliverance from the Pit

After King Drtad had imprisoned Gregory for many years and killed the Christian maidens (for the same reason—they were staunch Christians) he became desperately ill. His sister finally persuaded him to release Gregory, who was able to cure him and who ultimately baptized him and the royal family. It was during Gregory’s last year in the pit that the maidens were martyred, and upon his release he sought out their relics and buried them, building shrines on the sites where they were buried.