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St. Vartan & St. Valentine: Two Saints, One Love

Growing up I had the privilege to attend an Armenian School, which in addition to the benefits of learning the language, culture and history, for any elementary school student also meant that you had Armenian Holidays off school in addition to the National holidays that the rest of the schools had off. February was always a special month, since in addition to getting President's Day off as a long weekend we would also get Vartanantz off shortly thereafter, and with the month only averaging about 28 days, it felt like we were off school just as much as we had to go to school, at least for that month.

I remember the school bulletin board being decorated with Hearts and Cupid for Valentine's day on one side and with St. Vartan and the Martyrs fighting the Persians on the other side. I would often think how strange it was to be celebrating Love on one side and Death and Martyrdom on the other all in one month. But as I've grown older I see that these two holidays are appropriately matched. I am reminded of the Apostle Paul's words about love in I Corinthians 13 ***“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”*** And he concludes in this way ***“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”***

St. Vartan and the Martyrs fought and died for the faith that they had, they had a hope that their deaths would not be in vain and ultimately their sacrifice for me is a true example of love. They took St. Paul's words to

heart and acted out of love, which ***“Always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”*** They lived and died by Jesus' example and understood that He is the ultimate example of love in this world. ***“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” (1 John 3:16)***. They knew that real love meant sacrifice and love would cost them something.

Our modern celebration of Valentine's Day seems trite and syrupy. It reflects the surface and base emotion of love and not its deep solid core. It is easy to keep love at this surface level and not let it penetrate our deepest soul. C.S. Lewis has this to say about love in his book *The Four Loves* ***“Of all the arguments against love none makes so strong an appeal to my nature as ‘Careful! This might lead you to suffering.’ There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable.”*** Love is not the absence of suffering, but in suffering love can be manifest. Love is considered great because it risks much and if we want to experience love to its fullest and deepest we must expose ourselves and be vulnerable. This is true in our relationship with God and with each other. St. Vartan and the Martyrs knew that acting out of their love for God would cost them dearly, and even in the face of suffering they chose to love God more than their lives. So what have you loved recently? And more importantly how have you loved? Did it cost you something? Did it make you vulnerable? If not, then it is not a true and deep love.

Soli Deo Gloria (Glory to God Alone),
Rev. Shant Barsoumian

ACYF Super Bowl Party



The Armenian Congregational Church and the ACC Youth group extends their grateful thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Kirk and Leslie Banerian for hosting the Super Bowl Party at their residence on Super Bowl Sunday, February 2 at 6:00 p.m. Everyone in attendance enjoyed a delicious dinner and an evening of fun and fellowship with their church family.

received reports from Leslie Banerian about the Sunday School and encouraged parents and grandparents to have students be more regular in attendance and participation, Ed Garabedian gave a report about the Church Investments, Kenneth Basmadjian gave the Treasurer's report for the Church's finances for 2013, and Chairman Rodney Keteyian presented the Trustees report highlighting the arrival of Pastor Shant to the congregation, as well as looking forward to the coming year including an update on the Franklin Medical Building Parking lease as well as the Capital Campaign for improvements and maintenance to the church grounds and noted a generous donation of \$2,000 to kick start the campaign.



Family Night

The ACC Women's Fellowship Family Valentine's Night will be held on Friday, February 21, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. Come enjoyed a delicious dinner and an evening of fun and fellowship with the church family. Many thanks to all those who are helping in making this evening a success.

Vartanantz

The Greater Detroit Armenian Churches are sponsoring a united Vartanantz observance, on Thursday, February 27, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. The host church is St. Vartan Armenian Catholic Church. We invite all of you to join us for this special gathering at St. Thomas Syriac Catholic Church, 25600 Drake Road, Farmington Hills (11 Mile and Drake Roads.)

ACC Annual Meeting Sunday, February 9, 2014

The Annual Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, February 9, 2014, immediately following the Morning Worship Service.

Our ACC Congregational Meeting included submissions of Annual reports from various groups from the church. Rev. Shant Barsoumian submitted the Minister's Annual Report and gave a brief overview of the year in ministry since his arrival to the church in March 2013. We also

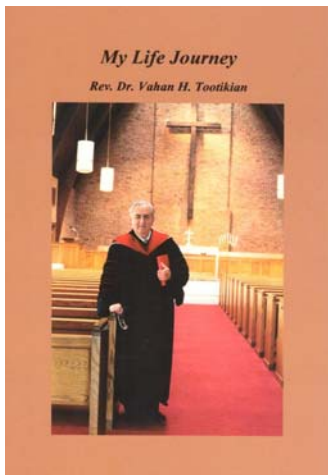
ACC Women's Fellowship Annual Lenten Luncheon

The A.C.C. Women's Fellowship is sponsoring their annual Lenten Luncheon on Friday, March-TBA -at 12:00 noon. Admission is \$15 per person. Come enjoy a beautiful program. Both men and women are welcome. To RSVP please contact the church office.

2013 Income Tax Receipts

You will soon be receiving your Income Tax receipts for your 2013 church donations in the mail. Please review your receipts, and if any corrections need to be made, please call the church office immediately.

Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian's latest book



'My Life Journey' is a compilation of the walk of a clergyman, author, educator, lecturer, and family man.

These are only a few of the roles Dr. Vahan Tootikian has had. To list the others would be a book that would fill many journeys.

Dr. Tootikian's birthplace, Kesab, has not only a strategic historical location but is described as a wonderful place to grow up. Indeed I would venture to relate that it did this and much more to prepare the author for his life's journey.

Education has always been important even from the earliest days of Dr. Tootikian's journey. His K-12, university and post graduate work have been hallmarks of his career in academia.

This journey in education is regarded fondly throughout the text. Dr. Tootikian's joy for learning literally "jumps" out at the reader. It's almost a "joie de vivre".

This life long learning quest not only resulted in writing this book but the previous 34!

For this writer there are numerous highlights. The one that stands out is the moving story of how Dr. Tootikian's mother subsequently found her mother after 30 years.

That scene, all too familiar to Armenians of that period i.e., the Armenian Genocide, when mother met child was a moving one. It's a saga that Hollywood couldn't create and one worth telling.

A portion of the book is almost like reading the current events of that particular period. For example, the era of the Egyptian leader Gamal

Abdul Nassar is referenced with interesting anecdotes.

Dr. Tootikian was there during this tense time. Egypt and Syria became the United Arab Republic.

This caused political and personal repercussions for many. Dr. Tootikian's experiences are very enlightening and will give the reader the actual history of what happened through the eyes of someone who was there.

This writer almost felt as an active participant in the history as described. Dr. Tootikian has much to relate about occurrences in the Middle East.

The events as related by Dr. Tootikian would be very informative even to policymakers. A life lived in that part of the world with the insight presented would be informative to anyone.

Other aspects of 'My Life Journey' encapsulate Dr. Tootikian's experiences in his pastorates from Damascus to Detroit. There were stops in between such as Cairo, Egypt and Watertown, Massachusetts.

'My Life Journey' is a real story about a real journey. Space doesn't permit to give many details.

However, you can solve this dilemma! Get the book!

Robert Kachadourian

Important Dates

February 21	ACC Family Night
February 27	Vartanantz
March 9	Daylight Savings Begins
March -TBA	ACC Women's Lenten Luncheon
April 13	Palm Sunday
April 17	Maundy Thursday
April 18	Good Friday
April 20	Easter Sunday
April 24	Armenian Genocide
May 11	Mother's Day Banquet
June 17	Father's Day Luncheon

Save The Date

**22nd AEUNA General Assembly
19th AEYF Convention
June 26-29, 2014
University Square Hotel
Fresno, CA
"Forging Ahead For Christ"**

Hosted by Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church. 3673 North First Street, Fresno, CA 93726 (559) 229-2915

ACC Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations

Kevin and Pam Czartoryski – Building Fund
Rodney and Barbara Keteyian - Heritage

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Reminders!

Is your anniversary, birthday or graduation approaching? Why not share your celebration with the church family by sponsoring the Flowers on the Altar or the Fellowship Hour. Please sign-up on the bulletin board or call Souzanne at the church office.

Special Request

The ACC continues to generate an email list of its members to better communicate upcoming events, updates, sermon topics, etc. If you would like to be on our email list please submit your email address to the church office.

ACC BANQUET HALL

Moses Avakian
Banquet Manager

Wedding & All Other Occasions
26210 W. Twelve Mile Rd. Southfield, MI 48034
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