



JUNE 2008

## ARMENIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

TEL: 96493380, FAX: 96493958, MOBILE: 0427404952, E-MAIL: [fr.basil@armeniancatholic.org.au](mailto:fr.basil@armeniancatholic.org.au)

### **Matt 12: 38-42 the Demand for a Miracle**

*Then some teachers of the law and some Pharisees spoke up. "Teacher" they said, "We want to see you perform a miracle."*

*"How evil and godless are the people of this day!" Jesus exclaimed. "You ask me for a miracle? No! The only miracle you will be given is the miracle of the prophet Jonah. In the same way that Jonah spent three days and nights in the big fish. So will the Son of Man spent three days and nights in the depths of the earth. On the Day of Judgment the people of Nineveh will stand up and accuse you, because they turned from their sins when they heard Jonah preach; and I tell you that there is something here greater than Jonah! On the Day of Judgment the Queen of Sheba will stand up and accuse you, because she travelled all the way from her country to listen to King Solomon's wise teaching; and I assure you that there is something here greater than Solomon!"*

*In his Gospel, Mathew tells us many Pharisees and scribes are asking Jesus for a revelation, They were supposed to be the wisest amongst the Jews, but they had eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear; Jesus was amongst them, teaching them and curing their sick and feeding their hungry, but alas! All of this could not kindle*

*a grain of faith in their hearts; and that's because it did not suit their moods and their motives.*

*When faced with hypocrisy and pride as your enemy, and when there is no Goodwill, any revelation, no matter how clear it was, even as clear as the sun, would be distorted so that its real message does not achieve its objective.*

*Today's Pharisees and scribes also want a revelation; but they have been given Jesus Christ who is always with us and amongst us, the God who took the human body, the light and the salt of the world, and furthermore his presence in the Holy Communion, in the church and in the hearts and minds of every believer. But they could not understand its true meaning for they have choked their hearts amongst the thorns and worries and its worldly attractions. They could not make themselves rise above the symbols so that they can witness the everlasting truth. They could not accept Jesus death and his resurrection and love for us the poor and sinner. They did not understand the parable of the good shepherd and his love to his flock; and that when one of his sheep was lost he went after it all over in the depth of the valleys and mountains to find it and bring it back carrying it in his bosom; they also did not*

*understand the love of the Father in the parable of the Prodigal son, who impatiently awaited for the return of his son so that he can free him from the worship of sin and thus give him back his rightful place and dignity as son of God.*

*The bible says, many have repented at the hands of the prophets, but the Pharisees and their supporters refused to acknowledge the person of Jesus as a savior. He brought light but they chose darkness; and despite all the miracles they refused his message of peace, brotherhood and tranquility with which he came to rid mankind from the yoke of sin. But they will be the ones who will be surprised to see repenting sinners going into Heaven on Judgment day, whilst they stay out tortured in their selfishness and arrogance, for they had refused to open up their hearts and accept Jesus.*

*If we open up our hearts to the Bible that will enough to convince us that Jesus loves us and that he is the true Savior. He gave us a love that respects our freedom, our deeds, and our choices; It is also necessary for all of us, young and old, to remember His Death and resurrection and his deeds and live by them for they will lead us to God's truth which ultimately will lead us to a new spiritual life in the Kingdom of heaven.*

*It is not enough to clean up our external lives unless it is accompanied by embracing God in our hearts; and only in this way we can ensure that there is no room for falsehood and bad thoughts which can drag us down and that will ultimately bring misery, distress and confusion in our lives.*

*So let us pray so that The Almighty turns our minds towards Him and that He may strengthen our resolve so that we can see*

*His loving face in all human kind and so that we can in turn show them the same love that he showed us.*

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## **Fund Raise Dinner**

We wish to inform our parishioners and readers that a Fund Raiser Dinner night was organized by the Armenian Church Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> .5.08. It gives us great pleasure to announce to you that the evening was a great success, both morally and financially. We were immensely heartened by the response of our friends and supporters who once again did not let down. The general response was beyond our wildest dreams and that only proves one and only one thing that if our hearts are in the right place and people see our modus operandi openly, then there is no reason why they won't rally behind us.

Before dinner was served the president of the Church Council Mr. Avedis Qasabian was invited on stage by the MC Mr. Garo Tcherkezian. Mr. Qasabian then delivered his impassioned speech (see full text below) in which he explained the challenges our church was facing in the near future and the wisdom in taking a proactive approach and the ultimate need for the physical relocation of the Church.

This was immediately followed by Fr. Parsegh's speech (see full text below) in which he outlined his dreams and vision for our community on all fronts.

At the end of the main course the opera soprano Mrs. Arax Mansourian mesmerized the gathering with some exquisite international songs. This was indeed the highlight of the evening. After deserts Dr Raffi Qasabian gave us a surprise piano

performance, his chosen piece was the “impromptu” by Chopin.

After having set the mood of the night Our MC Mr. Garo Tcherkezian invited Mr. George Shad who as usual gets straight to the point by urging the invitees to actively support our worthwhile cause, to which everyone responded positively and made their generous contributions according to their individual means.

We wish to convey our heartfelt thanks to all our generous and kind friends and supporters and we wish to also thank the individual talented performers who entertained us on the night. We wish to especially thank the organizers and all those who made the evening possible.

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Fr Parsegh, distinguished guests and friends, It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you all on behalf Fr Parsegh and the Armenian catholic Church Council, Our sincere thanks for having positively responded to our invitation; I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our friends and supporters, who were always there for us whenever our community needed their help or assistance.

Tonight it is a great opportunity for us to officially show you our gratitude. We also appreciate your presence here tonight and we hope that the evening will be as enjoyable for you as it will be for us.

Tonight, is also an occasion for celebration for us, as it marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of our humble church in the suburb of Lidcombe? But whilst we celebrate the evening, I would like to take advantage of the situation so that I may be able to give

you a glimpse of our thoughts and future plans for our church.

It is true that we have enjoyed relevant calm and security during all those years, and some of us might even derive satisfaction with the thought that the next thirty years might go the same way. We, as a community cannot afford to think in that fashion, for any community that sits on its laurels may find itself facing great difficulties in the future, and may even face extinction. The secret of survival, we believe, is in the ability to accommodate “change” and to be prepared to face up to the new challenges that are confronting us now and in the future. To preserve our unique language and culture it is imperative for us to think big and accordingly plan for it. Our community revolves around its spiritual rock “the Church”, the church is our spiritual magnet that unifies us through our faith, but if we don’t care for it and strengthen that binding force, we will eventually weaken and stagnate and ultimately perish.

Our spiritual leader Fr Parsegh and the Church Council, believe that the time has come to be proactive and to make a move, and it is up to us as leaders of this community to employ all our resources towards that end; and it is also up to each individual who cares about his or her community and our cultural heritage. We all possess diverse talents, and our contributions may take many forms, but whatever form we may take let us not be shy in expressing them and bringing them forward. All our talents are needed, be it moral, financial or otherwise, it doesn’t matter what form it takes, as long as they ultimately fulfill and realize those

objectives; the objectives which we are about to set for ourselves and the Community.

The suburb of Lidcombe, in the past few years, has undergone tremendous changes; partly due to the developments at Home bush Bay, and partly due to natural population growth. These changes have had a great impact on our church because of its location. It has become almost impossible to get in or out of the property without someone directing or halting the traffic. There is no adequate parking facility and we believe this has had a very negative impact on some of our parishioners. Weddings and funerals services are becoming harder to conduct, and many of our young opt to marrying in other churches lest they suffer the inconvenience of accommodating their guests.

My friends,

It is generally acknowledged that a community's faith is judged by the condition and the state of affairs of its principal place of worship. There is no doubt in our mind that we have the faith as a community, and over the years we have poured substantial sums on renovations, but there is a limit as to what we can do under the current conditions.

The Armenian Catholic Community purchased this church property in 1978. Whilst it served our community quite adequately during the past 30 years, the time we believe, has come to think about relocation.

Since the opening of the Home bush Bay Olympic complexes, Lidcombe, as we have mentioned before, has been transformed from a dormant little suburb to a highly

active economic centre. This has greatly enhanced property values, increased business activity and drastically changed the demographics of the area.

Therefore, for all those reasons that we have mentioned, The Church Council is planning to have this property prepared for future development, since early estimates and assessments by experts indicate that it may be possible to erect a multistory apartments building on the existing site. But to get this project off the ground it is necessary to obtain DA/BA approval from the local authorities and it is needless to say that the preparations and the drawing of such plans will require the expertise of architects and engineers, and the cost of which, we believe, will be substantial. (Early estimates suggest approximately \$70,000).

If we are successful in achieving the above plans, the Church Council, may be in a position to sell these plans to the highest bidder, which we estimate it would give us enough funds to acquire a more suitable property with all the appropriate facilities necessary for our community. This is the church council's objective for the future of our community, and it is a great opportunity for all of us to bring our hearts, hands and shoulders together and to take part in shaping up the future of our church and community.

This is our objective and dream. It is simply up to you and us to make it come true.

Thank you for your patience and attention, and once again, thank you for being with us tonight.

Avedis Qasabian

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Dear friends and parishioners,  
Tonight you have heard from the President of the church council regarding the Council's vision for the future of our church and the Armenian Catholic Community in Sydney. These are noble plans worthy of our support and encouragement. I pray that the Almighty grant us the perseverance and energy to transform the vision into reality.

Yet as a simple priest I think of not only bricks and mortar but the building blocks that make up our community. I consider the future of our children, our youth, our families and our elderly. Day in and day out, I think about the maintenance and growth of our community.

Our children and our youth represent the future and if we were to lose them then we as a community will have no future. We need to educate, teach and guide them so that they can grow up as young adults aware of their history, culture and faith. We must never forget that we owe a debt of gratitude to the previous generations who gave their lives to preserve the nation, the culture and the faith of the Armenian people. It would be a betrayal of our duty if we fail to keep the current young generation as Armenians living with the Word of God and with Christ in their hearts. No cost is too much, no effort wasted if it aims to achieve our sacred goal. All our planning must consider this as its primary objective.

If the youth represent our future, then the elderly represent the rock on which our present is built. The dignity and wisdom of our elderly is what defines our community values and give us our character. For this we are beholden to them. The welfare of our parents and grandparents must also be a

priority consideration in our community planning. We are obliged to ponder their needs and to make every effort to provide for them.

The family remains the cornerstone of the foundation to the Armenian nation in Armenia as in the Diaspora. The 21<sup>st</sup> century presents many challenges threatening the cohesive maintenance of the family unit. As a church and a community our plans must take into account the support of the family. Assistance must be given to Armenian parents in their onerous task of raising the future members of our church and community.

Throughout my life I have held the view that without a sense of caring and love for each other, there can be no sense of community. As most of you know since my arrival in Sydney I have worked hard to build a stronger church and a stronger community.

Today in your presence I commit myself to work even harder and reach out to our children and youth, our families and our elderly. In all this I need your help and support.

I trust and hope that I can count on each individual here tonight.

Thank you and May God bless you all.

Fr Parsegh Sousanian

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### **Annual Dinner Dance 12<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

Our Community will hold its Annual Dinner Dance on 12<sup>th</sup> July this year to take advantage of the presence of *His Eminence Bedros Miriatian, Archbishop of Aleppo*. His Eminence will be in Sydney due to his involvement with the World Youth Day celebration in July 2008.

The Dinner Dance will be in his honor and we expect a very favorable response from our community and our parishioners.

Tickets are on sale now and please ensure you make your reservations well in advance. Tickets can be obtained from any of the Council members or directly from the church by calling any of these two numbers. Mobile: 0427 404 952 or 9649 3380

The dinner dance will be held at the Emporium reception and function centre and we anticipate to have a very memorable and enjoyable evening.

Entertainment will be provided by none other than our favorite son “Karnig”.

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### **World Youth Day –Sydney 15 -20July**

As most of our community members are aware of the world Youth day celebrations in Sydney this year, our community will be receiving 32 young boys and girls from Syria who will also be taking part in these celebrations. They will be the guests of our community at during the period of their stay in Sydney. We have already some volunteer families who have opened their homes for some of these guests; however we need more volunteers to do the same.

All that is required is transport to and from church and a basic breakfast. So please if you wish to do a good deed, this is the time; for further information please call Fr. Parsegh as soon as possible.

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### **Holy Mass Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

The Holy mass will be presided over by His Eminence Bedros Miriatian Archbishop of Aleppo, who will be in Sydney as we have said earlier, for the World Youth day

celebrations. We are indeed extremely fortunate to have amongst us since we are certain many of our parishioners and community members who have come from those parts of the world, would like to meet up with him and reminisce the old days in Syria.

We have also heard on the grape vine that His Eminence will be carrying a big surprise on behalf of His Beatitude Nerses Bedros XIX for Fr Parsegh. It would be interesting to see what that might be.

It is indeed a great occasion for all of us to show His Eminence our love and respect, so let us all turn up in big numbers so that he can see the vibrant and active Armenian Catholic Community of Sydney.

Immediately after the Holy Mass he will retire into the Church Hall to meet up with all his ex compatriots and friends.

His Eminence and Fr. Parsegh and his entire Council Members will retire to the reception room where they will partake a small luncheon prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary and few volunteers.

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### **Feast of our lady of the Assumption**

Sunday 17 August as you all know is the feast of our Church and accordingly there is no need to remind you that it is a very important day for us all. This year, like every other year, we want to make it a very special day not only for us as a community but also for our individual families. So let us bring the whole family along so that we can really experience the true family spirit in our hearts and in every heart of our family members.

There will also be the blessing of the grapes which has been a tradition in our church for many years; so if any of our parishioners or friends wish to donate grapes, please contact Fr. Parsegh in due course.

The annual bazaar will also be held on the same day; many items of interest will be on display. So let's all make a day of it with our families and enjoy each other's company. There will be as per usual assorted (Kebab) and other culinary delights and Barbecues etc... Come along and feast your eyes on all the exotic sweets and delicacies that have been prepared and organized by the Ladies Auxiliary.

All are welcome, come along and bring a friend.

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### **First Holy Communion**

It gives us a great pleasure to inform our parishioners and community, that this year, as per every other year, seven more Angelic faces *Hovannes Misisilian, Chris Zaitounian, Troy Zaitounian, Natalie Khatchadourian, Hovsep Amirzaian, Taline Bardakjian, Alex Babkenian*, received their first Holy communion in our church on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May-2008. The church was packed with regular church goers, and friends and families of the recipients.

It was indeed touching to see how these little Angels were taking their vows and reading in turn the small excerpts, assigned to each one of them, from the Bible; finally showing their acceptance of Jesus and rejecting Satan and his evil deeds. It was even more touching to see these little Angels moving from aisle to aisle spreading the peace with their little joined hands.

After the ceremony a small reception was given at the church Hall to celebrate the happy occasion with all their families and friends.

Our sincere congratulations to all the boys and Girls and their respective families, May God bless them and protect them from all evil and may always grow in the shadow of Savior, Jesus.

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### **Baptism**

12.04.2008: Isabella daughter of Domenico and Rita De Felice.

20.04.2008: Hannah daughter of Francis and Rita Guvlekjian.

20.04.2008: Mary Rose daughter of Charlie and Eva Ahad

17.05.2008: Mary daughter of Daniel & Antoinette Mouzayek

25.05.2008: Christopher Khatchig Son of Harout and Manoushak Boladian

08.06.2008: Robert Son of Artur and Janna Nersisyan

15.06.2008: Tatiana & Nadia daughters of Joseph Tony & Christine Kalenderian.

Congratulation to the family's and proud parents.

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### **Wedding**

29 March 2008 Michael Shamoun & Josephine Batarseh.

27 April 2008 Robert Serobian & Kristina Gundic.

Our heartfelt congratulations to the newly-weds and may the Lord grant them a long and a happy life together, and may they also be blessed with many healthy children.

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