

## A PASTORAL VISIT

Twenty one years ago, when Father Ouzounian came to Sydney, he felt alone and lonely. His superiors sent him to this far away land asking him to do the best he could.

When he arrived in Sydney, Cardinal Gilroy arranged for him to stay at Balmain Presbytery. The first words that the parish priest of Balmain told him were: "Never forget that you are only a guest here." These words were not very encouraging.

Father Ouzounian worked hard to commence the community life in Sydney. Continuing on building an existing community is rather easy. Commencing is always hard.

The Armenian Catholic Community in Sydney had come from different parts of the Middle East, and their expectations from the Church and the priest were different.

Often guidance was needed, we asked for help from the superiors, but that help would not come, because we were too far. . . Divisions took place in the community.

When His Beatitude Jean Pierre Kasparian, became our Patriarch and Catholicos, he immediately showed an interest in the life of our community. He wanted to come and visit us earlier, but for different reasons his visit had to be postponed. Now, at last, the day is near at hand when his Beatitude will be amongst us.

He comes for a Pastoral visit.

Pastoral, that is, as a Pastor as our head and our leader, he wants to see the progress of the Armenian Catholic Church in Australia.

What do we have to offer?

We can say that we have a church at Lidcombe. We have just built a school at Rouse Hill which will make sure that the future generations will continue to celebrate our Liturgy in our language. We have a presbytery at Rouse Hill, which means that our priests do not have to live in different places in Australian parishes.

But all these are not of as great an interest, as the Spiritual life of the community.

His main question is: How much love and unity exist in our Community. This question leads to another question: To what extent the members of our community are living a Christian life - that is, going to Mass on Sundays going to Confession and Communion, living a life where the love of the neighbour and the forgiveness of the neighbour is practiced.

There have been divisions in the past. Today His Beatitude is inviting us all to be united. He is inviting us all to come and meet him, maybe explain our sour points once and for all, and then, hand in hand try to build this unity.

Kevork Emeen, in a poem written on the occasion of the tragedy of Dec and dedicated to His Holiness Vasken Catholicos, points out that it took this great tragedy and the death of so many innocents to show us Armenians that we should be united. That our differences are insignificant in front of the points that unite us.

Armenians all over the world have agreed to work together to rebuild the destroyed part of Armenian.

Can we put aside our differences and build on solid foundations a spiritually, intellectually, humane better place for our new generation?