

THE EIGHTIES

The Birth of the 1st Armenian School in Australia achieved by the Armenian Catholic Community

On Television, on the Radios, in the Newspapers we are given an account of the important events of the last decade.

Our present situation is the result of our past, and our future depends on our understanding of the present. Therefore, it is good to recapitulate the events of the past, and to find patterns there. The past will also show us the direction of the future.

The Eighties found the Armenian Catholic Community divided. Some persons who thought they had all the answers, arranged in very unorthodox ways for Father Sarkis Ouzounian to leave Sydney and start a new ministry in Melbourne.

Father Ouzounian had organized the purchase of the Church at Lidcombe. At long last the Armenian Catholic Community had a Church, but it had no priest to celebrate Mass in the Armenian Rite.

Father George Aerts, a Belgian priest, celebrated Mass for almost a year, in English, while the congregation was singing Armenian hymns.

I was the Parish Priest of the Armenian Catholic Community in Paris. I was asked to fly home for the wedding of my brother. Seeing the local situation, on my return to Paris, I immediately contacted our Patriarch and pointed out to him the unnatural situation of the Sydney parish, and insisted that a priest be sent.

The problem as I presented to our Patriarch was the following: The community of Sydney wanted a priest who will do exactly as he was told by the committee. The Committee members in particular and the community members in general were sure that they knew better how the parish should be run. (They still do).

Father Joseph Levonian, in spite of his age, was willing to undertake this journey. To the great delight of so many of our Sydney Parishioners he came to Sydney in December 1981. For 10 months the Armenian Catholic Community in Sydney enjoyed the presence of this lovely and lovable priest . . . And this until the arrival of the new parish priest, myself, in October 1982