

Celibate Priesthood in the 21st Century
Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church:
The Model of the Brotherhood
of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, Antelias-Lebanon

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PREFACE

Celibate Priesthood in the 21st Century Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church: The Model of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia¹ in Antelias-Lebanon is a Vancouver School of Theology Doctor of Ministry project, which analyzes a ‘monastic priestly order’ in the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church (hereafter Armenian Church).

Some clarifications are necessary at the outset. First, this project deals with a *Celibate Priesthood* and not a *Monastic Order*, because, strictly speaking, from the 15th century onwards the Armenian Church does not have monasteries and monastic orders. Celibate Catholicoi, patriarchs, bishops and priests live and serve at the four hierarchical administrative centers of the Armenian Church (Armenia, Lebanon, Israel and Turkey) or its worldwide respective dioceses and parishes. Second, taking into account that from 1973 to 1981 I studied at the theological seminary of the Catholicosate of Cilicia (hereafter theological seminary) and in 1981 I joined its Brotherhood, I had the competency to focus only on my context and not refer to the other three Brotherhoods of the Armenian Church. Third, since the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia (hereafter Brotherhood) is not a monastic order in its classical understanding, the brothers do not reside in a monastery but at the living quarters of the Catholicosate of Cilicia. In the Western tradition a community of priests living together under a common rule is often

¹ In Armenian, the official name of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is the ‘Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia.’ In 1995, when His Holiness Aram I became the Catholicos, he put into practice the usage of the ‘Catholicosate of Cilicia’ to make it simpler for non-Armenians.

called a community of ‘canons regular’; however, in keeping with the Eastern usage, terms such as monk, monastery and monastic are used freely.

I use the terms Brotherhood and Catholicosate interchangeably in this project and say more about their interrelatedness in Chapter Three, where the Rule of the Brotherhood and the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia (hereafter Catholicosate, unless where specificity is required) are examined. The term Brotherhood does not convey the full meaning of the Armenian term *Miabanut‘wn*, which refers to the unity and harmony of the brothers in thought, word and deed. *Miabanut‘wn* denotes the perfect accord of the brothers, *miabanner*, who reason, speak and act as one body.

The “Introduction” covers the Christian community – the Church, the monastic community and the Brotherhood. It sets the tone of the project and builds upon a brief and general understanding of being a Christian in the Church and a monastic community, and opens up the main section of the project by starting to examine the Brotherhood.

Chapter Two, “Contextualizing the Mission of the Brotherhood,” deals with the formation (how we become brothers), the identity (who the brothers are) and the ministry of the Brotherhood (what the brothers do). Formation explains how in the Armenian family, community school, Sunday school and theological seminary personal and organizational transformation is done. Identity elaborates the meaningful belonging to the Brotherhood and covers shared and relational identity in the community of fraternal fellowship based on prayer, *lectio divina*, holiness, authority and the perpetual vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience. Based on Article 1 of the Rule, ministry speaks about the witness and mission of the Brotherhood in the Catholicosate and the world-wide dioceses. In the ministry framework three areas open up: The Armenian Church and the

Catholicosate of Cilicia in Lebanon, church-nation and faith-culture dynamism in the Armenian reality today and the post-Genocide Armenian Diaspora and the Armenian Church.

Chapter Three, “The Rule of the Brotherhood,” concentrates on the existing Rule, gives more information on the responsibilities brothers carry out to fulfill their service, sketches the strengths and weaknesses of the Rule, and outlines general areas of modifications that are elaborated in Chapter Five.

These three chapters serve as a general background for the rest of the project.

Chapter Four, “The Field Research,” brings forth the voice of the brothers and blends it with the project. By qualitative research it puts together the responses of the brothers to a survey, where with an insider’s view they speak about their feelings and expectations related to the common life and service they share. The study might also serve as a catalyst for the renewal and organizational development of the Brotherhood in building on its strengths, once the recommendations are endorsed by the Brotherhood leadership and adopted into the Rule.

Chapter Five, “Recommendations and Conclusion,” spells out the end results of the project and develops recommendations based on the findings of the preceding chapters. The recommendations are aimed at enhancing the Brotherhood’s spirituality, and stand a good chance of being implemented. The recommendations ask for a period of experimentation, in anticipation of their adoption into the Rule of the Brotherhood. The chapter ends with highlighting the anticipated changes in the revised Rule.

Five “Appendices” complement the presentation of this project: (1) the letter and the seven questions sent to the members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of

Cilicia for the DMin research project; (2) the Rule of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia; (3) the proposed modifications in the Rule of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia; (4) the pontifical encyclical for the approval of the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, alongside the current Bylaws; and (5) the proposed modifications in the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia.

The “Bibliography” lists separately the English and Armenian books and articles used in the project.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I. The Christian Community – The Church

The Christian community is composed of men and women who live the Christian life in communion with God through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit and in relationship with other Christians in the Church.² The Church is a living community united in the Christian love “that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith” (1 Tim 1.5). To be a Christian³ is to be freely part of this community of faith, prayer and service – the Church; to be committed to following Christ and to the urgent realization of his Reign as God’s will and human’s longing (cf. Mark 1.14) manifested in divine love. As Christians we are called to live out our lives in response to the divine

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer cogently links the Christian community and fellowship: “He who loves his dream of community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter. ... If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even when there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith, and difficulty; if on the contrary, we keep complaining that everything is paltry and petty, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper Collins, 1954), 163. According to the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches: “The word “Church” (*ekklesia*) relates to the assembly of faithful convened by God the Father in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The intimate relation between the faithful and the Holy Trinity and also among the faithful themselves is expressed in New Testament Greek by the term *koinonia*, which means “communion”. St John declares to his readers “that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have communion (*koinonia*) with us; and our communion (*koinonia*) is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:3). St Paul blesses the Corinthians with the prayer that “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion (*koinonia*) of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Cor 13:14) [RSV]” (Interim Unpublished Document: *Nature, Constitution and Mission of the Church*, Paragraph I.6, Rome, January 29, 2009).

³ English Benedictines define being Christians in terms of a fellowship: “Christianity is the way of life of those who have been called, and have responded to the call, to share in the life of God through incorporation into Jesus Christ and fellowship in his Spirit” (Rees, Daniel and Other Members of the English Benedictine Congregation, *Consider Your Call: A Theology of Monastic Life Today* (London: SPCK, 1978), 2. For the most comprehensive definitions and theological implications of what it means to be a Christian, see Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian* (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1976).

love, in obedience to the good news delivered to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (cf. Matt 11.4-5; Mark 1.15; Rom 8.28; 2 Cor 1.19-20), who sets us free from the bondage of sin and its terrible eternal consequences (cf. Rom 3.23; 8.2; 1 John 1.7) and grants us our share in the life to come (cf. Eph 2.8-10). This good news ushers in a new reality. It creates a common bond through sharing and participation, a desirable state of being especially for today, when many people are lacking common spaces of familial connections where they need to love and to be loved. This goes beyond fulfilling a basic human need for love and belonging, or for Christians finding a community of faith and fellowship where believers are expected to feel at home.⁴ Such longing for sharing and participation forges a pilgrim people of companions on the road of faith, prayer and service, whose lives are fashioned after the example of the fellowship of the Christians of the first century, as described in Acts 2.42-47.

The human person as participatory being is depicted by Gabriel Marcel as follows:

To live within a community of persons who have one heart, one will, one purpose, namely, to stay in God's love by heeding God's commands, is to reside mysteriously in God. ... There is no such thing as an isolated experience; to be is to-be-in-a-situation. Participation, however, is not mere involvement with things and purposes other than oneself. In participation, the self is fulfilled and comes to be by a process of co-existence with others. In Marcel's view, to-be-with is a dimension of being integrally bound up with the dynamics of self-transcendence. Accordingly, to-be-with involves the individual in a commitment to dialogue with the whole created order requiring a genuine openness to truth. It involves a stance of mutual self-donation to one's fellow men and women. In the process of this engagement, the ultimate good of the individual and the community is manifested.⁵

⁴ John Main considers the community "simply a gathering together of those who journey together with the light of Christ as their guide. It knows this light as love and by their own love for one another they let the light of their guide burn more brightly"; *Letters from the Heart: Christian Monasticism and the Renewal of Community* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 118.

⁵ Frances M. Mannion, "Modern Culture and the Monastic Paradigm," *Communio*, Volume 20 (Fall 1993),

Hans Küng, addressing the key issue of belonging to a community of faith, writes:

After two thousand years Jesus of Nazareth still lives for mankind. What has kept him alive? Who testified to him time after time before mankind? Would he have remained alive, merely living on in a book? Did he not remain alive because he lived for two thousand years in the minds and hearts of innumerable human beings? In the institution of the Church or outside it, or on its fringe, human beings at immense distances of time and place have been and are under his sway: in all their human weakness and in very varying degrees, stirred, moved, filled with his word and spirit and thus forming in their different ways a community of faith.⁶

What it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ at this time, in our individual and collective lives, remains a challenge. The notion of discipleship invites us to expect that God will lead us to new experiences and enable us to grow in our faith. The search for Christian identity in discipleship to Jesus Christ culminates with life in Christ (cf. John 10.10; Rom 6.23; 2 Cor 2.14; 1 John 5.11-12), through the Church and for the Reign of God (cf. Matt 6.33; John 18.36; Col 1.10-14). Thus, sharing the heart of corporate Christian spirituality in the reality of the Church and the Reign of God here and now becomes not just an intentional practice of the Christian faith and the realization of the love of Christ, but an encounter “with the self-giving God through participation in the identity (filiation) of Jesus of Nazareth and his salvific life experience (the paschal mystery) through the gift of the Holy Spirit.”⁷ Participation in the life of Christ is a significant theme in Orthodox theology. It begins with one’s baptism, understood as death, burial and resurrection with Christ (cf. Rom 6.4); and also as initiation into discipleship (cf. 1 Pet 2.21). The latter is defined as following Christ so closely in his

509, 523.

⁶ Küng, *On Being a Christian*, 463.

⁷ Sandra M. Schneiders, *New Wineskins: Re-imagining Religious Life Today* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1986), 42.

footsteps that his experiences become our experiences, and vice-versa, since he also identifies himself with us. The sense of oneness with the Lord and participation in his life is re-established with participation in the Eucharist, as we partake of his sacred body and blood. As in baptism, so also in the Eucharist, the same theology of participation in the life of Christ is conveyed.

During the baptismal service in the Armenian Church, the candidate is thrice immersed in the water with the following words:

(Name) the servant of God, coming from the state of catechumen to baptism, is now being baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Redeemed by the blood of Christ from the servitude of sin, he/she becomes an adopted child of the heavenly Father, a coheir with Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit.⁸

And during the doxology of the Holy Eucharist in the Armenian Church, the celebrant prays:

And now I beseech you, let this be to me not for condemnation but for the remission and forgiveness of sins, for health of soul and body and for the performance of all deeds of virtue; so that this may purify my breath and my soul and my body and make me a temple and a habitation of the all-holy Trinity; so that I may be worthy, together with your saints, to glorify you with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.⁹

⁸ *The Rituals of the Armenian Apostolic Church* (New York: The Armenian Prelacy, 1992), 39. And in the prayers of baptism and confirmation the theology of incorporation in the life of Christ is expressed: "Fill this child with your heavenly grace and grant him/her the joy to be named a Christian and make him/her worthy of baptism of the second birth of the holy font. And by receiving your Holy Spirit let him/her be body and member of your holy Church. And by leading a blameless Christian life in this world may he/she attain all the good things of the world to come with help of your saints, glorifying your unchangeable dominion" (*Ibid.*, 23). "Clean him/her with your truth and by the shining grace of the Holy Spirit, in order that he/she may be a temple and the dwelling place of your divinity, so that he/she may walk in the paths of righteousness and be able to stand with courage in front of the awesome stage of your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Ibid.*, 43).

⁹ Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, *The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church* (New York: St. Vartan Press, 2000), 43.

The sense of oneness with the Lord is further conveyed through the drawing power of the Cross (cf. John 12.32 and the subsequent “Farewell Discourse”), the centripetal force that keeps his followers together, bonded by his love and the Holy Spirit (the adhesive that keeps the adherers together, as the Orthodox fathers taught).¹⁰ Then and now, the Christian community is sustained by the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ on the Cross (cf. 1 Cor 2.2), which interpretively becomes the eucharistic celebration of shared sacrifice of communion of love celebrated within the Church as thanksgiving (Gk. *eucharistia*) to God for making us, the strangers, his people and each other’s brothers and sisters in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Canon for Pentecost in the Hymnal of the Armenian Church, we chant:

The holy Apostles rejoiced with your coming, as they called to unity those who were scattered by the confusion of tongues. ... Love, begotten of Love, sent you who are Love to unite unto himself his own members through you, his Church that he built. ... Today the children of the Church joyfully celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, by whom they were adorned in bright and luminous garments.¹¹

The Church is the house of God, where he dwells and where believers receive the graces of the holy sacraments for their cleansing from sin and spiritual illumination, and become the body of the head, Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 4.15). In a hymn for After Midnight Hour in the Armenian Liturgy of the Hours (or the *Horologion*) the acolytes, on behalf of the sinful faithful, implore God to purify them:

I sinned against you, Lord; I sinned against you, Lord; I sinned. My transgressions are more than the sand of the sea. Worldly illusions deceived me and I became a

¹⁰ Q.v. “*kollaô*,” in G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 765.

¹¹ <http://www.stnersess.edu/classroom/resources/sharagans/index.php> accessed on 17 January 2011.

fruitless tree for the hopeful life. But you, who are a not revengeful and a pardoner Savior, spare and save your sinful servants.¹²

The union of the Godhead in the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – inspires this newly-created community of dedicated Christians to express its distinctive life-in-common through the experience of Christian *agape* as *koinonia* of substantial relations, which makes the Church the mystical Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12.12-30). The Church – the praying and loving community – becomes a supernaturally united living community of one heart, one will and one purpose where members dwell in God’s love and heed Christ’s commands in sharing the other’s burden, relying on each other and supporting each other by the sustenance of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 5.16), while faithfully and patiently pursuing God’s mission entrusted to them.

There are some who have responded to the call to follow the Christian way of life as consecrated people, to live a harmonious life while longing to be closer to God, to seek him constantly and to grow into perfection in him. Such a commitment often takes the form of monasticism.

The Son, who is the way, which leads to the Father (cf. *Jn* 14:6), calls all those whom the Father has given to Him (cf. *Jn* 17:9) to make the following of Himself the whole purpose of their lives. But of some, those called to the consecrated life, he asks a total commitment, one which involves leaving everything behind (cf. *Mt* 4:18-22) in order to live at His side and to follow Him wherever He goes (cf. *Rev* 14:4).¹³

¹² *Zhamagirk‘ Hayastaneayts‘ Ekeghets‘wo* [*The Book of Hours of the Armenian Holy Church*] (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1986), 149.

¹³ Lance Nadeau, “The Impact of the Family on Religious Formation,” *African Ecclesial Review* Volume 45, Number 1 (March 2003), 17.

The Church is essentially a community of faith built on Jesus Christ. The institutional expression of the Church must not be confused with its nature, and its essence must not be altered by its form. In the Church, the divine and the human, the ecclesial and the societal, the eternal and the timely, the transcendent and the imminent embrace each other. Jesus transforms the Church to a praying and loving community for the Reign of God. *Called to be the One Church*, a 2006 document of the World Council of Churches, defines the Church in the following way:

The Church as the creation of God's Word and Spirit is a mystery, sign, and instrument of what God intends for the salvation of the world. The grace of God is expressed in the victory over sin given by Christ, and in the healing and wholeness of the human being. The kingdom of God can be perceived in a *reconciled and reconciling community* called to holiness: a community that strives to overcome the discriminations expressed in sinful social structures, and to work for the healing of divisions in its own life and for healing and unity in the human community.¹⁴

Monastic life may be deemed as the church within the church; it endeavors to be the climax of the transformation of conversion and *theosis* realized in the Church by the Holy Spirit, hope in God, and love of God and neighbor (cf. Luke 10.27), and revealed in the mystery of the union and communion of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in which the monk is called to participate by grace in the "process of remonasticization of Christian existence".¹⁵

¹⁴ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/porto-alegre-2006/1-statements-documents-adopted/christian-unity-and-message-to-the-churches/called-to-be-the-one-church-as-adopted.html> accessed on 23 June 2010.

¹⁵ Mannion, "Modern Culture and the Monastic Paradigm," 506.

II. The Monastic Community

Monasticism evolved from the asceticism practiced by the Desert Fathers in Egypt, and was modified with the introduction of communal life under the Rule of St. Basil in the 4th century. By the middle of the 5th century monasticism was widespread in Armenia.¹⁶ Thus, monastic life has been an essential part of the Early Church, a characteristic of a totally Christ-centered way of life envisaged in the prayer of Jesus offered to his Father, “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17.21; NRSV, followed throughout). Monasticism is more than taking spiritual vows and living a personal/communal rule of life in a contemplative tradition. It remains a mystery of communion of faith and love of God, while monks strive to live out their baptismal calling of belonging to Christ (cf. Matt 18.20) and serving the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Christ, the ideal for monks, emptied himself to be filled with the charisms of obedience, celibacy and poverty for the glory of God (cf. Phil. 2.7). A monastic community is a group of like-minded monks, who attempt to live a life of dedication to God preserving the deeply held vows of obedience, celibacy and poverty. These three vows invite the monastic community to perfection in its calling and mission.

Christian monks are called to do not their own will but the will of God who sends them (cf. John 4.34; 5.30; 6.38). The obedience of the monks is first towards the authority

¹⁶ The 23rd homily in a mid-fifth-century homiliary is on the merits of monasticism. It begins with a list of twenty-two vices and their exact opposites, the virtues embraced by all those engaged in spiritual warfare. After commending the ascetic life of monks, the anonymous author goes on to promote communal or coenobitic monasticism, obedience to the superior and loyalty to the brotherhood. *Hachakhapatum chark'* [Oft-Repeated Discourses], text in Hakob K'eōsēian, ed., *Matenagirk' Hayots'* [(Ancient) Armenian Authors], ongoing series (Antelias: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2003) 1.128-137. Note also Canon XV of the Council of Shahapivan (AD 444); in Vazgen Hakobyan, ed., *Kanonagirk' Hayots'* [Canon Law of the Armenians], 2 vols. (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1964-1971) 1.450-454.

of Christ and then the authority of the Church in the person of the superior of their monastic community in whom they trust and who inspires obedience in those placed in his care. Monastic obedience is a spiritual requirement. To accept the total authority of Christ means to follow him under all circumstances, such as “poverty, hunger, thirst, trials, persecutions, reproaches and tribulations for Christ’s sake, as our Lord Jesus Christ says, ‘Whoever serves me must follow me’ (John 12.26).”¹⁷

Celibacy is a calling granted to chosen people, who willingly and unreservedly dedicate themselves to God (cf. Matt 19.12; 1 Cor 7.7; 32-34) for the sake of the Reign of Heaven. The Church requires that monks dedicate themselves fully to the Church according to the model of Christ. The love of Christ and his Church, sustained by prayer, make celibacy possible and workable.

Poverty is not a vow of misery and misfortune but appreciation of the worldly blessings in a longing for the heavenly treasures (cf. Matt 6.20). Monks are called to enjoy the material gifts in a spirit of detachment that God will provide for them (cf. 1 Cor. 9.14), dedicating their heart to Christ who became poor for our sake (cf. 2 Cor 8.9). The spirit of poverty will enable the monks to overcome social injustice. In living a simple life the monks will assist the poor and the needy, and inspire them with their personal and collective lifestyle and example.

A monastic community concentrates upon God in prayer and embraces His creation in love for the transformation of the individual monk and the monastic community by the power of the Holy Spirit. It affirms the point of sacramentality in all of life and reaffirms the reality of God in a corporeal way:

¹⁷ *Kanon Dzernadrut‘ean K‘ahanayi* [*The Canon of the Ordination of a Priest*] (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2003), 25.

At the heart of the monastic experiment is a simple premise, naïve to some and self-evident to others, yet radical in its implications: God is alive, well, and at work with us and in our world.¹⁸

The commitment of the monks is to seek God and each other in their community and to respond to their ministry, which upholds the values of identity, unity, cooperation and community in creating the ideal ‘other world’ of communal prayer inspired by their encounter with God and each other: community life of friendship characterized by fraternal love, trust and respect, and fruitfulness of common mission sustained by shared vision and sublime vocation.

A monastic community is a praying community where spirituality is developed by putting on the mind of Christ and opening the soul to the grace of the Holy Spirit. The ‘communal mind’ makes it to function as a sacred “‘school of divine service’ in which all welcome each other without having chosen each other in this daily miracle of community life,”¹⁹ where sometimes one meets the person he least wants to live with.

The monastic communal life is challenged by individual differences, communication skills and group dynamics, because monks come together not for the sake of living together but to support each other along the common inward/upward journey they are called to take together as their way of life and *esprit d’équipe*.²⁰ Despite the human limitations and failures, in trusting God for the up-keeping of the monastic

¹⁸ Parker Palmer, “Borne Again: The Monastic Way to Church Renewal,” *Weavings* Volume 1, Number 1 (September-October 1986), 19.

¹⁹ Sister Evangeline, “The Monastic Life: A Charismatic Life in the Church,” *The Ecumenical Review* Volume 31 (Number 3, July 1979), 275.

²⁰ Bernard F. Connor refers to the strengthening of the communal relationships as a team work, when he writes: “A religious community working even loosely as a team with a wide range of professional skills and contacts amongst all classes of people could greatly enhance its community and social apostolate” (Bernard F. Connor, *The Renewal of Religious Life*, *African Ecclesial Review*, 20 (December 1978), 363).

community, monks become more trustworthy toward each other and more available for the community's life and mission under God's care. By the participation of each monk, the monastic community is made not merely an institution but a home ever to be built by the Gospel values. The organizational style and the set of rules and preferences, though geared to integrate the monks into the community, are considered disciplines necessary for spiritual growth. Monasticism provides a process of spiritual formation in which to pursue one's longing to be closer to God.

Living in this kind of monastic community where the corporate identity is clearly spelled out, the necessity for continuous and meaningful belonging is nurtured and basic life needs are met. Each monk knows that he is accepted as he is and receives the support he is looking for, while being reassured of his valuable contribution. In this kind of healthy environment gifts are shared and the personal character of each monk is cherished; open dialogue is directed between superior and monks; and in the event of problems, unity of action emerges from the common faith, vision and commitment, and active participation is secured for better decisions and common service (cf. Eph 4.1-6). Above all, in this context of a committed communal life the soul's relation to God is affirmed and the community appreciated as an ineffable gift from God and a sign of his glory (cf. Matt 5.16), a realization of the prayer of Jesus addressed to his Father, "The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one" (John 17.22).

All these are achieved not through the human efforts of the community but by the transforming breath of the Holy Spirit, who renews the community to meet the challenges

of the changing times and conditions as it continues to lead the life in Christ as fully as possible.

III. The Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia

The Brotherhood is a community of celibate men in the service of God, who live in communion with the Holy Trinity and the world. Members are not a group joined together by a legal contract as a social entity. Our living together in prayer, love and service makes us servants of Jesus Christ – the ground of our faith –, who has given us to one another by the bond of fraternal love and who calls us to accept one another as his friends (cf. John 15.12-17). Our common life and ministry is sustained by the profound transforming grace of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14.15-17). Therefore, our lifestyle should meet the standards of the followers of Christ based on the prototype of Christian fellowship in the first century (cf. Acts 2.44-47, 4.32-35; Rom 12.1-8; 1 Cor 12).

The Brotherhood is a community *par excellence*, for it mirrors the following description by Patrick Regan:

A collection of individuals becomes a community through the emergence of a common meaning to which they commit themselves and from which they live. Meaning, though, is not a human product but a gift bestowed from beyond. It discloses and confers itself; we discover and yield to it, allowing it to carry us out of ourselves, bind us in relationship to others, and shape us into a unified whole according to patterns which it not only makes possible but also brings about. The community thus formed bears witness to the presence of a power which, while transcending both the group and the individuals who comprise it, nevertheless bears it up and holds it firm. This power, invisible in itself but manifest in the fabric of community activity, is the creative ground of both individual and corporate existence, that is to say, reality at the properly personal level.²¹

²¹ Patrick Regan, “Encountering Christ in Common Prayer,” *Worship* Volume 59, Number 1 (January 1985), 55.

The special calling of the Brotherhood as a distinct community is sustained by divine care and maintained by the group's response to it, as the English Benedictine Congregation affirms:

The most radical reason why the monks of a community are together is that they have all been called to share in the life of God. The one Spirit of which all are given to drink is the Spirit of communication, self-giving, and unity. But his action flows through the channels of human exchange and shared human responsibility among the brethren.²²

In prayer, and especially vis-à-vis the eucharistic presence of Jesus Christ, we participate in the redemptive love of Jesus Christ and orient ourselves as a Brotherhood towards love of creation and our neighbors through the power of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the spirituality of the brothers gives a sacramental value to our lives and labor. This is in keeping with the 1979 report of the *Orthodox Consultation on the Place of the Monastic Life within the Witness of the Church Today*:

... life in the community of faith, in the community which seeks the realization of the love of Christ. ... It is in concentrating upon God in prayer and in seeking at the same time to embrace the creation in love and intercession, that the monastic community opens the channels for the Spirit of God to transform both the individual and the community from within.²³

George H. Tavad refers to this kind of collective sacramentality as follows:

... each becomes, to the measure of God's grace, the dwelling of God in the Spirit; each reaches to mystical realms of life that are proper to him, yet which belong to all because they contribute, even invisibly, to the adornment of the whole body of the Church.²⁴

²² Daniel Rees and Other Members of the English Benedictine Congregation, *Consider Your Call: A Theology of Monastic Life Today* (London: SPCK, 1978), 66.

²³ "Documentation: Orthodox Consultation on the Place of the Monastic Life within the Witness of the Church Today, 30 April – 5 May, 1979, Amba Bishoy Monastery, Egypt," *International Review of Mission* Volume 68 (October 1979), 449.

The spirit of poverty, celibacy and obedience is rooted in simplicity and humility (cf. Luke 14.11). Simplicity and humility are already introduced at the ordination of subdeacons, when the bishop asks God to: "... grant them humility, meekness and modesty and blow your Holy Spirit on them to become worthy day and night to contemplate on your sanctuary and commandments."²⁵ A simple and humble member of the Brotherhood will influence the lifestyle of other members and that of lay people, teaching them by his Christ-like example to cultivate love, compassion and hospitality (cf. Matt 5.7, 11.29; Rom 12.16). An Armenian Church father, Yovhannēs Erzēnkats‘i (1230-1276), puts Christian love at the core of the community’s life, and exposes the inter-connectedness of love and humility. He writes:

In your hearts inflamed by love, you are purified as temples of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 3.16) and become dwellings of the Only-Begotten Son of God (cf. John 14.2, 2:19-22). ... Humility is the source of grace. The genuine humble person is neither saddened by insults nor delighted by praise; and he is not after glory.²⁶

The reduction of the challenge to the individual as much as to the community is significant. Patrick Regan highlights the importance of Christ-likeness by posing this pertinent question: "What is the image of Christ – or what are the images of Christ – which influence me, and which, in the actual circumstances of my life, determine the way in which I am a monk?"²⁷

²⁴ George H. Tavad, "Freedom and Responsibility in the Religious Life," *Continuum* Volume 2 (Winter 1965), 580.

²⁵ *Kanon Dzernadrut‘ean Dēprats‘, Kisasarkawagats‘, Sarkawagats‘* [*The Canon of the Ordination of Acolytes, Sub-deacons and Deacons*] (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2006), 81.

²⁶ Yovhannēs Erzēnkats‘i, "Yaghags Miabanut‘ean Eghbarts“” ["On the Unity of Brothers"], *Gandzasar’ Theological Journal*, Volume 6, 1996, 459 and 467.

²⁷ Regan, "Encountering Christ in Common Prayer," 48.

Aiming for the enhancement of our communal life of prayer, love and service, and possible adaptations in the Rule, I conducted a survey with the members of the Brotherhood. Much of the purpose of this survey was to discover how each member of our Brotherhood perceives himself as a monk and his role in the Brotherhood and among the faithful he serves. The outcome of this survey will be analyzed in Chapter Four.

Private and communal lives are, however, in constant change. We are living in a world where things alter fast. Although the celibate priesthood in the Armenian Church is based on traditional and well tested norms over time, it faces the challenges emerging from the modifications which our globalized societies are experiencing. Consequently, it needs to be regularly reviewed and, if necessary, changed to reflect the needs of the present day. This pressing need of change is underlined by Eric Simmons:

... new ways of monastic living are to be sought which combine the shared God-centredness of a closely knit community with an openness to the needs and aspirations of the world around it.²⁸

In the Brotherhood, Christian spirituality is a relationship of love and grace in Christ, expressed through prayer and service sustained by faith. When brothers live in the sanctifying presence of Christ, they are called to take him to the world for the transformation of the world through their *koinonia*, *kerygma* and *diakonia*. The opening Article 1 of *The Rule of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia* summarizes the responsive openness of the community to be gathered as disciples of Christ, to grow into a community and to care for others:

²⁸ Eric Simmons, review of *Consider Your Call: A Theology of Monastic Life Today*, by Daniel Rees and Other Members of the English Benedictine Congregation, *Theology* Volume 82, Number 686 (March 1979), 143.

The Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is composed of celibate clergymen, who are called to the service of God, the Armenian Church and people; who have vowed to live in a fraternal and communal manner, with Christian love and the spirit of obedience inspired by said Rule, and whose calling is to preach the Gospel of Christ and fulfill the spiritual and other needs of the Armenian nation, as well as the maintenance and development of Armenian culture, through their service to the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church.²⁹

As Article 1 of the Rule clearly states, our Brotherhood is called to be a God-centered and service-oriented community with an openness of outreach to the needs of people around us, particularly Armenian people, and to enhance their cherished culture – which is predominantly religious – under the auspices of the Church. To shape the *Geist* of the Brotherhood each brother is called to lead a growing personal relation with God and, at the same time, to establish intimate fraternal relations with his brothers, to make the Brotherhood an authentic witness to God in the world and his redemptive work, especially among the Armenian people. The life-style of the Brotherhood is in effect its inreach, which then translates to outreach as the Brotherhood carries out its mission within the thirteen dioceses of the Catholicosate. This reality expands the fact that monastic communities influence the spirituality of the people around them. Conversely, when such communities lose the balance between the communal/monastic and the pastoral/parochial dimensions of their calling, their service to and through the Church becomes blurred, misguided, and potentially perilous.

²⁹ *Metsi Tann Kilikiyoy Kat'oghikosut'ean Miabanut'ean Kanonagrut'iwv* [*The Rule of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia*], 2007, 1. Unpublished. Only for Brotherhood circulation. The translation from Armenian was made by the project author. See Appendix 2.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXTUALIZING THE MISSION OF THE BROTHERHOOD

I. Introduction

The mission of the Brotherhood is the same as that of the Catholicosate of Cilicia and invariably that of the Armenian Church, but with special attention to the needs of the Armenian people in the Diaspora. The Brotherhood carries out its mission in a variety of settings both at its base or the headquarters of the Catholicosate in Antelias-Lebanon and through the world-wide dioceses of the Holy See. To effectively fulfill their mission, brothers need proper formation, solid identity and clear sense of ministry. In the prayerful life led in Christ within the community of brothers and the Church at large, the Brotherhood seeks to enhance the *imago Dei* (cf. Gen 1.27) – flawed by sin and restored by grace – in people it serves and with whom it shares its special abilities and skills.

To serve God well, formation becomes the lifelong quest of the Brotherhood for transformation in Christ by the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of communication – that enables it to be receptive to new surprises emerging in its ministry. New developments, however surprising, are to be expected in the course of carrying out Christ’s mission; as St. Paul puts it, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Cor 5.17).

To know itself better, the Brotherhood develops a common sense of belonging to God and to each other, and cultivates a Christ-like identity of being and serving in obedience, following the example of the Son of Man. St. Nersēs Shnorhali (1101-1173),

an Armenian Church father and Catholicos, considers Christ-likeness the most demanding undertaking in one's discipleship, and goes on to remark: "Willingly stripping oneself of everything for the sake of Christ is the most difficult of all [responses]. I do not say impossible!"³⁰

Believing that the missionary initiative comes from God, and to become a genuine disciple of Christ, the Brotherhood embraces the notion of *missio Dei* ("sent by God"). To carry on God's work in the world, the Brotherhood strives in the path of perfection (cf. Matt 5.48) and aspires to be more dependent upon grace (cf. Acts 4.33) as it faithfully responds to the ever-emerging expectations of its environment. Formation, identity and ministry as a religious vocation culminate in participation in God's mission to the world, which includes the Church. The Brotherhood carries out this task by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and administering the sacraments of the Church, and by becoming the prophetic voice of the Reign of God on earth — while continuing as a praying, liturgical community, sharing in the life of God.

II. Formation

Quite accurately, the dynamic of trans-formation is described as a path, which

... consists of three major periods (Breakdown and Conflict, Darkness and Exploration, and New Venture and Reintegration) and four events (New Questions, Acceptance of Contradictions, New Insight and Workable Synthesis, and Celebration) which mark the transitions between periods.³¹

The remaining chapters will touch upon these periods and transitional stages and

³⁰ St. Nersēs Shnorhali, *General Epistle*, trans. and intro. Fr. Arakel Aljalian (New Rochelle, New York: St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 1996), 33. St. Nersēs Shnorhali is extensively quoted in the project because of his exceptional dedication to the Christian edification of his people, who in gratitude to his multiple services called him the Graceful.

³¹ Lawrence Cada, Raymond Fitz, Gertrude Foley, Thomas Giardino and Carol Lichtenger, *Shaping the Coming Age of Religious Life* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 95-96.

offer some reflection.

Each member of the Brotherhood has been through a long and complex process of personal formation in his Armenian family, school, and almost always, Sunday school. While in the theological seminary, the brothers have also gone through training in organizational formation for ordained ministry. The climax of this formation has been the consecration to God in the total self-giving to Christ by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission of God in the Armenian Church, as the bishop prays during the ordination of a celibate priest: “Fill his mind, thoughts and words with the Holy Spirit to be able to preach your life-giving word in boldness to the faithful relying on you.”³² Furthermore, training in organizational formation – like spiritual formation – is a lifelong engagement (cf. 2 Cor 4.16) for the brothers; it develops through their interaction with the constituencies of the Catholicosate, the dioceses and the parishes.

The personal education and formation of the brothers in the Armenian family, school and Sunday school form the basis for their continuous formation through training in the theological seminary, life in the monastery and pastoral work in the wider ministry setting. The Armenian family is the main agent of communicating the culture to the next generations. It is quite correct that

... one’s transformation in Christ does not happen in a vacuum. Rather, it first takes place within the individual’s family history and social-cultural setting. It is the family that plays the initial role in forming women and men for religious life and for any other lifestyle.³³

Morally and spiritually healthy Armenian families are the foundation stones of the

³² *Kanon Dzernadrut‘ean Vardapetats‘ Gawazan Talow, Tsayragoyn Vardapeti Ishkhanut‘ean*, [The Canon of the Ordination of Celibate Priests] (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2006), 101.

³³ Nadeau, “The Impact of the Family on Religious Formation,” 14.

Armenian society and bring a crucial contribution to the formation of the future brothers.

St. Nersēs Shnorhali urges Armenian parents to not ignore the Christian education of their children, because parental influence leaves an ingrained mark on them:

Furthermore, we give the following commandment to all believers in general, that you nourish your children in the fear of God, admonishing them during the days of their childhood to be God-loving, merciful, prayer-loving, and teach them the word of prayer and keep them from learning filthy words and swearing oaths; a parent's influence becomes an indelible memory, taking firm root in the minds of children especially when they are young. For this you will receive the reward of your good deeds from the Lord.³⁴

The Armenian school – correctly identified as community school – and the Sunday school play a pivotal role in the Armenian communities in communicating and cultivating Christian values. The Brotherhood takes special care of a well-organized network of Armenian schools and Sunday schools. The Armenian Church, school and Sunday school co-exist in Diaspora Armenian communities, and their formational mission is inter-connected. In short, the Armenian family, school and Sunday school are the extension of the Armenian Church.

Armenian schools in the Diaspora follow the certification requirements set by the respective ministries of education, to enable students to continue their university studies. The supplemental courses in Armenian subjects – such as language and literature, religion, Church and national history, classical Armenian – are the tools for Christian and Armenian formation of the young generation. The Catholicosate has been the initiator and founder of the Sunday schools in the Armenian Church. In 1930 Catholicos Sahak II and Coadjutor Catholicos Babgēn I inaugurated the Sunday schools and invited the first meeting of their directors and teachers to Antelias. Since then the number of the Sunday

³⁴ Shnorhali, *General Epistle*, 82.

schools has grown substantially. Today Armenian community schools and Sunday schools are supervised by educational boards and departments on central, diocesan and parochial levels.

The theological seminary education and formation prepare the brothers for their future ministry and enable them to reach the fullness of their spiritual and intellectual potential as devoted and motivated clergy. Typically, the seminary is “the heart and the mind of the Church,” where members of the Brotherhood, candidates for married priesthood and lay leaders are equipped for their respective work. The theological seminary is a boarding school with junior and senior sections, where seminarians study for eight years and learn to live together in a healthy communal atmosphere under the supervision of their dean, assistant celibate priests and clergy and lay teachers, who become their principal mentors. Their exemplary lifestyle that encompasses profound Christian faith, selfless love and dedication, competence in transmitting their knowledge and experience, and providing their undivided attention and energy to the specific vocation of the seminarians are pivotal and gratifying. Their spiritual, pastoral, pedagogical and parental role (cf. Gal 4.19; 1 Tim 1.2) enables the seminarians to apprehend what it means to be a Christian and to live the gospel message for the sake of God and one another. They learn by example how to be pastors long before they are ordained into a consecrated life for perpetual growth and character development as unique individuals called for the service of the Church.

At the conclusion of the seminary studies, the sacrament of ordination transforms the monk, who puts off the old self and puts on the new (cf. Eph 4.24; Col 3:9-10) by receiving a new name and becoming a new creature in Jesus Christ. Now he is a Christ-

centered servant of the Church for life, to contribute to the transformation of the society where he will be called to minister in his total self-giving to God and advancement in the Light and Life (cf. John 1.4; 8.12).

Life commitment in the priesthood and the creation of a new man in the ordained brother are expressed in the prayers of the priestly ordination in the Armenian Church:

Christ God, hope of salvation and fortress of steadfastness, keep this your servant unshaken forever, who responded to your divine invitation of priesthood, to fulfill your will. Vest him with a robe of happiness and a garment of glory. Strengthen him with perfect abstinence. Make him to vigorously endeavor for good deeds. To be modest, prayerful, spotless, prudent, humble, meek and clean in heart to keep his priesthood pristine by leading a saintly life and remain pure in everything by your blessing and will....

God clothes you the new man created in the image of God to live in justice, sanctity and truth, and to obey the Church by embracing God's love day and night.³⁵

The Brotherhood affirms its dedication to God in obedience and growing awareness of the "putting on Christ" (cf. Rom 13.14) and the reality of the sharing of spiritual gifts in the Church. One finds the gifts of the Spirit (cf. Is 11.2; 1 Cor 12.4-11) in all its institutions, especially in the monastery whose life and mission he has come to adopt. The brothers live in a monastic world where discipline and freedom are constructed within a relational framework of the fatherhood of the superior – the head of the Church and the Brotherhood, the Catholicos³⁶ – and the brotherhood of the monks,

³⁵ *Kanon Dzernadrut'ean K'ahanayi [The Canon of the Ordination of a Priest]* (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2003), 109-111, 155.

³⁶ The headship of the Catholicos is underlined in a prayer of the ordination and consecration of a Catholicos: "Lord, grant him a prudent heart to ardently keep all your commandments, to love you with all his might, heart and mind, to walk in the paths of righteousness in truthfulness, pure heart and sincere faith, and to be enriched by good deeds, according to your goodwill. May he remain firm and wholesome in his authority and rank in your presence and in the Universal and Apostolic Church founded and established on the rock of faith put by the apostles and prophets" (*Kanon Dzernadērut'ean ew Ōtsman Kat'oghikosi [The*

where their needs are met and their service is implemented by their observance of the Rule by which they govern their lives, undergoing social, cultural and spiritual transformation. The Rule continues to shape the formation of the Brotherhood by preserving it on its path of God-centeredness, utilizing the riches inherent in each of the spiritual gifts and setting criteria for mutual accountability in the fellowship of one common identity, exchange and sharing of responsibilities among the brothers in their unified mission.

The characteristics of formation/transformation within the Brotherhood and what more needs to be done to meet the altering and growing demands of the 21st century will be discussed in Chapter Three, with further details about the theological seminary.

III. Identity

In their monastic life brothers follow Christ by utilizing the charisms of the Holy Spirit as they do in their service to God for the benefit of the Armenian Church. Their participation in Christ's life of prayer and service makes them co-workers of the new creation (cf. Gal 6.15) and tireless respondents to the divine invitation to discipleship. This spiritual commitment preserves the dignity and personal freedom of each monk and makes him sensitive to the needs of his brothers. Further, it builds up an invaluable shared identity in the community life of fraternal fellowship.

The Brotherhood seeks to know what it means to be in Christ through its corporate relational identity, its community life shaped by the practice of the Christian faith for the nurture of its communal soul of prayer, discipleship, friendship and service.

Canon of the Ordination and Consecration of a Catholicos] (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1995), 39).

An Armenian Church father, St. Grigor Narekats'i (950-1003), defines this communal soul in terms of the rational soul in the individual and the relational harmony in heaven:

When it [the rational soul] acts through the right intellect, it does not fail at all in its likeness to the heavenly beings. And each of its [three] parts has its peculiar virtue. The virtue of the intelligent part is discretion; the virtue of the tempered part is valor; and that of the desiring part is chastity. The work of discretion is to think and make choices between good and bad. The work of valor is to bravely and valiantly execute that which is chosen by discretion. And the work of chastity is to kindle in the love of God [that which is] in accordance with the choice and execution, thus making the antecedent ones stronger in their natural capabilities by the warmth of that love.³⁷

Such corporate identity helps replace the personal longings, needs and egos of each member of the Brotherhood and sets the solid foundation of unselfish, effective and flourishing communal service. Frederick H. Reisz, Jr., describes this as the “three movements” of the spiritual life and highlights three types of inter-connected and enduring relationships:

The first polarity deals with our relationship to ourselves. It is the polarity between loneliness and solitude. The second polarity forms the basis of our relationship to others. This is the polarity between hostility and hospitality. The third, final and most important polarity structures our relationship with God. This is the polarity between illusion and prayer... The spiritual life is that constant movement between the poles of loneliness and solitude, hostility and hospitality, illusion and prayer. The more we come to the painful confession of our loneliness, hostilities and illusions, the more we are able to see solitude, hospitality, and prayer as part of our vision of life.³⁸

The combined personal-communal identity helps in the “separation” from the world to encounter Christ and each other in a brotherhood fostered by Christian love for

³⁷ St. Grigor Narekats'i, *Khērat Ughigh Hawatk'i ew Arak'ini Mak'ur Vark'i* [Advice on Orthodox Faith and Virtuous Conduct] (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2002), 39.

³⁸ Frederick H. Reisz, Jr. “Assessing Spiritual Formation in Christian Seminary Communities,” *Theological Education* Volume 39, Number 2 (2003), 31.

the spiritual enrichment and fulfillment of all within the community, for a joint mission led by collegial leadership, mutual obedience and sharing of gifts. This framework of candid friendship dissolves the human loneliness, disappointments and fragilities and dawns the brotherly life of communal prayer and service in a healthy community and joyful companionship of shared identity discovered by *lectio divina*, when the Gospel is followed, proclaimed and expressed in all life's endeavors (cf. Phil 1.27). The reading of the Bible enables the brothers to grasp their life and ministry as a discipleship in the prayerful, obedient pursuit of knowing Christ and yearning for a Christ-centered perfection. Preaching the gospel and serving God are inseparably evoked by the commitment of the Brotherhood for the realization of the Reign of God in their midst and the society at large through spoken words to the people of God by the grace of the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Pet 1.21).

Lectio divina instructs us to know God and his relations with his creation. Gaining a richer understanding of the biblical message of love allows the Brotherhood to bond more closely in their monastic life. The Word of God informs and forms the brothers of how to become affectionate towards one another in their prayerful life and proclaim the liberating and saving Gospel as genuine messengers of Christ, committed to spread the Christian truth, faith, hope and love (cf. John 17.17; Rom 10.17; Heb 4.12; 11.1-40).

Sandra M. Schneiders puts a particular emphasis on the shared identity of a community:

Specifically, it is the corporate identity need, the requirement for ongoing and meaningful belonging to a social unit larger than oneself with whose ideals, purposes, and members one can affectively identify and within which one can be oneself without pretense, that is primarily met by community membership.³⁹

³⁹ Schneiders, *New Wineskins: Re-imagining Religious Life Today*, 262.

The dedication of the brothers to God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit at work within the Brotherhood is maintained pragmatically by the traditional monastic vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience. It is astonishing to note that these three essential vows of stability of a monastic order are not spelled out explicitly in the Rule of the Brotherhood.

Celibacy is cited in Articles 1, 5 and 63. Surprisingly, poverty is never mentioned, although there are some implicit references to it in Article 1 (“to live in a fraternal and communal manner”), in the ‘Communal Life’ section (Articles 15 and 16) and it becomes problematic in Article 33 dealing with issues related to estates and wills. We read about obedience in Article 1 (“the spirit of obedience inspired by said Rule”) and Article 4 (“The Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is subject to the Catholicos of Cilicia”). Therefore, because the spirit of these three vows is in the Rule of the Brotherhood, and more will be said about them in Chapter Three, it is appropriate to reflect on them in this sub-section.

The vow of celibacy (cf. Matt 19.12) is not simply bodily chastity and sexual rejection, but a full commitment to the formation of an ideal community where the mystery of purity of heart, intimate companionship, reciprocal care and unselfish service is expressed through Christian brotherly love. M. Basil Pennington encourages celibacy as a treasured friendship:

The Christian celibate should prize friendship highly and give himself in friendship. Otherwise, not only will he not develop as a human person, but his choice for celibacy might well be suspect. Rather than being a free commitment in love and communion with the Lord, it might seem a merely human choice not to

share life or not to be bothered with others. The unfriendly, unloving celibate is a counterwitness to what is central to Christian life – love.⁴⁰

In my seminary, initially established as a monastic community, the original rule of the community was ‘community of goods so long as a community of purpose.’ Poverty for the sake of the Gospel is the joyful confidence in God for sharing of his gifts in his Church and storing riches for the life to come (cf. Matt 5.3; John 10.10; 15.11; 1 Tim 6.17-19; Phil 4.4-5). Frieda Haddad highlights this in a brilliant definition of the vow of poverty:

The vow of *poverty* is not in fact about external poverty, it is not possessing anything. It is rather not being possessed by anything, be it money or other worldly belongings. It is being free from what is “mine”, being able to say the prayer of Jesus fully: that which is mine is yours and that which is yours is mine. It is recognizing that “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1). It is being able really and truly to live the eucharistic prayer which the church assembled offers at every divine liturgy right after the epiklesis: “Thine own, out of Thine own, we offer to Thee entirely and for all things.” ... He who seeks to be “poor” in this sense understands the meaning of the self-emptying of God in the incarnation: “though he was rich, yet he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). Therefore poverty is an emptying of oneself for others in the likeness of the Lord.⁴¹

St. Nersēs Shnorhali advises the monks in the monasteries to follow obediently their vow of poverty:

Renounce completely everything you receive, whether plants or other things, as the sin of greed, as harmful plants from good seeds. Do your work not for the

⁴⁰ Basil M. Pennington, *Called: New Thinking on Christian Vocation* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), 26.

⁴¹ Frieda Haddad, “Orthodox Spirituality: The Monastic Life,” *The Ecumenical Review* Volume 38, Number 1 (January 1986), 69.

accumulation of possessions, but for the will of God. Lodge your earthly treasure in heaven and from physical labor accumulate treasure for your souls.⁴²

Another Armenian Church father, Eghishē Vardapet (400-464), paraphrases Job's nakedness (Job 1.21) and contemplates:

I see almost all wallowed in worldly possessions. But will not my human nature reprimand me? I was created naked, I was placed naked in paradise, I was dispelled from there naked, I was born naked and I will depart from this earth naked.⁴³

The vow of obedience is our surrender to God's will (Psalm 143.10) in love, patience, humility, freedom and joy (cf. 2 Cor 6.6; Prov 3.34; Phil 2.3; Gal 5.13; Ps 16.11; John 16.22) to cultivate in the brothers inner peace and serenity.⁴⁴ Obedience is not a tiresome burden; it ensues from a longing felt in the hearts of the brothers. The bond of mutual obedience-in-love of all brothers frees them from egoism (cf. Matt 6.24-34), makes them die to themselves so that Christ may live in them (cf. Gal 2.20) and enables them to grow to full stature of Christ (cf. Eph 4.13). Obedience to God, community life, Rule, superior and brothers are intertwined and open up channels of communal dialogue, mutual understanding, spiritual vitality and fruitful service in the imitation of Christ, who said, "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (John 6.38).

⁴² Shnorhali, *General Epistle*, 31.

⁴³ Eghishē Vardapet. *Ban Khratu Haghags Miandzants' [Advice to Hermits]* (Venice, Italy: Mekhitarian Publication, 1859), 162.

⁴⁴ The vow of obedience is underlined starting from the ordination of acolytes in the Armenian Church, when the bishop prays to God for the candidates and says: "Grant them your grace and keep them away from all perils, because out of their free lifestyle, which they had so far, they came to enter under the yoke of your service and received your grace" (*Kanon Dzernadērut'ean Dēprats', Kisasarkawagats', Sarkawagats' [The Canon of the Ordination of Acolytes, Sub-deacons and Deacons]*, (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2006), 15).

In reprimanding certain monks of his day, St. Nersēs Shnorhali makes a brief but rather rich analysis of obedience and freedom:

They often respond with words of still graver foolishness to those who advise them against moving about aimlessly, saying that God created them free, and, since they have free will, they can not see why they should place freedom in the service of mankind. If only they would put the freedom which God bestowed on them to good use, and remain free of sin! Evil and harmful service is servitude to sin, as Christ says: “Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin” (John 8.34). And the service to God and for the sake of God to the church, and for the church to the prior, is justice and not sin, as the Apostle affirms: “Be subject to one another out of reverence to Christ” (Eph 5.21); and Christ himself commands that “he who is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matt 23.11). Saint Basil writes further in his monastic rule: “All sobriety and virtue to him who does not have obedience to the prior – is worthless and to no avail.”⁴⁵

Celibacy, poverty and obedience for the Reign of God are supplementary to the life of prayer, which is the cornerstone of the monastic life of the Brotherhood. It makes room for the Holy Spirit to perform the work of character-forming and personality development in the brothers in unity with Christ and one another. It encourages them to depend upon God in everything and respond to him by sharing their talents for the glory of his name (cf. 1 Cor 10.31) and the promise of the future which he has prepared for his faithful servants (cf. Matt 25.21).

An Armenian Church father, St. Grigor Tat‘ewats‘i (1344-1409), reflecting on Matthew 6.33, “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” writes:

Some do not strive for the Reign of God, but shy away from it. Others strive for the Reign of God, but do not find it. Others strive for the Reign of God and find it, but do not maintain it. Others strive for the Reign of God, find it and maintain it. Thus, there are four kinds of people in the world. First, those who do not strive for the Reign of God, but shy away from it are those who during all their lives

⁴⁵ Shnorhali, *General Epistle*, 35-36.

perform evil deeds. Second, those who strive for the Reign of God, but do not find it are those who pursue vain-glory and please humans, and are lost in their chasing after glory. Third, those who strive for the Reign of God and find it, but do not maintain it are those who believe for a while and during trials give up, for the temporary life deprive themselves from the eternal life, for a short time enjoy in this world and suffer eternally in hell. Fourth, those who strive for the Reign of God, find it and maintain it are those who unite themselves in love with God, ignore the worldly pleasures and nothing can separate them from the love of Christ, as the apostle says....⁴⁶

Daily prayer hours and especially the offering of the Sunday Holy Eucharist invigorate the joy of human companionship and sense of community and confer the foretaste of the eschatological table of Christ by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Brotherhood. In prayer and ministry the Brotherhood responds to the sacrifice of Christ and God's invitation to become his children (cf. John 1.12) by the renewal of its calling to preach the Gospel and to distribute the body and blood of the Lord to his people. The eucharistic liturgy of the sacrificial offering of Christ is a celebration of praise, forgiveness, sacrifice and transformation as the brothers and the faithful are called to model the Trinitarian communion of love in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit and the inauguration of the eschatological community of the people of God. Obedient response to God by the brothers puts the self-giving authority of Christ at the center and transforms them to servants in constant renewal of the vows of celibate love, evangelical poverty and total obedience; it fills all the brothers with the spirit of holiness⁴⁷ and servant leadership⁴⁸ as befits the children of God.

⁴⁶ Grigor Tat'ewats'i, *Dzmeran Hator* [*Winter Volume of Sermons*] (Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 1998), 333-334.

⁴⁷ Eghishē Vardapet has a very appealing description of holiness: "If our paths are not holy, the shoes of our feet will scold us" (*Ban Khratu Haghags Miandzants'* [*Advice to Hermits*]), 163.

Holiness is the “deepening awareness of the presence of the Holy with us, and a living out of that Holy accompaniment”⁴⁹ as we proceed toward that high mark, trusting fully in God’s beauty and goodness. A holy person is an extraordinarily present friend who fills our everyday life with meaning and love. The Brotherhood understands holiness as a divine calling (cf. Lev 11.45) that embodies the spirit of sacramentality in its life of faith, prayer and service, both to the Brotherhood and beyond. It is not only concerned with personal and communal sanctification, but also longs to seek the gracious face of God in the communion of saints in heaven – as it heeds the universal call to holiness within the Church.

The Brotherhood considers the mystery of conversion in the caring presence of God and by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit as becoming the face of Christ in the world (cf. 2 Cor 4.6; Acts 3.14) for the furtherance of the Reign of God. Perpetual *metanoia* drives the brothers to remain a renewed community focused on Christ and sustained by mutual love, tolerance, forgiveness and acceptance of one another; to carry co-responsibilities for service in the Church, following Christ’s example of servant-leadership. The spirit of communal unity is characterized as communion of faith and love of God, because it exists for the realization of the love of Christ by putting aside the divergent ways of self-achievement and reaching the maturity of fraternal, unconditional acceptance of each other in self-giving love. This love, “wrapped in the mystery of pure

⁴⁸ For the coinage of ‘servant leadership’ I am indebted to Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), Chapter 9.

⁴⁹ Reisz, “Assessing Spiritual Formation in Christian Seminary Communities,” 32.

heart, patience and silence”⁵⁰, grows in faith and prayer and radiates in mission and ministry.

A communal response to the love of Christ is conditioned by the authority of the superior and obedience of the brothers. The only final authority vests in Christ and all obedience is rendered to him harmoniously enhancing one another. Therefore, authority should not be confused with power, juridical regulations and lordship or obedience through compulsion and subjection. Power could either secure participation or exert control and estrange team spirit. A reflection on the Taizé community conditions the team spirit by obedience:

It is by obedience that the individual monk abandons or modifies his private or individual project in order to lend his hand to the ‘group project’ which is the community’s interpretation of what God expects of it in the given circumstances.⁵¹

Authority and obedience in the Brotherhood are practiced in conciliarity, which allows the brothers to contribute in the proper areas of ministry in consultation with community leadership. The authority of the superior and the obedience of the brothers to him and to one another are expressed in mutual love, trust, respect and accountability for the building up of the Brotherhood. The participation of all in the decision-making process compliments authority and obedience, and guarantees the unity of vision and the positive impact of the ministry.

⁵⁰ A practice of silence in the life of a contemporary Indian Orthodox hierarch is exemplary: Alexios Mar Eusebius, Diocesan Metropolitan in Houston-Texas, has decided to observe Wednesdays as days of silence at the Diocesan Center.
<http://www.orthodoxchurch.in/component/content/article/63-south-west-america-/1433-wednesdays-to-be-observed-as-a-day-of-silence-at-the-diocesan-center> accessed on 11 June 2010.

⁵¹ J.M. Keeley, “An Ecumenical Light on the Renewal of Religious Community Life: Taizé,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* Winter (January 1968), 174.

Marie Margaret Johanning's observation of authority is very pertinent: "Shared responsibility and participation through dialogue and communal decision making coupled with the exercise of authority have become a viable and life-giving form of government for us."⁵² While a review of the book *Consider Your Call: A Theology of Monastic Life Today* observes that "Obedience is the lifeblood of monasticism. To have any spiritual 'teeth' this obedience must be to a concrete human, on a daily sacrificial level."⁵³

The virtue of communal obedience is the Christian structure of power in the form of reciprocal self-sacrifice of bearing our cross (cf. Matt 16.24) based on the example of Christ's obedience to the death on the cross (cf. Phil 2.8). Christian authority is a gift of service and a sign of unity for the common good of the brothers. It builds up the Brotherhood in love and justice by securing clear direction, open dialogue, fair understanding, active participation, shared responsibility and communal decision-making for the availability of the brothers to the service of God. The superior exercises his authority in response to the mutual obedient love, respect, trust, loyalty and support of the brothers. In following Christ, their Master, on a daily sacrificial basis, brothers filially obey the superior who represents him, and in obedience to one another they seek their affinity with God and union with Christ in the fellowship of their community life and ministry. Thus,

The paradox of Christian authority is that it is actually obedience: a nonobedient authority is an abuse. Authority reaches its peak when it promotes the prophetic qualities of those over whom it presides.⁵⁴

⁵² Marie Margaret Johanning, "Theology and Governance in Religious Life: A Personal Reflection," *Philosophy and Theology* Volume 3 (Fall 1988), 79.

⁵³ Brother Job, review of *Consider Your Call: A Theology of Monastic Life Today*, by Daniel Rees and Other Members of the English Benedictine Congregation, *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* Volume 25, Number 1 (1981) 69.

Consequently, joining the Brotherhood means sharing a corporate relational identity in the following five inter-related spheres:

(i) Personal and communal religious experience by the preservation of the vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience sustained by constant prayer, spiritual life dedicated to God, invitation to holiness and commitment to the Brotherhood's values;

(ii) Personal transformation, collective discipleship to Jesus Christ, corporate servant-leadership (cf. Matt 20.26, 23.12; Mark 9.35, 10.44; Luke 9.48, 22.26) and mutual accountability expressed in communal conversion of life to God and participation in the community by a strong sense of divine vocation, perpetual *metanoia* (cf. Mark 1.15), love and communal life;

(iii) Communicative discernment of God's mission and the Church's ministry by the dynamic incorporation of authority, obedience, loyalty, freedom and service;

(iv) Traditional fidelity and continuity in sustaining common values while experiencing generational shifts and new cultural trends affecting human freedom and moral responsibility; and

⁵⁴ Tavad, "Freedom and Responsibility in the Religious Life," 581.

(v) Worshipping God, living and proclaiming the Gospel and serving together in anticipation of the coming of the Reign of Heaven for the glory of God and everlasting joy of the redeemed.

IV. Ministry

The ministry of the Brotherhood is spelled out in the opening lines of Article 1 of the Rule, which sets the tone of its witness and mission:

The Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is composed of celibate clergymen, who are called to the service of God, the Armenian Church and people; who have vowed to live in a fraternal and communal manner, with Christian love and the spirit of obedience inspired by said Rule, and whose calling is to preach the Gospel of Christ and fulfill the spiritual and other needs of the Armenian nation, as well as the maintenance and development of Armenian culture, through their service to the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church.

Today, forty-six celibate clergymen – one Catholicos, twenty-one bishops and twenty-four priests⁵⁵ – form the Brotherhood and serve in cross-cultural contexts at the Catholicosate and in its worldwide dioceses. According to the Rule, they serve the Triune God and the Armenian Church and people. In rendering their service the brothers rely on God, who is the *raison d'être* of their faith and existence, the owner of their mission, the inspiration of their ministry and the fulfiller of their vision. This service is done within the confines of the widespread Armenian Church in the Diaspora. Armenians living in the Republic of Armenia are under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of All Armenians of Holy Ējmiatsin, while the Armenian Diaspora is divided up among the four Hierarchical Holy Sees of the Armenian Church.

⁵⁵ The ordained clergy has more intermediary ranks in the Armenian Church (e.g. archbishop), but I am avoiding those details for the sake of more clarity.

Article 1 of the Rule further specifies the service of the brothers and defines their ministry to preach the Gospel of Christ, to fulfill the spiritual and other related needs of the Armenian nation, as well as to maintain and develop the Armenian culture. This could be achieved only through the practice of the Christian faith and the working of the Holy Spirit in a communal setting of self-giving lifestyle by those who have made themselves available to carry out God's mission for God's people (cf. Jer 1.7). Brothers keep Christ at the center of their lives, listen to the Word of God, live the Gospel message and make the preaching of the Gospel of the Reign of God to the Armenian people (Mal 2.7) their number one task through their corporate obedient fellowship in the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶

Spiritual renewal in a society could begin in a variety of ways. A proven way to begin is with the revitalization of a monastic community. As Jean Leclerq adequately puts it:

... the principle role of monasticism is to remind everyone that the first condition to fulfill in order to transform society is to transform ourselves by leading the life in Christ as fully as possible, and to do this for the glory of God.⁵⁷

Spiritual needs are among the higher needs for human beings. The Brotherhood is called to draw the Armenian people to the Reign of God (cf. Rom 14.17) and to the Gospel of their salvation in Christ (cf. Eph 1.13), helping them become the temple of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 6.19). The holistic sacred ministry of the brothers goes beyond the spiritual transformation of the people; it extends to the daily material needs of the

⁵⁶ Joan Chittister comments on service for the Reign of God in these terms: "The function of the Christian community in sharing the bedrock of Christian spirituality is the upbuilding, the co-creation of the kingdom; the bringing of the kingdom now, the bringing of the now to the kingdom"; "A Sign and a Choice: The Spirituality of Community," *Sojourners* Volume 16, Number 6 (June 1987), 14.

⁵⁷ Jean Leclerq, "The Role of Monastic Spirituality Critically Discussed," *Worship* Volume 39, Number 10 (December 1965), 595.

faithful, as the diaconal mission of the Church. Although Article 1 does not specify it, but it is obvious that the Brotherhood has an evangelical obligation of solidarity with the marginalized and the underprivileged (cf. Matt 25.34-36; Luke 1.53; Luke 6.37; Rom 12.20; 1 Tim 6.17-19).

For St. Nersēs Shnorhali prayer and *diakonia* go together as feeding the soul and the body:

Since the body is secondary to the soul, it is necessary first to take care of the soul's nourishment which is prayer and good works and then the nourishment of the physical body. For the master first eats the food prepared and served by the servants, the servants then eat from the scraps of the master. Since in us the body is the servant, the soul is the master, and the will of the mind is the judge, it is right for the judge to keep the other two in order: first, to feed the soul with spiritual food, through service of the body, and then to care for the body, by the wisdom and stewardship of the soul. So in these and similar good works, you should be demanding of your brotherhood.⁵⁸

The maintenance and development of the Armenian culture covers the educational, intellectual and cultural mission of the Brotherhood, which aims at “enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential as individuals created in God’s image and assisting them to direct their gifts toward building the earth.”⁵⁹ Historically, Christian and national formation go hand in hand for the Armenian people,⁶⁰ thus enabling the Brotherhood to dwell on both, simultaneously. This mission will be elaborated in Chapter Three, where the Rule identifies the areas of activities.

⁵⁸ Shnorhali, *General Epistle*, 42.

⁵⁹ Marie Margaret Johanning, “Theology and Governance in Religious Life: A Personal Reflection,” 78.

⁶⁰ See Abraham Terian, *Patriotism and Piety in Armenian Christianity* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 2005), 13-40.

The Brotherhood is not a self-contained entity, but rather exists to serve God through the Armenian people in obedience to the calling of the Armenian Church and for the transformation of the society at large. This focused “internal mission” serves the entire Church when each monk

... becomes, to the measure of God’s grace, the dwelling of God in the Spirit; each reaches to mystical realms of life that are proper to him, yet which belong to all because they contribute, even invisibly, to the adornment of the whole body of the Church.⁶¹

This is akin to the Sisters of Mercy of Connecticut critiquing their relational living by this reflection:

By our life in community and by sharing our faith and mission, we come to know ourselves as sisters and to form bonds of union and charity. Reverence for the unique gift of each member –the young and the old, the well and the infirm– helps us to live together in affection and mutual respect. When breaches of charity occur, we encourage each other to speak the truth in love and to bring prayer and patience to the restoration of harmony. (Constitutions #18)⁶²

Article 1 brings us back to the spirit of monasticism, where the ideals of unity and identity of fraternal and communal life are reflected upon and the mission/ministry of the Brotherhood is upheld by its very Rule. This ministry is carried out (i) at the Catholicosate, where members of the Brotherhood feel the warmth of a family; and (ii) in the dioceses, as diocesan bishops, administrative assistants to the bishops, parish pastors and students in local Christian universities come together.

⁶¹ Tavad, “Freedom and Responsibility in the Religious Life,” 580.

⁶² <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/practice/organizationDetail.cfm?coid=8164§or=24> accessed on 18 January 2007.

Some members of the Brotherhood live and work at the Catholicosate and the nearby theological seminary, assisted by almost forty lay employees.⁶³ The rest are in diocesan service. The precise numerical distribution of the brothers at the Catholicosate and the dioceses, and their respective roles will be given in Chapter Four. According to the Rule, at the Catholicosate a brother is expected to diligently fulfill one of the following responsibilities: of grand sacristan; choirmaster; theological seminary dean; librarian; museum director; publications director; printing house director; *'Hask'* official periodical editor; bookstore director; chief steward; pantry chief; hospitality director; and property manager. Brothers live their corporate spiritual, intellectual and communal lives envisaged in the Rule only at the Catholicosate, because in the dioceses and parishes they mostly reside alone. More on these and other related issues will be said in Chapter Three.

Common denominators of the ministry of the Brotherhood are (i) belonging to the Armenian Church; (ii) sharing the same Christian faith and Armenian culture; and (iii) serving Armenians in the Diaspora created after the 1915 Genocide.

A. The Armenian Church: A Brief Overview of its Genesis, History and Current Condition

The official name of the Armenian Church is Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church. It is Armenian, because as an ethnic or national church it serves the Armenian people – it is the Church of the Armenians, the nation. An Armenian, by the strictest definition of the term, is a member of the Armenian Church by birth, by baptism in the

⁶³ The Benedictines underline the special place of their employees: “Among our many partners in ministry the men and women who earn their living by working for the Society have a special place. We could not fulfill the mission to which God calls us without the contribution of their many skills which complement our own” (*The Rule of the Society of St. John the Evangelist* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley Publications, 1997), 70).

holy font of the Armenian Church and by active participation in the life and mission of the Armenian Church. A non-Armenian joins the Armenian Church by a personal choice or marriage to an Armenian. It is Apostolic, since two apostles of Jesus Christ, Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew, are its founders and its bishops claim apostolic succession.⁶⁴ Its apostolicity is also in its being sent out by Christ to make disciples for him (cf. Matt 28.19-20). It is Orthodox because it is both Apostolic and staunchly Nicene.⁶⁵ In the ecumenical circles of today, it is a member of the family of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, or the non-Chalcedonian Churches: alongside the Coptic, Syrian, Ethiopian, Indian and Eritrean Churches. It is Holy because its Lord is holy, who died to sanctify it (cf. Eph 5.27).

In 301, through the evangelization by St. Gregory the Illuminator and the support of king St. Tērdat III, Armenians became the first people to declare Christianity as their state religion and they officially established the Armenian Church with its Hierarchical Holy See – the Catholicosate. Since then Christianity was imprinted upon the Armenian ethos as “the color of the skin.”⁶⁶ In 405 St. Mesrop Mashtots‘ invented the Armenian alphabet and St. Sahak Part‘ew spearheaded the translation of the Holy Bible into

⁶⁴ In the ordination and consecration of a bishop the apostolic succession as a great responsibility is sustained by the following words of the prayer: “Since you, Lord, raised him to the grace of chief-priesthood, make him worthy to imitate you, the Good Shepherd, and to lay down his life for his sheep (cf. John 10.11). May he become guide to the blinds, light to those who are in darkness, adviser to indolent, glow to the whole world to fortify the faithful in this life and lead them to your court of judgment with having nothing to be embarrassed for and to receive from you the great reward who is prepared for those who undertake afflictions for the preaching of your gospel” (*Kanon Dzernadrut‘ean ew Ōtsman Episkoposi [The Canon of the Ordination and Consecration of a Bishop]* (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1997), 61-63).

⁶⁵ Armenians value highly the Irenaean definition of Orthodoxy in terms of Apostolicity, and consequently cherish the works of St. Irenaeus of Lyon that survive for the most part in Armenian only.

⁶⁶ Eghishē, *Yeghisheh the History of Vartanank* (New York: The Delphic Press, 1952), 123.

Armenian to make God “Armenian-speaking”⁶⁷ to the Armenians. Thus began an outstanding Golden Age of Armenian literacy. In 451, at the battle of Awarayr, led by army commander St. Vardan Mamikonean and priest St. Ghewond Erēts‘ Armenians heroically defended their Christian faith and homeland against the Persians and affirmed that they recognize “the Holy Gospel to be our father and the Apostolic Orthodox Church our mother.”⁶⁸

Arab and Seljuk invasions in the 7th and 11th centuries devastated Armenia, and Armenians enjoyed only short periods of peaceful existence. An independent Armenian principality evolved into a kingdom in neighboring Cilicia as of the 11th century and the Catholicosate was transferred there. The Cilician Kingdom fell in the 14th century, yet the Catholicosate continued to exist in Sis, the capital of Cilicia. However, in 1441 a new Catholicos got elected in Armenia. Since then the Armenian Church had two Catholicosates with equal rights and privileges, and each had its respective jurisdiction. The Catholicosate of Cilicia had always acknowledged the primacy of honor of the Catholicosate of All Armenians of Holy Ējmiatsin.⁶⁹ Turks and Russians invaded Armenia in subsequent centuries. In 1915 Ottoman Turks perpetrated the first Genocide of the 20th century and massacred 1.5 million Armenians. The survivors took refuge in different parts of the Middle East and created the Armenian Diaspora. In 1918 Armenia enjoyed two years of independence and in 1920 became a Soviet Republic. In 1921 French forces evacuated Cilicia, Kemalist Turks killed 300,000 Armenians and most of

⁶⁷ Koriwn, *Vark‘Mashdots‘i* [*Life of Mashdots*] (Cairo: Yusaber Publishing House, 1954), 57.

⁶⁸ Eghishē, *Yeghisheh the History of Vartanank*, 79.

⁶⁹ More on the origin of the Armenian Church could be obtained under the history section of the website of the Catholicosate of Cilicia: <http://www.armenianorthodoxchurch.org/v02/index.htm> accessed on 12 June 2010.

the survivors settled in Syria and Lebanon. In 1930 the Catholicosate of Cilicia temporarily settled in Antelias. In 1991 Armenia regained its independence and meantime the Armenian Diaspora continued its existence and struggled for justice and a settlement with the Turks.

Today the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church⁷⁰ has four Hierarchical Holy Sees: (i) The Catholicosate of All Armenians, Holy Ējmiatsin-Armenia; (ii) The Catholicosate of Cilicia, Antelias-Lebanon; (iii) The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Jerusalem-Israel; (iv) The Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, Istanbul-Turkey. These Sees are intimately linked to each other in terms of faith, dogma and liturgy, constituting the genuine unity of the Armenian Church. Its administration is democratic with a decentralized system, and the Hierarchical Holy Sees co-exist as self-governing entities. The Armenian Church is a global Church and serves its people in the Republic of Armenia and throughout the worldwide Diaspora. Armenians live all around the world⁷¹ and mostly look to their Church for spiritual, national, cultural and political guidance.

Since this project is focused on the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia and its mission, some further information on the latter is deemed necessary.

B. The Catholicosate of Cilicia in Lebanon: Its Mission of Faith and Promotion of Christian and Armenian Values

In 1921, Turks occupied the Catholicosate in Sis and forced Catholicos Sahak II and the Brotherhood to follow their people in exile. After wandering in Syria and

⁷⁰ The majority of the Armenians belong to the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church, but there are tiny Armenian Catholic and Armenian Protestant Churches. In 1831 the Armenian Catholics were officially recognized as a separate community by the Ottoman Regime as well as the Armenian Protestants in 1848.

⁷¹ Of the six million Armenians, less than half live in Armenia and the rest in the Diaspora.

Lebanon, in 1930, the Brotherhood established the Catholicosate in Antelias-Lebanon, opened the theological seminary and the printing house, took care of the organization and rejuvenation of its people in the Diaspora and organized its new Dioceses. Babgēn I became the Coadjutor Catholicos in 1931 and dedicated his efforts to the editorship of *'Hask'*, the official periodical of the Catholicosate, and a number of publications. He passed away in 1936, while the incumbent Catholicos Sahak II was still alive.

The property of the Catholicosate was an Armenian orphanage under the care of the American Near East Relief organization; and after a lease of a symbolic fee of One US Dollar a year, Catholicos Sahak II settled on the new property on 29 September 1930 and exclaimed, “Now we have a stable base, thanks to American philanthropists and Armenian-American benefactors.”⁷² He purchased it on 27 October 1937, with the donation of anonymous benefactors (later known to be Simon and Mat'ilt Gayēgchean).

Catholicos Petros I succeeded Catholicos Sahak II in 1940 and on 10 March 1940 he consecrated the St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral built with the donation of an unknown benefactor, whose name, Sargis Gēnachean, was announced only after his death. A Chapel in memory of the 1.5 million Armenians of the 1915 Genocide, named after the Christian proto-martyr and first deacon St. Stephen, as well as a residence for the Catholicos and the new theological seminary building were constructed one after the other.

Catholicos Garegin I occupied the throne in 1943. During his pontificate the Catholicosate became a dynamic center of cultural activities. The theological seminary flourished and *'Hask'* became an established periodical for Armenian Studies. Catholicos

⁷² Biwzand Eghiaean, *Zhamanakakits' Patmut'iwn Kat'oghikosut'ean Hayots' Kilikioy 1914-1972 [A Contemporary History of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia 1914-1972]* (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1975), 336.

Zareh I, the first graduate of the theological seminary, succeeded Catholicos Garegin I in 1956 and extended the ministry of the Brotherhood to various communities in the Diaspora. His personal insights and saintly life left a seminal influence on all and especially the seminarians dedicated to the service of the Church. In 1962, during his tenure, the Catholicosate became a member of the World Council of Churches. In 1963, Catholicos Khorēn I succeeded Catholicos Zareh I and secured the financial stability of the Catholicosate and through new constructions met the growing needs of the people. In 1977, Garegin II became the Coadjutor Catholicos as Lebanon was embroiled in a fifteen-year civil war. He improved the printing house, established the Christian Education Department and enlarged the scope of the ecumenical involvement of the Catholicosate.

In 1995, His Holiness Aram I, the current Catholicos, succeeded Catholicos Garegin II. He was born in 1947, in Beirut-Lebanon, and after pursuing his higher education (PhD, Fordham University, New York) he served the Diocese of Lebanon, since 1978. As the head of the Church, he revitalized the mission of the Brotherhood in the areas of theological formation, Christian education, ecumenical collaboration, inter-faith and international relations, publications, communications, cultural and youth activities and social services. His Holiness was an ecumenical pioneer and leader, and had been involved in the ecumenical movement from his early years of priesthood. Currently he is one of the four presidents of the Middle East Council of Churches. Also, he is a prolific author and lecturer and, *ex-officio*, superior of the Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood considers Catholicoi Sahak II and Babgēn I the founders of the revived Catholicosate in Lebanon. The succeeding Catholicoi – Petros I, Garegin I, Zareh

I, Khorēn I, Garegin II and Aram I – safeguarded their inspiring vision and sacred legacy, and inspired the Brotherhood to continue serving God and his people with an ever-renewed vigor and onward-looking commitment. Catholicos Sahak II was the linkage of centuries-old Armenian monasticism⁷³ and the historical Holy See of Cilicia. Although the Catholicosate and the Brotherhood have been in Lebanon for eighty years, they long for their homeland and strive for their return to the historic headquarters. They are reminded of this longing every time they sing the anthem of the Catholicosate: “I long to see my Cilicia, the country that gave me the sun.”

Based on the spiritual heritage of the Armenian Church and the venerable mission of the Catholicosate, the outreach of the Brotherhood today embraces the following dimensions in the life of the Armenian people:

(i) The Armenian Diaspora

Throughout its history, and especially in difficult times, the Catholicosate has been actively present in the religious, educational, cultural and social life of the

⁷³ I am indebted to Abraham Terian for his “Monasticism and Education” (paper delivered at the 1700th Anniversary of Christianization of Armenia: The Armenian Church in the 21st Century, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, New York, NY, 31 March 2001): “Armenian monasticism simultaneously started in Armenia and in the Holy Land in the 5th century. In the 11th century it flourished in Cilicia and lasted up to the 15th century. Since then it is preserved as celibate priesthood. Terian writes: It is rather paradoxical that while the church is locked into a monastic structure, there is no true monasticism in the Armenian Church today. The monastic structure of the church served well through the Middle Ages, but certainly not in the last 500 years or since the death of Tat’ewats’i in 1409, or since the return of the Catholicosate to Ējmiatsin in 1441, or since the founding of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1461. In other words, the 15th century was a decisive time, for as of that time the needed structure for the church should have been more diocesan/parochial and less monastic, as it was partially at Constantinople and throughout the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate – thanks to the Ottoman Millet system that compelled the church to care for the various needs of its ethnic faithful. ... Over all, since the hierarchs of the eastern churches are chosen from among the monks, monasticism has exerted a greater influence upon the eastern churches. Celibacy without true monasticism is perpetuated in the Armenian Church so as to provide, among few other things, that pool from which hierarchs are elected. For this reason, and because of the monastic legacy, celibate priests occupy the central place in the rank and file of Armenian clergy. For the last 500 years the Armenian Church is caught between this transition from a fundamentally monastic structure to one with diocesan/parochial needs and concerns.”

Armenian people. After the 1915 Genocide, it contributed crucially to the formation and organization of the Armenian Diaspora.

(ii) Theological Formation

The theological seminary has played a pivotal role in the witness of the Catholicosate. Many teachers, married priests, and monks, including bishops and Catholicoi, have graduated from the theological seminary and have served the Armenian Church and nation in an exemplary spirit of Christian dedication and witness.

(iii) Diakonial/Social Services

The Catholicosate has contributed significantly to the development of social services. It has not only encouraged social projects at the diocesan level, it has also initiated important social projects. It directly administered an orphanage, a sanatorium, popular housing projects and old peoples' homes in Lebanon, Syria and Greece.

(iv) Cultural Life

The Catholicosate promotes Armenian spiritual and cultural values as witnessed by its recent construction of a museum and by its well-stocked library. Its publishing house, which produces numerous titles every year, has organized many important book fairs, conferences, seminars and cultural gatherings.

(v) Ecumenical Relations

Since the 1950's ecumenism has occupied a major part of the work of the Catholicosate. Its lay and clergy representatives participated actively in the meetings and conferences of the ecumenical movement. The ecumenical engagement of the Catholicosate was given a more organized form after 1962, when it became a member of the world family of churches. During the World Council of Churches (WCC) general assembly in Nairobi, in 1975, Bishop Garegin Sargisyan (later Catholicos Garegin II) was elected as a vice-moderator of the central committee. At the WCC general assembly in Canberra, in 1991, Archbishop Aram K'ēshishean (since 1995 Catholicos Aram I) became the first Orthodox, the first Middle Eastern and the youngest person ever to be elected moderator of the central committee. His Holiness was re-elected moderator at the WCC general assembly in Harare, in 1998.

(vi) The Armenian Cause

Itself a victim of the Armenian Genocide, the Catholicosate was a key player in bringing the Armenian Cause to the attention of the world at large. It also worked to build its own people's awareness of the Genocide.

(vii) The Middle Eastern Context

Having its headquarters in the Arab world, the Catholicosate has participated fully in the major events of this region. It has taken part in the struggle for independence of the Arab countries, mainly in Lebanon and Syria. It has strongly

supported the Palestinian Cause and worked for a just, comprehensive and permanent solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Being a firm believer and defender of co-existence and dialogue, the Catholicosate has taken part in all efforts aimed at creating and strengthening a shared and harmonious common life among religions, societies, cultures and civilizations in the Middle East.⁷⁴

I conclude this sub-section with a testimony by Abraham Terian:

As for Antelias, while its commitment to the educational excellence of its celibate clergy is admirable and the academic achievements of certain of its Brotherhood is commendable, the Catholicosate remains absorbed in its self-definition vis-à-vis its role in the Armenian dispersion and alongside the other Sees.⁷⁵

C. The Development of Church-Nation and Faith-Culture Dynamism in the Armenian Reality Today

The Armenian Church is conscious of its primary call to be obedient to the imperatives of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It serves to praise God (cf. Eph 3.16-21), to teach the Word of God (cf. 2 Tim 2.2; 2 Tim 3.16-17), to proclaim the salvation of God (cf. Rom 1.16) and the good news of the Reign of God (cf. Acts 8.12), and to build up the body of faith in love (cf. Eph 4.15-16) in the variety of the members of one body in Christ (Rom 12.4-5). The Armenian Church –alongside all the Churches– does all this only to fulfill the one God-given mandate, which is to take Christ to the world, as Hans Küng defines it compellingly:

⁷⁴ With some modifications acquired from <http://www.armenianorthodoxchurch.org/v00/index.htm> accessed on 12 June 2010.

⁷⁵ Terian, “Monasticism and Education,” 6.

The Church's one task today then would be to serve the cause of Jesus Christ: that is, at least not to obstruct it, but to defend it, give effect to it, itself to realize this cause in the spirit of Jesus Christ in modern society.⁷⁶

Having penetrated all aspects of Armenian life, the Christian faith has strongly impacted the course of Armenian history. The history of the Armenian people and that of their Church are identical. Armenian Church and nation, and religion and culture are inextricably intertwined and no line of demarcation could be drawn between them. Their intimate interaction is always strong. The Church is a symbol of national unity, holding together the Armenians scattered throughout the world. The good of the Church and the interest of the nation are always in harmony. Christian faith and Armenian national identity are thoroughly mixed together in the Armenian ethos. In the construction of Christian Armenian identity, this fusion sometimes leads to ethnocentrism and tempts some Armenians to put the nation above the Gospel.

The Armenian Church is the church of the nation – a national church. All Armenians are integral elements in it. Christianity and 'Armenian-ness' bestow mutual sense of belonging to the nation and become one of its unique characteristics. The Church gives a corporate Christian identity to the nation and a new quality of life in God through the spiritual transformation of the Holy Spirit. From the adoption of Christianity by the Armenian people in 301, the Church becomes the primary guardian of the language, culture and identity of the nation. Through the inculturation of Christianity the Church turns out to be the embodiment of all achievements and longings of the people by synthesizing the Christian faith and national culture, piety and patriotism.⁷⁷ Loyal to its

⁷⁶ Küng, *On Being a Christian*, 478.

⁷⁷ For concrete historical examples, see Abraham Terian, *Patriotism and Piety in Armenian Christianity*, especially the Introduction, 13-77.

long-standing calling, the Armenian Church makes the Christ-event a living reality in the life of its people. The Brotherhood undertakes this noble task by simultaneously communicating the message of God and the teachings of the Armenian Church to strengthen the faith of the people in God and to attend to their spiritual and national needs.

The following characteristic statement on the Christian and national role of the Armenian Church made by Patriarch Eghishē Tērtērean, during a conference on ‘The Mission of the Armenian Church Today’, organized in Jerusalem, in 1980, remains forever relevant:

The Armenian Church is a national church because of historical circumstances related to its birth and development. ... Religious affection and national ideal have strengthened each other and became moral values sustaining our centuries-old history, from the very beginning of the first century AD. Ironically, this reality has been the weakness and the forte of our Church, which, as a two-edged sword, has wore off and sharpened our national life. ... The Armenian Church has always been a unifying fiber both religiously and socially.⁷⁸

The Armenian Church is the rock of faith (cf. Matt 7.24; 16.18) and the courageous shepherd (cf. Acts 20.28; 1 Peter 5.2) of its people in obedience to its role of conveying God’s love (cf. John 15.9-10; 1 John 4.7) and Christ’s peace (cf. John 14.27). The harmonious nation-building endeavors bear fruits when talents entrusted to the people are profitably invested in the Church (cf. Matt 25.14-30) for a Christocentric life. Armenians enjoy the democratic spirit of their Church by serving in its various administrative structures without discrimination of gender. Nowadays more youth and women secure their presence and involvement in the leadership of the Church and

⁷⁸ ‘*Sion*’ Volume 54, Number 7-10 (July-October, 1980), 51-52.

participate in its life, even though the ordained ministry is open to both male and female up to the diaconate only.

Two hierarchs of the Armenian Church underline the fact that people are actively involved in the life of the Armenian Church. Patriarch Maghak'ia Ōrmanean writes:

Among the Armenians the clergy are not looked upon as absolute masters and owners of the Church. This Church, since its institution, has belonged as much to the faithful as to the ministers of worship. In virtue of this principle, and apart from sacramental acts, for the performance of which ordination is indispensable, nothing is done in ecclesiastical administration without the co-operation of the lay element.⁷⁹

Catholicos Aram I in his on-line dialogue with the youth appeals for a participatory Church:

One of the characteristic features of our Church is the full participation of the people in the Church's total life. Men and women, disabled and youth, people from all walks of life without any discrimination contribute, in one way or another and on a larger or smaller scale, to the witness of the Church. The Armenian Church is not strictly a clerical Church, it is open to the people. Laity takes an active part in almost all aspects of the Church's life and mission, including decision-making structures and processes, and often with a determining voice. The people-based and people-oriented character of the Church must be further enhanced. However, the nature and the limits of the participation of laity in church matters and structures be clearly defined.⁸⁰

Up to the 19th century the Armenian Church supervised the educational, literary, cultural, social and national demands of the nation. The pressing majority of educators, teachers and artists came from the rank of the clergy, and the national leadership of the people was entrusted to the clergy. Today, the Brotherhood continues its missionary engagement of Christian and Armenian formation and leadership under much more

⁷⁹ Maghak'ia Ōrmanean, *The Church of Armenia* (New York, N.Y.: St. Vartan Press, 1988), 151.

⁸⁰ <http://www.armenianorthodoxchurch.org/v08/index.htm> accessed on 14 June 2010.

demanding conditions, especially with the growth of its dioceses and dispersion of its people. The Armenian Diaspora is not a homogenous entity anymore. The dense communities of the Middle East are replaced by the vast communities all over the globe. The constant mobility of the people and the danger of assimilation require the Church to be attractive enough to integrate the new generations of Armenians with the national values. These new circumstances oblige the Brotherhood to exert additional efforts to disseminate the Gospel message and to forge a theologically resonant life of being Armenian faithful in Christ, the source of our salvation (cf. Ps 87.6; Heb 5.9).

Armenians are transformed by the Christian faith to the extent that *martyria* – to live and suffer looking to the crucified and living Christ (cf. Rom 6.6; 2 Cor 13.4) – becomes the hallmark of Armenian Christianity. The Brotherhood believes that God never abandons his people (cf. Rom 8.31) and that they can overcome the endless tribulations they face through the special application of Christian *martyria* (cf. John 16.33; Rom 5.3; 8.35). Indeed, the Church is a credible witness of Christ in a continuous *martyria*, because “... if its strength had to lie in worldly power, the Church would be lost in the world. But if its strength lies in the cross of the risen Christ, then its weakness is its strength, and it can go on its way without fear of losing its identity.”⁸¹ *Martyria* receives its strength from the cross of Christ, since “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12.24).

The Armenian Church embraces the totality of the people, is concerned about the changes occurring in the life of the nation and is responsive to the needs and the challenges emerging from the new trends in the multilayered Armenian Diaspora. To be

⁸¹ Küng, *On Being a Christian*, 506.

loyal to the Armenian Christian identity, the Brotherhood boldly meets the challenges of the Christian faithful witness and to pursue a holistic ministry. In the globalized and secularized world the Brotherhood is called to cultivate active church-people relations and faith-culture interaction through the revitalization of its pastoral care, evangelical fervor and diaconal outreach to discern its prophetic role. Hence, the pursuit of human rights and dignity, peace and social justice, national determination and love of homeland, go together with the Christian ministry and national service of the Brotherhood in the Diaspora.

Although the very calling of the Brotherhood is to reach out to the Armenian Diaspora, it cannot be indifferent to the positive or negative developments taking place in the Republic of Armenia – the current homeland of all Armenians. Therefore, the decisive role of the Armenian Church in the Christian and national domains clearly indicates the full engagement of the Brotherhood in the church-nation building processes everywhere. The all-embracing mission of the Armenian Church comprises the entire life of the nation and makes the primary concerns of the Church – such as evangelism, social service, Christian and national formation, and community-building – requisite for all. To meet these contemporary concerns responsibly the Armenian Church needs well-educated and dedicated clergy.

The Brotherhood today serves in several countries and in different socio-cultural contexts. It is exposed to numerous challenges and applies contextual and global approaches to face these challenges. There are a number of political parties and cultural, educational, youth, students, women and sports associations in the ordinary life of the Armenian people. The Christian and national formation of their leadership and members

is necessary, as also their coherent cooperation with the Armenian Church hierarchy. Furthermore, coordination of activities is desirable not only to minimize friction and conflict among them but also to make the most of the service rendered by all of them to the nation. Plus, the Armenian Church regularly ascertains its aim of presenting the Christian faith in a national context rather than preserving the national culture in a spiritual environment.

D. The Post-Genocide Armenian Diaspora and the Armenian Church

The Armenian Diaspora has been in existence for a long time. In history Armenia was devastated by many foreign powers and Armenians were forced to migrate to more peaceful countries. Also, some Armenians even reached as far as the Far East due to their commercial ventures and settled in countries like India and China. But the current and numerically the largest Armenian Diaspora was created after the 1915 Genocide, when the initial survivors were expelled out of their motherland by the Turks, reached Middle Eastern hospitable countries and then some were dispersed all around the world – all the way to the North and South Americas, Australia, South Africa, etc. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, new waves of Armenians leaving their homeland mainly because of economic hardships, created their subgroups in already existing communities of the Armenian Diaspora and brought up new social complexities. The Armenian Diaspora – by and large – remains the direct result of the 1915 Genocide, which has left a lasting impact on Armenian identity throughout the widely dispersed communities.

In the middle of the 19th century, there were 2.5 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the majority lived in their ancestral homeland in the eastern

provinces of Anatolia. A series of massacres lasted until mid-1890's and claimed the lives of about 300,000 Armenians. In 1908, the Young Turk revolution removed the despotic Sultan and proclaimed a new egalitarian and modernist regime. Already in 1909 30,000 Armenians were massacred in Cilicia. The 1915 Genocide began when on 24 April, in Istanbul, some two hundred and fifty Armenian intellectuals – many of them clergy – were arrested to be deported, and then nearly all of them were murdered.⁸² Before 1914, over two million Armenians lived in Turkey. Since the First World War this figure has dropped below 100,000. About 1.5 million Armenians were victims of mass killings and another half-million became homeless refugees.

Immediately after the 1915 Genocide and up to 1965, for fifty years, Armenians in the Diaspora were in a state of irremediable shock, mourning their victims and lost land, assessing their new situation and organizing their life around their family, church, school and community center. In the post-Genocide Armenian reality the irreplaceable loss of the homeland was substituted by the extended family of relatives. In the Middle East, Armenians lived in close-knit associations and with the dream of the land of their forbearers and the repeatedly-told stories of the good old days. Compatriotic unions were formed and the sad reminiscences of the past were the prevalent feature of the Armenian collective identity. From 1965 to 1990 was a period of struggle for justice and recognition of the 1915 Genocide – through various legislative structures and otherwise; followed by demands for restitution and compensation for the Armenian land, material and other losses. This ongoing struggle is known as the “Armenian Cause.” Day after day Armenians were convinced that the Diaspora is a permanent reality and they have to look

⁸² More on the Armenian Genocide and related topics may be accessed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Genocide accessed on 1 March 2011.

for an established life in their host countries. New vitality in the Christian and national identity emerged, creating a virtual ‘spiritual Armenia’ wherever Armenian communities were formed. Various manifestations of Armenianness were expressed in the cultural and other realms of the Armenian Diaspora.

The year 1991 was a turning point in modern Armenian history, when with the disintegration of the Communist totalitarian regime former Soviet Armenia became an independent republic and Armenians felt that they have regained their partial self-determination on a small portion of their homeland. The creation of the Republic of Armenia and the ever growing Armenian Diaspora have brought new problems and challenges. Unless the 1915 Genocide is recognized and Armenian demands are met, the Armenian Diaspora lives with the loss of its ancestral, historic land. The Republic of Armenia is the homeland of all Armenians wherever they reside, but the loss of occupied Armenia beyond its borders remains a constant reminder of the 1915 Genocide. The Armenian Diaspora is mostly composed of descendants of the survivors from historical Armenia and they cannot conceive the Republic of Armenia as the axis of their identity. These Armenians feel themselves half Armenians both in the Republic of Armenia and in the Armenian Diaspora, with a lack of anchoring. Those Armenians who never have visited the Republic of Armenia feel more at home in the foreign land of their birthplace than in today’s small Armenia.⁸³

In August 2000, I made a pilgrimage to Cilicia, the land of my grandparents, and visited many towns and villages. I came back home to Lebanon with mixed feelings.

⁸³ I am well aware of the complexities of the Diaspora in respect to the Armenians leaving the Republic of Armenia and creating their ghettos in already existing communities. Also, the Armenian Diaspora is facing difficulties of integrating spouses joining the nation through mixed-marriages. Dealing with these issues is beyond the focus of this project.

Cilicia is my land; it belongs to me and at the same time it is not mine. I am not allowed to live there. It is occupied by the Turks and it ‘belongs’ to them. All Armenians feel the same way – we visit Turkey but we belong to ‘Turkish Armenia.’ I have multiple identities: I was born in Lebanon; in 1986 I migrated to Canada and the United States of America; in 1997 I came back to Lebanon; my parents are Armenian; my ancestors have been Armenian for centuries; since 1995 I visit the Republic of Armenia at least three times a year; I hold Lebanese, Canadian and Armenian citizenships – I am in exile, because my motherland is the Turkish-occupied Armenia, where my roots rest for ever. During a conversation, an Armenian native friend of mine in Lebanon said that he feels the whole universe being his home. “I was born in a Palestinian camp in Lebanon, because of Turkey, Armenia, Israel and Palestine,” he concluded. This resonates with the feeling of millions of Armenians.

Today Armenians live in a new world context dominated by the features of globalization, secularization and pluralism. Speedy technological progress is significantly impinging on our lifestyles, insights, norms and values. The Armenian Diaspora exists between the continuous and emergent inter-generational tension of assimilation and integration. The Republic of Armenia negotiates good neighborly diplomatic relations with Turkey based on territorial integrity and bilateral cooperation. Armenians and Turks are caught up in a psychological vicious cycle. Most Turks continue to deny the 1915 atrocities while others encourage the need to face their past and to break the silence to challenge the official state rhetoric of denial. Some Armenians acknowledge that many Turks are still in collective amnesia of the 1915 Genocide and the only possibility for admission of the perpetrated crime is open dialogue between the two sides. During the

last decade Armenians and Turks started talking together about the 1915 Genocide.⁸⁴ Turkish historians and intellectuals deliver lectures on this topic in Armenian milieus. Awareness-building and advocacy are growing through conferences and publications in many languages.⁸⁵

Where is the Armenian Church in all these developments? What are the expectations of the Armenian people from it? Most Armenians in the Diaspora find their homeland, culture, corporate identity and spiritual longings in their Church. Overcoming the dichotomy between ancient/Armenian and new/local identities, and adoption of an integrationist approach to diverse traditions, beliefs, practices and values in the Armenian Diaspora, is the paramount task of the Armenian Church for securing a sense of dignified attachment and belonging to both the nation and the host countries.⁸⁶ The Armenian Church has to co-create a coherent Armeno-local environment and maintain a careful balancing. Thus, the utilization of the classical Armenian language in the liturgy, which for some has little more than mystical significance, and the modern western and eastern vernacular in the daily communication – conversation, media, publications – solely for its national-cultural importance becomes a major challenge for the Church. For many Armenians being Armenian means resolute attachment to the Armenian language,

⁸⁴ On 24 April 2010, in Istanbul-Turkey, few hundred people publicly commemorated the Armenian Genocide. An American-Armenian was among them and he wrote about his impression, *The Sound of Footsteps on April 24 in Istanbul*. <http://www.azad-hye.net/news/viewnews.asp?newsId=148asdh73> accessed on 14 June 2010.

⁸⁵ As early as 1984 The Armenian Church has been instrumental in the publication of a booklet by the World Council of Churches in collaboration with Middle East Council of Churches, *Armenia: The Continuing Tragedy*.

⁸⁶ In 1890, Catholicos Mëkërtich' I, in his encyclical addressed to the Armenians in the United States of America, picks up this issue: "Live with each other in peace and in love, so that you may preserve your existence in a foreign land where many languages are spoken. Let your honest way of life and your civilized demeanor gain respect for you in the eyes of the non-Armenians. Give no one cause to trouble or hate you" (*History of the Western Diocese 80 Years of Service* (Burbank-California, 2008), 150).

Christian faith and historical homeland – although, the order of priority might vary from person to person. The Armenian Church remains the protector of cultural and national values, but is called not to abandon its foremost calling of being the messenger of the Gospel message. With its active involvement in the daily life of the Armenian people, the Brotherhood is the herald and the architect of affirmation and commitment of both national and local identities.

The deeper lesson of the 1915 Genocide for the Armenians is a Christian conscious response to this tragic experience and its aftermath. It has been over 95 years and still the primary concern for the Armenian Church is the physical well-being and political survival of the nation. It is important for the Brotherhood to embark on the renewed ministry of providing the daily spiritual bread to the Armenians and make the Reign of God a tangible life-giving presence in the post-Genocide Armenian community of faith. Young Armenians especially are looking for formation, reflection and action in the Christian life of discipleship, witness and service. Only the Church can train them to truly be the faithful servants of God, who raises the dead and gathers back his people (cf. Ps 106.47; Ps. 126.4-6; Ezek 37.12-14).

The long interaction with the Armenian Diaspora constantly calls the Brotherhood – itself a collective victim of the 1915 Genocide – to continue to be loyal to its proclamation of life in Christ, Christian Armenian identity, holistic mission and multi-faceted ministry both within its monastic community and throughout the Armenian Diaspora; to meet the demands of the new and ever-changing times with its moral character and spirit of servitude. Armenians look to their Church for the realization of

their salvation and the Brotherhood has to respond in the spirit of the Apostles: “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16.31).

CHAPTER 3

THE RULE OF THE BROTHERHOOD

I. Introduction

The Brotherhood⁸⁷ has its roots in the centuries-old Armenian monasticism, as I have indicated in Chapter Two. It brought its Rule from Cilicia to Lebanon in 1930. This Rule was continuously modified in response to the demands of the changing conditions. In the early 1980's the number of the brothers grew substantially and the need for a revised Rule was greatly felt. The current Rule is the product of the endeavors of those years and assumed its final form at the 9th Brotherhood General Assembly, in 2002.

Rules, in general, serve several purposes, as the following *Rule of the Society of St. John the Evangelist* indicates:

It enables the community to sustain its specific identity and focus through changes in leadership and the succession of generations, and it enables the Church to confirm and validate the vocation of the community and to hold it accountable. ...The word “rule” has a legalistic ring in English; the original Latin word *regula* suggests not so much a code of legislation but a means of regulating and regularizing. A rule sustains identity by mandating the rhythms of worship, spiritual discipline, prayer and rest, work and ministry. It sets out the patterns by which authority is distributed and where accountability is expected. It delineates the bounds of the community and describes the processes of initiation. And it connects the practices and ideals of the particular community or order with the gospel and the Christian mystery.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Today the Armenian Church has four Brotherhoods based at the hierarchical four centers of Armenia, Lebanon, Israel and Turkey. These Brotherhoods lead their lives according to their own Rules inspired by the traditional monasticism of the Armenian Church.

⁸⁸ *The Rule of the Society of St. John the Evangelist*, xii.

As it dwells on specifics, the Rule of the Brotherhood takes several concepts for granted; for example, the mandates of the Gospel as the ultimate rule. To follow Christ we need to be obedient to him. Our Lord underlined the “spirit” of the law rather than its literal application (cf. Mark 2.27); and the Apostle Paul reiterated the same by writing to the Corinthians: “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3.6). An Armenian Church father, Yovhannēs Ōtznets‘i (650-728), describes the canon law as “the illuminated path to God for all the believers in Christ who live in total obedience [to the divine commandments] (Cf. John 8.12).”⁸⁹ The same applies to the Rule, which has to conform to the present time and milieu, as well as to the changing social and cultural conditions. It is a guide which regulates our life by the principles of mutual love, trust, respect and accountability.

The Rule of the Brotherhood is a facilitator for the spiritual formation to take place, the identity to be molded and the ministry to be followed. Through the Rule several charisms are brought together to equip the brothers to participate in the building up of the Church (cf. Eph 4.12) through their concerted efforts. The Rule is charismatic; it binds the brothers to Jesus and to his authority and service, and transforms their personal responsibilities to a communal ministry. The Rule is also disciplinary; it oversees the harmonious life and service and when necessary introduces corrective measures for the betterment of all.

The observation made by Mark Gibbard corresponds very well with our Rule and all other monastic rules:

If this rule were ever to be regarded as an end in itself and to dispense us from always seeking further to discover God’s design, the love of Christ and the light

⁸⁹ Hakobyan, *Kanonagirk‘ Hayots‘* [*Canon Law of the Armenians*], 1.535.

of the Holy Spirit, we should be imposing on ourselves a useless burden. Then it would have been better never to have written it.⁹⁰

In this chapter I will first present the history of the development of the Rule, will reflect on its present structure and, when necessary, will refer to the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia⁹¹ which governs the obligations of the Brotherhood beyond its monastic center and I will point out the connectedness of these constitutional documents. In Chapter Five I will supply fresh ideas for a renewed appreciation and commitment by the Brotherhood to its Rule. Second, I will discuss the bearings of the Rule upon the Brotherhood. I will explain how the Rule needs to be conceived as a covenant for the building up of the Brotherhood, a provider of the means for formation and growth of the brothers, a regulator of the prayer and community life, service and leadership, a sustainer of the specific identity of the Brotherhood, a holder of everyone for mutual accountability, a facilitator of the mission and ministry of the brothers and their embrace of the Armenian Church in the Diaspora. And third, I will elaborate on the inter-relatedness of the Brotherhood to the Catholicosate, underlining the correlated articles of the Rule and the Bylaws. Further reflections and substantial recommendations for changes in the Rule and the Bylaws will be presented and discussed in Chapter Five.

⁹⁰ Mark Gibbard, "Christian Spirituality: The Contribution of the Communities," *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review* Volume 191 (January 1966), 24.

⁹¹ The Bylaws has 38 articles and is found in Appendix 4. The Bylaws of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, even under 'Catholicosate' section, does not specify what is the Catholicosate. Rather its Article 1 reads: "His Holiness the Catholicos of Cilicia is the Spiritual Leader of the Armenian people in the dioceses of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the President of all the national assemblies, the Head and Administrator of the Executive Authority." This means that by 'Catholicosate' we understand the spiritual and administrative Catholicosal headquarters and the diocesan jurisdiction under the Catholicos of the Holy See of Cilicia.

II. The Current Rule: A Critical Analysis

The Rule has 86 articles (see Appendix 2). The original language of the Rule is Armenian and the English translation is done by the author of the project. I will quote only the necessary parts of some articles and analyze their key concepts based on the principles set above. I will start with an important modification: Make appropriate changes in all the articles which use ‘obliged,’ ‘obligation/s’ and ‘must.’⁹² This modification arises from the fact that in Article I the brothers are already “vowed to live in a fraternal and communal manner, with Christian love and the spirit of obedience inspired by said Rule,” and Article 4 specifies that “The Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is subject to the Catholicos of Cilicia and is governed by this Rule.” This commitment is enough to treasure the dignity of a brother and the equality of brothers; the rest is fulfilled by shared human responsibility to the common service.

The Introduction consists of Articles 1 to 5. Although the Rule does not include a mission statement, Article 1 could be considered its mission statement. It specifies who the brothers are (a group of celibate clergymen); what the Brotherhood does (serves God and the Armenian Church, preaches the Gospel of Christ, fulfills the spiritual and other needs of the Armenian nation, takes care of the maintenance and development of Armenian culture); and how does it live (in a fraternal and communal way, with Christian love and the spirit of obedience inspired by said Rule).

Article 1 amalgamates the identity, the mission and the life of the Brotherhood. It is very clear that the Brotherhood does not exist for itself but to do the *missio Dei* – to serve God through the Armenian people. Because the emphasis of Article 1 is on the

⁹² Under “The Current Rule” I am highlighting only the key modifications. All the actual modifications are in Appendix 5.

mission of the Brotherhood, it is more proper to start with an introduction and include biblical quotations on its identity and life, which will sustain its mission. While people are governed by laws, monks live by love. The monastic identity, mission and lifestyle are summed by the following words of an Armenian Church father, Yovhannēs Gárnets‘i (1180-1245): “The foundation of all virtues is humility, the anchor is love, the pillar is hope, the mighty tower is faith and the culmination of all goodness is compassion, without which no one is able to see the Lord.”⁹³

Article 1 begins with these words: “The Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is composed of celibate clergymen, who are called to the service of God, the Armenian Church and people.” An essential clarification is needed here. “Armenian Church” and “Armenian people” need not be used together but alternatively, because the Armenian Church is the Armenian people and the Brotherhood serves God and the people of God. Also, Article 1 has to define “the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church.” The apostolicity, the orthodoxy and the holiness of the Armenian Church are explained in Chapter Two.

Article 2 reads: “The Brotherhood is an indivisible part of the Armenian Church and is faithful to its creed, teachings and traditions.” Article 2 needs to mention the existence of all the Brotherhoods in the Armenian Church and underline their belonging to the one Armenian Church. Therefore, I sub-divided Article 2 to two parts and made the necessary additions.

Article 4 reads: “The Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is subject to the Catholicos of Cilicia and is governed by this Rule.” It is more appropriate to replace

⁹³ Norayr Tsovakán, “Surb Horn Yovannēsi Gárnets‘oy Khrat Kronaworats” [“Counsel by the Holy Father Yovannēs Gárnets‘i to Monastics”], *‘Sion’*, Number 11-12 (November-December, 1953), 319.

“subject” by “obedient.” This corresponds to the interaction of authority and obedience, and is more compliant with Article 5.b “promise to obey His Holiness the Catholicos and execute the Brotherhood’s Rule.” Obedience to the head and to the Rule goes together. Although the Armenian Church recognizes only three orders in the Church –diaconate, priesthood and episcoposy– but it elects and consecrates the Catholicos, who serves for life. Also as the head of the Brotherhood he serves for life, and because of his privileged position and mandate holds an intrinsic superiority over the other brothers. Those who wish to guide others need to be aware of the danger of belittling or overlooking their own failings but exaggerating those of others. In the service of Christ it is imperative that a brother constantly examines and corrects his own life guided by biblical principles. Only then he has the clear sight to be able to help his brother properly (cf. Luke 6.41-42). The head needs to perform the role of a spiritual father (cf. 2 Thes 2.11-12) and exercise his authority in charity, because there are no superiors and subjects, but all are one in Christ. “The one who presides does so by exercising what St. Ignatius of Antioch, speaking of the Church in Rome, called a ‘presidency in *agape*.’”⁹⁴ As the representative of Christ and the corrective guide of the Brotherhood, the head needs to inspire common co-responsibility and lead by properly channeling the charisms of the brothers for a better service.

In his letter addressed to the priors of holy monastic orders, St. Nersēs Shnorhali underlines that in order to govern properly the leaders need virtue and knowledge, and admonishes them by saying:

The leaders of the church, whose paths are illuminated by two eyes, the knowledge of Scripture and virtuous deeds, and by purity and holiness and all the

⁹⁴ Tavad, “Freedom and Responsibility in the Religious Life,” 581.

justice which the commandments of God teach, guide – themselves as well as the entire brotherhood – rightly in divine things. And he who has one eye open and the other eye closed – that is, has knowledge without works of virtue or virtue without knowledge – is lacking in goodness and not perfect, and does indeed resemble a person with one eye.⁹⁵

Another Armenian Church father, Vardan Arewelts‘i (1200-1271), highlights the inter-connectedness of the Scriptures and holiness in the life of a priest:

The high rank of priesthood is based on two foundations: the knowledge of the Holy Bible and the holiness of the individual. If a candidate to the priesthood lacks one of these he is considered as a building without foundation, because if he has the knowledge of the Holy Bible and lacks in good works or vice-versa, he is not fit for the priesthood.⁹⁶

The Spiritual Life is covered in Articles 6 to 9 and they specify prayer, communal activities and services, administration of the holy sacraments, meditation, and the group study of the Holy Bible and the Church fathers. This regulates our life “in the Spirit” (cf. 1 Cor 6.11; 2.12) and provides food for our witness. The interrelatedness of prayer and community services is underscored by the Church father Gárnets‘i, who writes:

Venerable brother, the eagle does not fly only by its two wings but also by its big and small feathers and using all of them he rises up in the sky. And you cannot please God only by your prayers; you need to be humble and charitable, meek and serene, temperate and patient.⁹⁷

Article 8 reads: “To allocate one week in the year (preferably the week of the St. Gregory the Illuminator’s Pilgrimage Day of the Antelias Cathedral) to meditation, with

⁹⁵ Shnorhali, *General Epistle*, 41.

⁹⁶ Vardan Arewelts‘i, “Yaghags K‘ahanayut‘ean” [“On Priesthood”], *Mets Mashtots‘* (Constantinople, 1807), 343.

⁹⁷ Tsovakan, “Surb Horn Yovannēsi Gárnets‘oy Khrat Kronaworats” [“Counsel by the Holy Father Yovannēs Gárnets‘i to Monastics”], 320.

the participation of all the brothers.” In Chapter Five I will present an outline on the annual meditative gathering (Article 8) and the convening of the Brotherhood General Assembly once every two years (Article 36). The Pilgrimage Day falls on a Sunday, when the solemn Holy Eucharist is celebrated. One day before, on Saturday, the feast day of St. Gregory the Illuminator, we also celebrate Holy Eucharist. Diocesan brothers could arrive to the Catholicosate the earliest on Monday, because they have to celebrate the Holy Eucharist on the preceding Sunday in their respective dioceses and parishes. Therefore, they could gather for meditation Tuesday to Friday, participate in the Holy Eucharist on Saturday and Sunday, and conclude their gathering on Monday. For clarity and practicality a rephrasing of Article 8 is done in Appendix 3.

Article 9 reads: “Once a month, the brothers have a time of collective reflection, devoted mostly to the study of the Holy Bible and the Church fathers.” So far we have not implemented this article. The only thing which happens now is the monthly gathering of the brothers by the invitation of the Catholicos for information sharing on important events and some general discussion.

The imbalance between the Spiritual Life section (Articles 6 to 9) and the Communal Life section (Articles 14 to 32) is very apparent. Therefore, the Spiritual Life section needs more elaboration.

Articles 10 to 13 cover the Intellectual Life section and speak about the obligations of the brothers in increasing their religious and cultural knowledge, teaching in the theological seminary and other educational institutions, collaborating on ‘*Hask*’ and other publications of the Catholicosate, and producing studies pertaining to the Armenian Church, the Armenian people and other topics, as well as the activities and

history of the Holy See of Cilicia. Article 11 highlights the teacher-educator role of the brothers. Education is a vehicle for formation. Article 1 already refers to “the spiritual and other needs of the Armenian nation, as well as the maintenance and development of Armenian culture.” To teach in the theological seminary will give a chance to the brothers to follow more closely the upbringing, learning and formation of the future brothers, and resonates with Article 47: “Develop the theological seminary’s educational plan and determine the principles and direction of the theological seminary’s educational task.” To teach in the community schools will grant them an opportunity to be educators of spiritual and ethical principles, and to recruit seminarians. In Article 13 we read: “The brothers are obliged to produce works and studies pertaining to the Armenian Church, the Armenian people and other topics. More clarification is needed for “other topics.” In general, the Intellectual Life section is vague and brings very little out of the intellectual productivity of the brothers.

The Communal Life section has a long coverage in Articles 14 to 32. It first embraces the necessary areas of fraternal living and all the physical needs of the brothers (Articles 14-18) and then deals with the visitations in the country and the travels outside the country of a brother, and with general disciplinary measures (Articles 19-32).

Articles 15 and 16 refer to the gratis coverage of the physical and the medical needs of the monastery resident brothers. All articles dealing with financial income and expense need more transparency, because so far the Catholicos is in charge of finances. The Brotherhood needs to feel accountable for the financial income generation and balancing of its budget. Sharing of responsibilities and communal support must also

include the financial sphere. Based on this mutual accountability of the Brotherhood, I made a modification in Article 20.a.

Article 22 reads: “The brothers are to convey their concerns and problems to His Holiness the Catholicos, either verbally or in writing, through the Administrative Council.” This sounds very odd, especially when it is the first citation of the fatherly and filial relations. This article needs to start by a positive confirmation and encourage open and obedient communication of mutual trust between the superior and the brothers. I made a different phrasing.

Article 27 reads: “A brother is sent away from the monastery for a period of ministry of three years at most, the extension of which is decided exclusively by His Holiness the Catholicos.” Outside the monastery a brother serves either in a diocese or a parish. A diocesan brother is elected by a diocesan assembly, while a parish brother is appointed by a diocesan brother. This article refers to non-elected brothers only. In some dioceses the diocesan bishop-brothers are elected for life and in others for a term of limited years, but could be re-elected indefinitely. We have to live with these situations, because they are based on the diocesan bylaws. I subdivided this article to four points and included dispositions related to both elected and non-elected brothers. The Brotherhood is one entity and all the brothers have to return to the monastery after certain duration of service in the dioceses and parishes to express their zeal to their home (cf. John 2.17). This will grant an opportunity for all the brothers to share in the common ministry of the monastery and outside of it, avoid detachment from the monastery and by various personal gifts contribute to the general mission of the Brotherhood. Another major benefit of the revision of this article is the priority given to the authority of the

Brotherhood leadership over the diocesan and parish structures, because monastic vows are superior to the diocesan and parish positions.

Estates and wills are covered in Article 33 and it contradicts the vow of poverty, which unfortunately is nowhere mentioned. This is a major shortcoming in the whole Rule and needs to be reviewed seriously. Brothers serving in the dioceses live within a consumerist society, where they accumulate wealth and, relying on their material security, sometimes are tempted to not carry out their services in the spirit of poverty (cf. 1 Tim 6.9-10). Often they create artificial hurdles when they do not obey the dispositions of Articles 27, 29, 30 and 32. The life of a brother, as Rees reminds,

should be marked by frugality, simplicity, and gratitude for the gifts of God, and he must be aware of his duty to witness in a materialistic world to the dependence of men upon their heavenly Father, and to their need and destiny for a happiness beyond material fulfillment.⁹⁸

The absence of the vow of poverty creates disequilibrium between those who have financial security and those who rely on God for their material needs to be met. The vows of celibacy and obedience cannot exist in a monastic community without the vow of poverty, and three of them are sustained by prayer – the precise pointer of the life and mission of the monk – in response to the authority of the superior and obedience to the Rule.

All vows and commitments – whether it be to chastity, poverty and obedience, to silence and solitude, or to fasting and self-denial – can only be ancillary to the principal task, the life of prayer, which is the foundation of all monastic life. As this central principle of prayer becomes rooted in faith and in love, all other things are added to it.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Rees, *Consider Your Call: A Theology of Monastic Life Today*, 220.

Articles 34 to 47 are about the Brotherhood General Assembly. Article 34 mentions the Catholicos Locum Tenens for the first time (“His Holiness the Catholicos or the Catholicos Locum Tenens is the President of the Brotherhood General Assembly and the Bodies originating from it”). It is more appropriate to mention him in Article 3 (“His Holiness the Catholicos or the Catholicos Locum Tenens is the head of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia”). In this way it is clear that when the Catholicos is dead or if the Catholicos see remains vacant for any reason, the Catholicos Locum Tenens replaces him until the election of a new Catholicos. Therefore, there is no need to mention the Catholicos Locum Tenens anymore in the Rule. This is consistent with Articles 4, 5 and 6 of the Bylaws.

Articles 41 to 47 spell out the obligations of the Brotherhood General Assembly. Articles 42, 43 and 44 refer to Catholicos election, National General Assembly and Catholicos Electoral Assembly. These three are related to Articles 7, 23.b and 10 of the Bylaws. Article 47 rightfully gives prominence to the theological seminary and entrusts the Brotherhood General Assembly with the task to “develop the theological seminary’s educational plan and determine the principles and direction of the theological seminary’s religious-educational work.” The role of the theological seminary in the education and formation of the brothers is very crucial for the identity and ministry of the Brotherhood. This fact is clearly underlined here.

Articles 48 to 54 are dedicated to the Administrative Council and its responsibilities. Besides Articles 48 to 54, the Administrative Council is mentioned in Articles 5, 19, 22, 25, 26, 31, 45, 46, 56, 57, 58, 60, 63, 67, 70, 77, 80, 81, 82, 83 and 84.

⁹⁹ “Documentation: Orthodox Consultation on the Place of the Monastic Life within the Witness of the Church Today, 30 April – 5 May, 1979, Amba Bishoy Monastery, Egypt,” 449.

It seems that the Administrative Council is the executive arm of the Brotherhood under the presidency of the Catholicos, but since according to Article 53 “The decisions and arrangements of the Administrative Council are subject to the approval and validation of His Holiness the Catholicos,” it could only have consultative function. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to call it Advisory Council.

Articles 55-59 mention 13 monastic directorships and outline the mode of their operations. Article 55 reads: “The monastic directorships are: Grand Sacristan, Choirmaster, Dean of the theological seminary, Library, Museum, Publications, Printing House, ‘*Hask*’ editorship, Hospitality, Bookstore, Chief Steward, Pantry Chief, and Property Maintenance.” First, the order of the directorships needs reordering for the sake of coherence of some responsibilities and subsequently the numbering of the articles will be changed. And secondly, some responsibilities (e.g. ecumenical officer) are not covered by the Rule. Since the Catholicos is the head of the Brotherhood and of the Catholicosate and both are intersected and inter-dependent in their ministry, the following 15 missing responsibilities have to be included in the Rule and have their appropriate articles: (1) communications officer, (2) ecumenical officer, (3) youth department director, (4) archives department director, (5) Christian education director, (6) Sunday schools director, (7) university students association spiritual advisor, (8) special courses for married clergy candidates director, (9) boarding school spiritual advisor, (10) Christian education board membership, (11) ecumenical relations committee membership, (12) ‘*Hask*’ Armenological editorial committee membership, (13) Armenian education board membership, (14) literary funds membership and (15) university students scholarships funds membership. These further responsibilities and offices held by members of the

Brotherhood need to be added in the Rule all the more so since these involvements complete the picture of the holistic ministry of the Brotherhood. Also, an article should say that if more responsibilities are added, they need to be included in the Rule and have their appropriate articles.

Articles 60 to 78 enumerate the details of the responsibilities of the directorships. All these articles deal with the monastic responsibilities of the brothers and facilitate the internal life and service of the Brotherhood. I have introduced the necessary changes in these articles in Appendix 3. Since Articles 60 to 78 deal with in-house details, it would be better to have them at the end of the Rule, as internal guidelines.

Articles 79 to 81 specify the dispositions of conferring titles by the Catholicos. This area has always been sensitive, because the final authority rests with the Catholicos and his fatherly attitude plays a very crucial role. The real conciliar challenge for the Catholicos is to listen to the requests of the Administrative Council, the Brotherhood General Assembly and the diocesan authorities, and come up with a fair decision to confer titles on his brothers. The Rule carefully spells out this challenge, but the outcome of the decision of the Catholicos always leaves a minority disappointed.

Article 82 is about punitive measures, which are in response to unspecified “circumstance of severe culpability on the part of a member of the Brotherhood.” Here again the advisory role of the Administrative Council and the Chair and Secretariat of the Brotherhood General Assembly is underlined, since “the decision is presented to His Holiness the Catholicos for proper resolution.”

Conferring of Titles and Punitive Measures sections put a very heavy burden on the Catholicos and makes his prudence – the mother of the virtues – and authority –

power exercised in love – to serve the common benefit of the Brotherhood and the Armenian Church.

Articles 83 to 86 are about various dispositions for the resolution of unforeseen issues, the review of the present Rule and its modification and implications. Although Articles 83 to 85 do not explicitly refer to the Catholicos, but as the president of the Administrative Council and the Brotherhood General Assembly he is actively involved in these processes. Article 86 reads: “The present Rule consisting of 86 (eighty six) articles assumed its final form in the 9th Brotherhood General Assembly, 4 June 2002, and was approved by the Encyclical of His Holiness the Catholicos dated ... and numbered ... for execution.” The Rule has been provisionally implemented since June 2002. The Chair and Secretariat of the Brotherhood General Assembly are collecting the opinions and the recommendations of the brothers for its final modification, which will be discussed at the next Brotherhood General Assembly in 2011. If no major changes are required, then the Rule will be officially approved by the encyclical of the Catholicos.

III. The Existing Bylaws: A Critical Analysis

The correlated articles of the Rule of the Brotherhood with the Bylaws of the Catholicosate will make clearer the inter-relatedness of the Brotherhood to the Catholicosate. I will not thoroughly review the Bylaws but just elaborate on the key articles and enumerate the related articles to show the effect the Brotherhood and the Catholicosate have on each other. Those who are more interested about the Bylaws of the Catholicosate have to refer to Appendix 4.

In 2002 the Bylaws of the Catholicosate was approved by the pontifical encyclical of Catholicos Aram I. In this encyclical the Catholicos referred to the Christian Church as

a community in need of laws “to organize and maintain its thinking, decisions, activity and, generally speaking, its life, as well as to give it clear boundaries and direction.”¹⁰⁰

After reminding how necessary canons were adopted for proper Church governance as of the ecumenical councils of the Universal Church and the local councils of the Armenian Church, the Catholicos underlined that “The bylaws of the churches have always been made to conform to their times and environment, as well as to the ever-changing social-cultural and religious-political conditions.” In 1863 the National Constitution was proclaimed for the governance of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, organizing their life around the Armenian Church. “The bylaws of all the dioceses subject to our Holy See are inspired by the basic principles and overall direction of the National Constitution, with unique local conditions always being taken into consideration” confirmed the Catholicos. From 1941 to 2002 the Bylaws of the Catholicosate was revised on numerous occasions, taking into consideration “the church’s democratic principles and the people’s active participation in the communal life and mission of the church. ... Thus, today the Bylaws of the Catholicosate of Cilicia are more complete and crystal clear, having been adapted to the greatest extent possible to the present conditions of life of our people,” states the encyclical and confirms and approves the Bylaws.

The oddest deficiency of the Bylaws is the lack of any reference to the Holy Trinity. The Catholicosate is not a civic organization but inseparable part of the Armenian Church. Therefore, an appropriate opening paragraph is added in Article 1.¹⁰¹ Also, in Article 1 of the Bylaws, when enumerating the offices held by the Catholicos,

¹⁰⁰ All the quotations of this paragraph are from the pontifical encyclical found in Appendix 4.

¹⁰¹ All modifications to the Bylaws are indicated in bold letters in Appendix 5.

“and the Head of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia” is added, echoing Article 3 of the Rule of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

The democratic nature and the clergy-laity cooperation of the Catholicosate are very noticeably spelled out in the Bylaws. These two characteristics were unique to the Armenian Church from its inception. The Catholicosate and the Brotherhood are called to maintain them through excellent collaboration inspired by their Bylaws and Rule. The Armenian Church as the body of all believers has a larger number of lay people than clergy and laity is a majority presence in the service to God and governance of the Church. The people of God serve God through the Church – the totality of the faithful gathered in the name of God. Articles 9 and 10 refer to the participation of the clergy and the Brotherhood in the election of a Catholicos, and Articles 22-25 refer to their participation in the National General Assembly. For the election of a Catholicos, Article 9 reads: “One third of the number of delegates must be clergy, and two thirds laypersons,” and for the National General Assembly, Article 22 reads: “One seventh members of the National General Assembly must be comprised of clergy and six sevenths of laypersons.”

Article 3 of the Bylaws refers to the religious council, lay council and joint council of the central executive committee and the vicar general. This is the first reference to the clergy-laity collaboration. Article 26 reads: “The Central Executive Committee, with its Religious and Lay Councils, is the Executive Body of the Catholicosate of Cilicia. The Religious and Lay Councils of the Central Executive Committee shall respectively consist of equal number of members – seven, nine or eleven – to be elected by the National General Assembly.” And Article 28 specifies: “Clergy,

who are members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, and married clergy, if need be, can be elected as members of the Religious Council of the Central Executive Committee.” The Bylaws need to explicitly indicate that the vicar general has to be a member of the Brotherhood.

Article 29 lists the primary obligations of the religious council, lay council and the joint council. Articles 20.c, 21.d, and 21.e refer to the religious council and lay council. Articles 5, 8, 14, 24.c, 33, 34, 35 and 36 refer to the joint council. Article 53.h of the Rule, under the responsibilities of the Administrative Council, reads: “Prepare the annual budget of the Brotherhood and the Directorships subject to it and present it to the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee.”

Articles 4, 5, 7, 10.b, 16, 18, 20.a and 23.b refer to the Brotherhood and the Brotherhood General Assembly. Article 20.a, in the legislative and administrative assemblies section, mentions the Rule of the Brotherhood: “Brotherhood General Assembly, which is convened according to the Rule of the Brotherhood.” Article 7 indicates that the candidacy for the office of Catholicos of Cilicia is not limited to the members of the Brotherhood. This article has to be modified in the spirit of reciprocity pointed out in Article 12. Article 7 underlines the unity of the Armenian Church: “After a forty-day period of mourning, the Locum Tenens shall convene the Brotherhood General Assembly, which, by secret ballot, shall compile a list containing the names of five candidates selected from among the bishops of the Armenian Church.” But for the election of Catholicos of All Armenians in Holy Ējmiatsin there is no reciprocal, corresponding article. There ought to be such reciprocity to embrace the unity of the Armenian Church.

Article 1 reads: “His Holiness the Catholicos of Cilicia is the Spiritual Leader of the Armenian people in the dioceses of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the President of all the national assemblies, the Head and Administrator of the Executive Authority.” It is more appropriate to begin this article with a paragraph on the Catholicosate of Cilicia and then speak about the Catholicos (see Appendix 4, Article 1). Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 25 and 38 refer to the Catholicos.

Articles 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 18 and 25 refer to the Catholicosal Locum Tenens. Article 5 reads: “When His Holiness the Catholicos passes away and/or if the See remains vacant for any reason, the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, with the participation of the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the National General Assembly and the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the General Assembly of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia shall elect the Catholicosal Locum Tenens.” The Bylaws needs to explicitly indicate that the Locum Tenens has to be a member of the Brotherhood.

In general the Bylaws maintains the balance of clergy and laity participation and collaboration in the service to the Armenian Church. But two areas need further improvement. First, to adopt the principle of conducting every business through the joint council and for purely religious matters convene the religious council.¹⁰² This will enhance the cooperation of the clergy and laity and confirm that there are no lines of separation and points of influence between them in the governance of the

¹⁰² The Armenian Apostolic Church of America, Inc. (Eastern Prelacy) is the only Diocese of the Catholicosate which implements this provision. We read in its Bylaws: “IV. THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, Article 26: The Executive Council is composed of 2 separate bodies which routinely convene together: A. A Religious Council composed of 3 or 5 clergymen. B. A Lay Council composed of 7 or 9 laymen.” (Obtained by a personal email on 7 July 2010).

Catholicosate.¹⁰³ Second, the Bylaws needs to have an article explaining how an Armenian lay person has to become a member of the Armenian Church and then participate in the assemblies and serve on the lay council of the Catholicosate. The inclusion of the importance of Christian education and formation for service on the legislative structure of the Armenian Church is a must and needs to be clearly spelled out in the Bylaws.

IV. Conclusion

The re-writing of the Rule is a continuous process of spiritual development to facilitate growth in response to the gifts of the Holy Spirit given for the edification of the Brotherhood in ever-changing circumstances. In revising the Rule for the renewal of the Brotherhood, the real challenge is to keep its authentic tradition¹⁰⁴ while making the Rule relevant to its contemporary needs. The revised Rule has to be re-adopted by each brother and embraced as a new guide for service, to lead the Brotherhood in its response to God's call to corporately live the Gospel in the life-changing presence of Christ.

The modification of the Rule is an integral part of the renewal of faith, prayer and service of the Brotherhood and ensures its life and mission for today and for the future. The Rule was finalized in 2002 and until today it has been applied provisionally. The

¹⁰³ A saying of St. Augustine quoted in the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* is good to bear in mind referring to the role of the clergy as leaders of the whole Church: "When I am frightened by what I am to you, then I am consoled by what I am with you. To you I am the bishop, with you I am a Christian. The first is an office, the second a grace; the first a danger, the second salvation" (Susan Star Paddock, *Appreciative Inquiry in the Catholic Church* (Plano, Texas: Thin Book Publishing Company, 2003), 15).

¹⁰⁴ The definition and role of the tradition are perfectly defined by the English Benedictine Congregation: "... tradition is the past living in the present; it does not mean a subjection to the standards of the past, nor merely an accurate transmission of something that remains identical throughout the whole process. Tradition (*paradosis*) is of its nature a process of vital communication directed towards the future, and it must therefore adapt itself to its changing recipients. This especially has to be the case where the tradition concerned is a way of life, not only if it is to pursue the course of legitimate development, but even if it is to retain the same role it has played earlier" (Rees, *Consider Your Call: A Theology of Monastic Life Today*, 54).

years 2002 to 2010 has been years of reflection and communications between the brothers and the Brotherhood leadership for an honest and sincere evaluation of how we respond to God's call in communal love and in sharing of our values that bind us together.¹⁰⁵

The revised Rule will be more operative and effective only if it is formulated in a way to cultivate a spirit of overcoming egocentricity and to underscore communal decision-making and shared responsibility. The Rule will be a real covenant underlining the relationships between God and one another in encountering our brothers in Christ and cherishing the irreplaceable value of community life and service. The Rule will create a joyful relationship of human friendship only when brothers experience *metanoia* and live for one another and their Brotherhood, thus belonging to one genuine family nourished by a communal spirituality.

¹⁰⁵ According to Marie Margaret Johanning: "The re-writing of a constitution is a work of theology, of bringing scripture, tradition, and other theological sources into dialogue with a congregation's faith, charism, history, and lived experience" ("Theology and Governance in Religious Life: A Personal Reflection," 74).

CHAPTER 4

THE FIELD RESEARCH

I. Introduction

Article 1 of the Rule of the Brotherhood defines the character and mission of the Brotherhood, which at the time of the research was composed of 44 members. Also, as I already indicated in Chapter Three, Article 1 could be taken as the mission statement of the Brotherhood and the remaining articles as its supportive elements. My research focuses on the composition, formation, identity and ministry of the Brotherhood as it is spelled out in the Rule and expressed in the responses to the survey. Chapter One and Chapter Two of this study gave an in-depth description of the Brotherhood, including its organizational structure and the theological nature of its calling and service (cf. John 6.44). Article 1 of the Rule puts these in a general framework:

The Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is composed of celibate clergymen who are called to the service of God, the Armenian Church and people; who have vowed to live in a fraternal and communal manner, with Christian love and the spirit of obedience inspired by said Rule, and whose calling is to preach the Gospel of Christ and fulfill the spiritual and other needs of the Armenian nation, as well as the maintenance and development of Armenian culture, through their service to the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church.

The common denominators in the ministry of the brothers are: belonging to the same Church, sharing the same Christian faith and culture, and serving the same people. These commonalities enhance the Brotherhood's relations, intensify its cooperation, reinforce its partnership and affirm its commitment. The brothers are further upheld and enriched

by their focus on the foundation and bond of belonging to God for mutual up-building (cf. Rom 14.19). This fosters private and communal prayer, seminary character formation, unity of mind, purpose, heart and soul (cf. 1 Cor 1.10; Acts 4.32), deep communion of fellowship on earth and in God's upcoming Reign, longing to live in the discipleship of Christ and the peace of the Holy Spirit as children of God (cf. Rom 8.14), living a common Christian life in God's graceful presence, and sharing of common values and pursuance of common good.

Daniel Rees describes similar goals for the English Benedictine Congregation:

This underlying theological principle, the communication of the Spirit, provides the basis for the common life and fraternal unity. In more particular terms, its application may be guided by four different principles. First, there is the principle of *solidarity*, which states that in every area of life, from the most spiritual to the most mundane, all that the community does is the concern, and, in differing measure, the responsibility of each individual monk, even when it is a question of work that goes beyond the immediate confines of the monastery. Second, there is the principle of *pluralism*, which recognizes the ultimate worth of every individual person and that it is right, within certain bounds, for there to be variety and diversity within the framework of the community. Third, there is the principle of *authority*, which expresses the underlying need for and validity of the exercise of leadership in the monastic community, above all in the case of the abbot, but also at other levels of the monastery's life and work. Fourth, there is the principle of *subsidiarity*, which states that what is within the competence of a person or body of persons should not be taken over by a higher authority. This principle governs the delegation of authority, the responsibility of an individual or group within the monastery for a particular task, and the legitimate exercise of free initiative at every level in the community.¹⁰⁶

In light of this mission, the goals of my survey are: to explore the commonalities which gather the brothers around their divine calling for the unity of brotherly love, to gain understanding of the feelings and concerns of the brothers, and to re-animate them by the common divine calling we have, the communal life we share, and the mission we try to

¹⁰⁶ Rees, *Consider Your Call: A Theology of Monastic Life Today*, 66-67.

fulfill. More specifically, my objectives are: (a) to describe, collectively, the rich inter-generational experiences of the brothers; (b) to bring forth their voices in order to re-assess the service of the Brotherhood, to envision a livable present and positive future, and to shape it along its notable potentials; and, (c) through the brothers' active participation and cooperation, to secure their support for the future possible implementation of the outcomes of the project for the successful renewal of the Brotherhood in order to face the challenges of the new times.

The research focuses on the following seven questions:

- A. What and/or who do you consider to be the key movements, structures, and people (role models) who have shaped and are shaping the identity of the Brotherhood? What is the significance of their contribution? What is the effect of their efforts?
- B. Do you believe that by a modified process of our personal and corporate formation the Brotherhood might have more members and could carry out better ministry?
- C. Why are you in the Brotherhood today? What do you consider the ultimate fulfillment of life, as a member of this corporate body?
- D. Who are the decision-makers and influence-bearers in the Brotherhood? Are you satisfied with the status quo? If not, do you see any possibilities for change? How?

- E. In the Brotherhood, which things have endured, which things have changed, and which things have disappeared as time passed?
- F. Do you think that the Brotherhood is fulfilling its calling by adequately serving God through the Armenian Church?
- G. What suggestions do you have for the linkage of the resident and non-resident members of the Brotherhood?

II. Method

The survey was conducted in July 2007, by face-to-face interviews with the fourteen resident brothers in the monastery (four bishops and ten priests), and by an on-line survey with open-ended questions with 25 brothers serving in the dioceses and parishes (14 bishops and 11 priests). The personal interviews were not tape-recorded. I took notes during the conversation and then checked their accuracy with the respondents. The brothers serving in the dioceses and parishes sent in their written responses.

The respondents, all members of the Brotherhood, were familiar with the context of the survey, knew me well, and talked candidly. My seven questions served as stimuli for the brothers to express their thoughts and sentiments in the interviews and written responses; they also helped guide the conversations and the reflections submitted in writing. To respect the confidentiality of the respondents, I have used pseudonyms when referring to them in the project.

A. Sample

The sample consisted of 42 members of the Brotherhood (21 bishops and 21 priests); the Catholicos and the author of the project were not included. I divided the

sample into three groups according to the dates of their priestly ordination. Group One was composed of the senior generation (1952-1972 – 13 bishops and two priests), Group Two of the middle generation (1976-1988 – eight bishops and two priests), and Group Three of the new generation (1990-2010 – 17 priests). There are no survivors from the 1930's, the founding time of the Brotherhood, and in 1973-1975 and 1989 there were no ordinations. The responses are classified according to these three group categories.

I sent the initial letter to request participation in my survey to the 42 members. When I did not hear from 14 members (five from Group One, three from Group Two and six from Group Three), I sent them a reminder and all but one then responded.¹⁰⁷ Thus the total number of participants was 41. The letter, the questions and the interviews were in Armenian; I translated them later into English.

B. Characteristics of the Survey Participants

Out of the 41 participants, 21 members were born in Lebanon (10 bishops and 11 priests), 18 in Syria (10 bishops and 8 priests) and two priests in Armenia.

Fourteen participants served in the Catholicosate (four bishops and ten priests) and 27 in the 12 dioceses (14 bishops and 13 priests). The 12 dioceses under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate were (the numbers in parentheses refer to the approximate size of the total Armenian population): (1) Lebanon-Beirut (100,000), (2) Syria-Aleppo (75,000), (3) Cyprus-Nicosia (5,000), (4) Kuwait and Gulf Countries-Kuwait (10,000), (5) Greece-Athens (20,000), (6) Tehran-Iran (70,000), (7) Isfahan-Iran (10,000), (8) Aderbadagan-Iran (10,000), (9) Eastern United States of America-New

¹⁰⁷ Only one brother from Group One declined to participate in the survey and sent me a short note saying, "Thank you for your confidence in me, but please contact another brother to answer your questions. I wish you success for your project."

York (400,000), (10) Western United States of America-Los Angeles (one million), (11) Canada-Montreal (50,000), (12) Venezuela-Caracas (3,000). We do not have the exact numerical count of the Armenians who migrated from the Republic of Armenia after its independence in 1991 and settled in these dioceses. Also, the exact number of church members is not known, because the Armenian Church never conducted a census.

In the dioceses, the participants included 11 bishops (one in each of these dioceses: Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Kuwait, Greece, Eastern United States of America, Western United States of America and Canada; and three in Iran) and one diocesan vicar bishop (Eastern United States of America), one diocesan dean priest (Venezuela), one diocesan vicar priest (Syria), two retired bishops (Western United States of America), three administrative assistant priests to the bishops (one in Syria and two in Western United States of America) and eight parish pastors (one in Greece, one in Aderbadagan-Iran, one in Eastern United States of America, two in Western United States of America and three in Canada). Three parish pastors (one in Greece, one in Eastern United States of America and one in Canada) were pursuing their university studies while pastoring.

In regard to the educational level of the participants, all 41 of them are graduates of the theological seminary in Antelias. Thirteen bishops and 10 priests hold university degrees, including the two bishops with doctorates.

C. Survey Questions

In the resident interviews, each of the seven questions opened up a conversation on the topic, followed by deeper reflection. Each interview averaged an hour and a half in length. The on-line survey utilized the same open-ended questions with an invitation to

elaborate. Each method provided an opportunity for the respondents to reflect beyond the questions and share their life experiences.

Question A: *What and/or who do you consider to be the key movements, structures, and people (role models) who have shaped and are shaping the identity of the Brotherhood? What is the significance of their contribution? What is the effect of their efforts?* This question focused on the role of the founders of the Brotherhood in molding its identity and original purpose in Antelias in the early 1930's. We exist in the company of dead and living people who, despite their human frailties, influence us. The question attempted to determine the founding charisms of the Brotherhood; it opened up the whole area of the connectedness of the brothers to their mentors in their common journey within the Brotherhood.

Question B: *Do you believe that by a modified process of our personal and corporate formation the Brotherhood might have more members and could carry out better ministry?* This question was about continuity and newness in the formation of the brothers for improved ministry. The question was important, because formation is a life-long process with mutual participation of all brothers, while ministry is the sacred common task of all brothers with a corporate vision and commitment.

Question C: *Why are you in the Brotherhood today? What do you consider the ultimate fulfillment of life, as a member of this corporate body?* This question probed directly into each brother's feelings about being an integral part of the Brotherhood and an active

participant in its ministry. This shifted the focus of the survey from the general and communal aspect to the direct personal involvement in a profound life of faith, prayer, and service centered in Christ.

Question D: *Who are the decision-makers and influence-bearers in the Brotherhood? Are you satisfied with the status quo? If not, do you see any possibilities for change? How?* This question was about the interplay of authority and obedience, and the potentials for modification in the leadership style. The question introduced the issue of renewal that was later picked up by questions E and F.

Question E: *In the Brotherhood, which things have endured, which things have changed, and which things have disappeared as time has passed?* The intention of this question was to put the continuity of the Brotherhood in perspective and highlight the permanent and changing components in it.

Question F: *Do you think that the Brotherhood is fulfilling its calling by adequately serving God through the Armenian Church?* This question was an indirect reference to Article 1 of the Rule to test the awareness of the brothers of their calling, both in the narrow and broad circles of their service. The question aimed also at bringing in the new reality of the contemporary world and changing times as the brothers search for a transforming response and a renewed ministry.

Question G: *What suggestions do you have for the linkage of the resident and non-resident members of the Brotherhood?* This issue is very crucial for holding the Brotherhood as one body who is called to serve in the monastery and in the dioceses, where it faces many different challenges but has to maintain its unity in diversity. In Chapter Three the solid fraternal relationships of the internal and external brothers was taken up as a vital area for revitalization of the calling of the Brotherhood.

III. Findings

A. The Charisms and the Role of the Founders of the Brotherhood

The Brotherhood lives and serves by remaining faithful to the original spirit of its founders and by adapting itself to the modern needs emerging in the community and the dioceses. All the brothers expressed their gratitude to the founders for their resilience and for leaving a permanent mark on the identity and service of the Brotherhood. Expressions of this gratefulness was seen in three areas: the key movements shaping the identity of the Brotherhood, the founders of the Brotherhood and their enduring vision, and the creation of the Armenian spiritual and community life in the Diaspora.

1. The Key Movements Shaping the Identity of the Brotherhood. All three groups appreciated the strong foundation of community life and the diocesan, programmatic, relational, and coherent mission of the Brotherhood to the Armenian Church through the dedication of the brothers to abide in God and to serve him.

Group One, the senior members, considered the purchase of the Catholicosate, the networking of the dioceses and the initial spiritual, educational, cultural and social

programs and achievements of the Brotherhood very essential and enduring. For Brother Vērēzh “the Brotherhood is called to serve God and the Armenian people as the guardian and the promoter of our spiritual treasures and culture.” Brother Ařak‘el summed up the historical stages of the Brotherhood as follows:

1930-1935 were the years of the re-establishment of the Brotherhood and the ownership of the Antelias property. 1935-45 were the years of construction of new buildings. 1945-1952 were the years of national, religious and cultural inspiration and formation. Up to 1963 was the period of ecclesiastical fervor, and the years then on were years of pursuit of all of these as the ever-growing mission of the Brotherhood.

Brother Matt‘ēos assessed the settlement of the Brotherhood in Lebanon as a great opportunity for its members and the graduates of the community schools, which he saw as benefiting from the Lebanese liberal educational system.

In Group Two, the middle generation, Brother Vēlas sketched another four historical stages for the Brotherhood:

1915-1956, years of reorganization; 1957-1963, years of institutionalization and servitude; 1964-1995, years of new buildings, publications, cultural activities and national responsibilities; 1996 to the present, the new era, years of higher education, and ecumenical and international relations.

He considered Christian education the principal ministry of the Brotherhood and the re-establishment of a Sisters’ Order in the Armenian Church its novelty.

In Group Three, the youngest group, Brother Aristakēs reconfirmed that the Brotherhood is the indivisible part of the Armenian Church and identified “the communal lifestyle, the preaching of the Gospel (cf. Col 4.6), the intellectual work and the pastoral care” of all the brothers as their contribution to the up-building of the Church.

The increase of Muslim fundamentalism in the Middle East is also affecting Lebanon. This will definitely have long-term worrisome effects on the Christian existence and witness in the pre-dominantly non-Christian milieu where the headquarters of the Brotherhood is located. Brother Matt'ēos of Group One saw a big danger in this development but was not in favor of moving the headquarters of the Brotherhood to a more Armenian populated and safer place like Los Angeles. “The Brotherhood was with its people in the Middle East during its difficult times and has to continue its service out of Lebanon to generate hope of survival,” was his opinion.

2. The Founders of the Brotherhood and their Enduring Vision. Group One was more attached to individual founders as role models and referred to their attributes of hope, vision, intellect and sainthood, their contribution to seminary formation, international relations of the Brotherhood, and the creation of the Armenian Diaspora. Group Two emphasized the role of the theological seminary as the backbone of the formation of the brothers, and all its graduates as the lasting legacy of the founders. Group Three put the vision of the founders in the general framework of serving God and the totality of the Armenian Church.

Group One viewed the founders in a much broader scope and timeline. They identified Catholicos Sahak II as the initial founder – full of hope, vigor and foresight, Coadjutor Catholicos Babgēn I as a visionary, Bishop Shahē Gasparean as the first dean of the theological seminary and an intellectual, Catholicos Petros I as a coordinator, Catholicos Garegin I as a mentor of Armenian culture, Catholicos Zareh I as a model of saintly life, Catholicos Khorēn I as an exceptional organizer and fundraiser, Catholicos

Garegin II mostly as the dean of the theological seminary, Catholicos Aram I as an international figure, Bishop Zareh Aznaworean as an inspirer of spiritual life and Biwzand Eghiaean as an especially dedicated lay teacher and character molder. For Brother Vērēzh “a handful of faithful clergy and laity who survived the Genocide were instrumental in their service of forming the brothers because they had the unyielding support of the people.”

Many in Group Two did not pinpoint any founders by name, but regarded the founding of the theological seminary, in the general framework of the organization of the Armenian religious and national life, as the major achievement of the Brotherhood for the preservation of the remnants of the nation after the Genocide. For Brother T‘ovmas “the genuine formation of our Brotherhood for mission starts in the theological seminary, where we still feel the spirit of our founding generation.” For Brother Addē the extension of the vision of the founders of the Brotherhood is expressed also through the Association of the Antelias theological seminary Graduates, which is active in the dioceses. “This Association not only raises funds for the theological seminary but also recruits candidates for the celibate and married priesthood,” he explained. Brother Shēnorhk‘ spoke about the Brotherhood as an inseparable part of the Armenian Church, placed its roots in the first century and recalled some saints and heroic figures of the Armenian history as role models: “In the name of Christ, with vivid faith and by blood testimony, we undauntedly continue the legacy of St. Yovhanēs Ōtznets‘i, St. Grigor Tat‘ewats‘i, Nersēs Ashtarakets‘i and Khērimean Hayrik.”

Group Three regarded the Catholicoi as the founders of the new era of the Brotherhood and the carriers of the past glorious religious and national heritage, and described their vision as total dedication to serve God and the Armenian Church.

The life of the Brotherhood is anchored in Christ. For many brothers this was a given reality, while in Group Three Brother Kiwregh came up with this bold statement: “The Church is built on Christ and the Armenian Church is part and parcel of it. Therefore, Christ should be the only role model of our Brotherhood and should instill in us his servant spirit.”

Among the ranks of the clergy other than the Catholicoi, Bishop Zareh Aznaworean was mentioned by many brothers in all groups as a saintly role model, a brother always available for all, founder of the Christian education department, and patron of the spiritual fiber of the Brotherhood.

3. The Creation of the Armenian Spiritual and Community Life in the Diaspora. The founding of the Brotherhood was interconnected with the blossoming of the religious and national life in the Armenian Diaspora after the 1915 Genocide and the Sovietization of Armenia in 1920. The communist penetration into Armenia not only prohibited the Armenian Church from taking care of its people in the homeland, but also cut it off from contacts with Armenians outside Soviet Union and from reaching out to the needs of the dioceses under the jurisdiction of Holy Ējmiatsin. All the respondents emphasized the power of God that provided spiritual nourishment and facilitated a national revival by the joint efforts of the brothers who organized the post-Genocide

Armenian Diaspora. There was a very strong sense of the need for us, “earthen vessels,” (cf. 2 Cor 4.7) to rely on God’s providence.

In Group One, Brother Zak’aria looked back to the past and fused the founders and events with the following statement:

During the last 95 years, our Brotherhood played a leading role and offered an irreplaceable service in the maintenance of the Diaspora Armenian communities. This was done because of the tireless efforts of our Catholicoi, who not only became founders of a new era, but integrated the gifts of all the brothers for the common ministry entrusted to them by God.

In the same group, Brother Matt’ēos paralleled the resurrection of Jesus with the rising of the Armenian people for a new life despite all the calamities of the early 20th century, and saw the role of the Brotherhood as inspiring this hope of renewal.

Brother Khach’atur of Group Two remembered the role of the theological seminary in the formation of the leaders for the Armenian Diaspora:

During the last 75 plus years the majority of the clergy and intellectuals serving in the Diaspora were graduates of our theological seminary, and they put their indelible mark on the spiritual, intellectual, and cultural developments of our people.

For Brother Garegin of Group Three, the survival of the Armenian people and the re-flourishing of the Brotherhood in Antelias are gifts of God. “Many clergy were killed during the 1915 Genocide, but God did not abandon us, and although we are not large in number, we are still able to reach out to the needs of our people,” he stated.

Only Group Three referred to the unfortunate reality that the mission of the Armenian Church is sometimes blurred when it is made an arena of political and national maneuvers. Brother Yovhanēs labeled this as “national-ecclesial crisis” and Brother

Věrt'anēs as “national-political victimization.” The brothers confirmed that this tension of being the house of God and the house of a nation is present in the Armenian Church as a side effect of simultaneously catering to the spiritual and cultural needs of the people.

In analyzing the key movements shaping the identity of the Brotherhood, in identifying the founders of the Brotherhood and their enduring vision, and in exploring the creation of the Armenian spiritual and community life in the Diaspora, the brothers underscored their close relations to persons, events, things, and places identifying their formation, life, and mission. It was very clear that the Armenian Christian personal and corporate life is built upon the Christian identity of being in Christ and becoming his witnesses. The core of that identity, which is the *raison d'être* of Armenian Christianity (cf. 1 Tim 4.16), is nourished by the spirituality of prayer, education, care, preaching, bearing the banner of Christ, and being in his service as disciples for the establishment of the Reign of God (cf. Luke 10.9)

B. The Inter-relation of Innovative Formation and Improved Ministry

All the brothers felt that the formation of the brothers gears them to a better discipleship in Christ for the ministry of the Church. The mode and standard of formation secures a more God-pleasing and people-fulfilling ministry. The conventional formation of the theological seminary and the experimental formation in the mission-field provide a lifelong journey for the transformation of the Brotherhood. The brothers' education and formation in the family, seminary and ministry, which last for a lifetime, go hand-in-hand with assisting them in the flourishing of their God-given gifts and putting them in their communal relational life and service. The discipleship of the brothers is based on Jesus' definition of how a disciple follows the word of God (cf. John 8.31-32), how a disciple

prays and bears fruit (cf. John 15.7-8), how a disciple is not obsessed by his possessions (cf. Luke 14.33) and how a disciple expresses love for others (cf. John 13.34-35).

1. The Significance of theological seminary Formation. For most of the respondents, belonging to each other and in the meantime serving the Church were conditioned by a solid foundation of formation in the theological seminary. From the early years of seminary education, the brothers start to have a sense of belonging to a family as contributors and not mere consumers. Then, by joining the brotherhood, they can extend the warmth, love and care to the whole Church as a family, community and fellowship in which each belongs to God and to each other (cf. Rom 12.5; Eph 2.19; 1 Pet 2.17).

In Group One, the senior members, Brother Nazarēt⁴ underlined this role by saying “the theological seminary is our spiritual mother and she inspires in us the ideals of righteousness, truth and dedication to God and the Armenian nation.” Brother Petros echoed that for him to be formed for ministry means “to manifest qualities of being a faithful and educated person to impress people by an exemplary conduct and to attract them to God through a dedicated service.”

In the Armenian community, seminary formation starts at an early age: the seminarians are enrolled at age 11-12 years. This practice has pedagogical, psychological and sociological benefits for the teachers at the theological seminary as it allows them to instill in the future monks the virtue of non-attachment and unselfish following of Christ (cf. Matt 10.37-39). Brother Pōghos of Group One believes that “the numerical growth

and the betterment of quality are inter-connected, because we are responding to a calling and not performing a duty.”

Formation at the theological seminary is enriched by the inclusion of contemporary methods in the studies and by the family atmosphere for the seminarians who grow up away from their homes. Brother Movsēs of Group Two, the middle generation, addressed the necessity of these two components as “formation for life and participation in relational maturity.” Brother Samuēl said that “productivity in the ministry of the brothers will be increased by post-seminary academic and professional training.” And, with deep self-criticism and self-assessment, Brother Addē surmised, “In the theological seminary we are investing for a hopeful future. It is very crucial to raise the educational level of our brothers. Our Seminary’s mission is inspired by commitment to theological formation and pastoral care.”

In Group Three, the youngest generation, Brother Sargis longed for a more solid and higher-level education in the theological seminary, to be provided by priests and educators who are theologians. He expressed his optimism by saying:

It will be possible to speak of a rebirth of the Armenian Church when our theological seminary becomes a genuine center of scholarly theological creativity and when a new generation of theologians with post-seminary university education takes up higher positions in the church hierarchy. Having priests with a profound zeal for pastoral ministry is not sufficient; we need also to provide educators of priests and laymen to effectively minister at each level of the Church.

Brother Gēorg felt that “being entrusted with the care of seminarians, their true spiritual good and their priestly formation, makes us feel responsible also for taking care of the dignity of the priest, transformed by the Holy Spirit to manifest God’s holiness in today’s unholy world.”

In the three groups, there was an overarching consciousness that in the theological seminary God wants the brothers to be members of his one family (cf. 1 Pet 1.3 [LB]) and to fulfill the mission of God by being formed for the living out of their ministry. Belonging to the extended family of the Brotherhood strikes a sensitive chord in the lonely hearts of the brothers and makes them feel that they are cared for in the future. This belonging helps them devote themselves to love others in the society around them. Seminary education is an investment in people who will go and build a community of love in a solid network of Christian relationships. The second overarching desire was to equip the seminarians – the future leaders in ordained and lay ministries – with a solid formation at all levels of the theological, spiritual and pastoral education. This requires quality training to make the brothers more effective in the work for which they have been called, to enable them to pay close attention to themselves and their teaching, in order to save both themselves and their hearers (cf. 1 Tim 4.16) in their ministry of edification of the Armenian faithful.

2. Continuous Formation in Serving God and the Armenian Nation. To serve God and his people means to be a student for life in the school of multi-faceted formation. The graduates of the theological seminary render their service in many areas of the ministry of the Armenian Church as ordained or lay servants, such as clergy, teachers, choirmasters, editors and social workers.

Brother Khad of Group One characterizes this as “service to take God and the Armenian Church to the nation to whom we belong.”

For Brother Aharon the liturgy of the Church is the beacon of spiritual formation:

During the Holy Eucharist God's people assemble to offer their gratitude for the body and blood of the Lord, which inexhaustibly feeds them. This is a 'profound mystery', as an Armenian hymn puts it. The lifelong formation takes place in the Sunday Eucharist, when earthly things are made heavenly things, and are distributed to all for their spiritual sustenance. Thus, the gathered become the church of Christ and they are sent out to take him to the world for the salvation of the world. When I was a child, I remember we used to be in the church on Sundays for four hours and then everybody used to regret that the Eucharist was over. But the best part of it was its extension into our daily lives. I understand that times have changed. If we want the Holy Eucharist to continue to be a tool of spiritual formation, we need to keep the faithful in the church for one hour maximum. This means that we have to abridge the Holy Eucharist in a theologically sound way not to lose its meaning and communication.

Many in Group Two considered university education as a plus for continuous formation. Brother Hayrapet promoted the idea of life-long renewal and confirmed:

We need to be renewed. Our Brotherhood is not a stagnant organization. We need to keep pace with the modern world without harming our roots. The best environment to achieve this is the university. I am sure this will be appealing for new vocations, too.

Another dimension was the complementarity of individual and corporate formations for mutual trust building. As Brother Vēlas expressed it, "the building of warm and firm relationships and participating in joyful communal service with fraternal love make human fulfillment a concrete reality that reflects the image of God in one another."

Brother Gabriēl was critical of innovative measures in formation and expressed himself very bluntly:

Innovations will not increase the number of our Brotherhood nor enlarge the scope of our service. What counts is the moral character and corporate ideal. Balancing of the old and new has to be our option. The old generation was successful in this. The new generation is fascinated only by the new trends. Tradition and modernity need to blend in together. We have to be loyal to the tradition and yet relevant to our time.

Intergenerational formation is a great challenge for the theological seminary and the monastery, where we have brothers in the age-range of twenty to eighty years. Fraternal fellowship and unity of mission become complicated if mutual support is not rendered to each other. Group Three in general was feeling more uneasiness in this area, because they did not feel the continuation of brotherly love (cf. Heb 13.1) in the modern trends of self-centeredness and self-containment penetrated in the lifestyle of the Brotherhood.

Brother Hērayr disapproved “the programmed formation dictated by the higher authorities of the Brotherhood,” and added, “Spiritual authority is conditioned by listening to one another and assisting one another for the common good.” On the other hand, Brother Vanakan urged all the brothers “to follow the paradigm of love embodied in Christ’s earthly ministry: ‘I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another’ (John 15.17).”

Brother Vērt’anēs convincingly added:

The Holy Bible is the daily bread of our soul and mind, and prayer is the open filial communication with God. The life of personal prayer and reading the Word of God are keys for formation. We are formed by God and not by new methods. The Holy Bible must be at the centre of our lives and ministries. Unless we build our lives upon its rock-solid foundation, we will not have any roots.

The themes surfaced in response to this question on formation are related to the inseparability of church and nation in the Armenian reality in response to God’s call of making us his people (cf. Jer 30.22). Continuous formation is sustained by a forward-looking commitment in a life-long renewal of mission and ministry, and in a prayerful and Bible-oriented life for the redemption of the faithful. On the one hand, seminary and

post-seminary education plays a pivotal role in linking tradition and modernity; it is a vehicle of better learning and a medium for mutual confidence building in the expression of compassionate loving-kindness in the ever-presence of God. On the other hand, authority enhances operational cohesion if the leadership listens to and co-ordinates the human assets entrusted to its care as an intangible collection of spiritual and intellectual ability, competence and experience.

C. Why Are You in the Brotherhood Today?

“Why are you in the Brotherhood today?” is an existential question for each brother who is in communion with God and the others in the Brotherhood of faith, prayer and service for the realization of the Reign of God. Brothers confirmed that they do not co-exist in the Brotherhood just for the sake of co-living and comfortable fellowship. Each brother participates in the ministry of the Brotherhood by sharing his God-given gifts for the advancement of its ministry. They are called to be together for the sake of the Gospel and to witness for Christ by full involvement that goes beyond personal choices of where to serve. Christ-centered ministry holds the brothers in unity of body, heart and mind, and creates community. Therefore, being together means praying together, serving together, and receiving the grace of God together. All the brothers articulated that the integrity of the Brotherhood relies on the development of each brother in the community, modeling the friendship Christ had with his disciples, and by dwelling in the Holy Spirit to be fully available for *missio Dei* in the world. All these sentiments were coherently reflected in two spheres: called to live in God and with each other for the service of the Armenian Church and called to communicate God to the people of God.

1. Called to Live in God and with Each Other for the Service of the Armenian Church. The linkage of wholly belonging to God and wholeheartedly serving him was the dominant feature in the responses of the brothers, based on the example of Christ who “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt 20.28). The common effort of the Brotherhood was to live for God in their community and to show him to the others in their ministry, believing that they were chosen by him to do his will (cf. Heb 10.7). The invitation of God to live in him and serve him relentlessly (cf. Isa 40.31) is relevant in the corporate life and mission of the Brotherhood.

Brother Aharon in Group One described his being in the Brotherhood by the following statement:

I joined the Brotherhood at an early age because of the development of my Christian faith, national roots and family education, and later I matured in my conviction to serve my people. Being in the service of God is a reflection of our image of God. We serve God when we confess by words and deeds that we are followers of Christ – our way, truth and life (cf. John 14.6). We follow him on the way, walk in truth and live his life.

Brother Ařak‘el of Group One described his belonging to the Brotherhood as follows: “The purpose of my life has been a total dedication to God through the Brotherhood, which became the ark of salvation for the survivors of the Armenian Genocide.”

The reality of the 1915 Genocide is deeply seated in the hearts of Armenians. It is a reminder of delayed justice to the Armenian nation and a call for solidarity for human rights. Group One, being the next generation of the Genocide survivors, is greatly

influenced by these atrocities and their message of resilience. In this regard, Brother Soghomon echoed Brother Ařak‘el:

I am a son of parents who survived the Genocide by a miracle. I believe in the role and mission of our Brotherhood. I have been in the Brotherhood for over 50 years. It has been inculcated in me every day that by conforming myself to the will of God I am serving the Armenian Church and participating in the efforts of the preservation of Armenian religious and national values. I am a humble soldier in the sacred struggle for the restitution of the rights of my people.

Brother Khad also referred to the Genocide and the pressure of organizing the Armenian Diaspora, which deterred the spiritual service of the Brotherhood: “We were pressed by the survival of the nation and were obliged to take care of its immediate needs. Now is a high time for collective ministry, which will make my being in the Brotherhood more meaningful.”

Group Two is the Armenian Diaspora generation. These brothers do not have the Genocide syndrome, but they are more concerned about the long-term existence of the Armenian Diaspora. Brother Barsegh responded: “I was called by God to be in the Brotherhood, which is the best place to be able to cater to the needs of our people in the Diaspora.” Brother Hayrapet considered himself “the ambassador of God to my people,” and pledged that “I will reach out wherever I am called to teach the Christian and national message.” Brother Vėlas added a biblical metaphor to his belonging to the Brotherhood:

This is my effort of putting in the widow’s coins in the treasury of God (cf. Mark 12.41-44), being available to spread out the Christian faith, the national Christianity, and the spiritual values in the Diaspora that faces insurmountable problems.

Brother Shēnorhk‘ listed a wide range of responsibilities as the reason for his being part of the Brotherhood: “To serve God through the Armenian Church and to render spiritual service, to preach the Gospel (cf. Eph 4.29), to inspire hope, and to form a conscientious young generation who in its turn will serve God.”

Group Three is the youngest generation of brothers in the Armenian Diaspora. For Brother Yarut‘iwn:

Studying in the theological seminary as a teenager was like being in the family ambiance, growing up in intimacy with God and my seminarian brothers, some of whom eventually became my brothers in the Brotherhood. To live in God and serve him is the natural outcome of being on the right path with him and with those brothers entrusted to me by him.

Brother Art‘un underscored:

The link of family, elementary school, Sunday school and seminary formation, in being in the company of God, has been foundational for me. During my current pastoral service I hear in my inner self every day the echo of the seminary days’ mission invitation: ‘one day you will go to quench the spiritual thirst of our people’. This is a life-long reminder of my commitment.

Brother Gēorg considered his being called by God a blessing and said: “When God calls someone to serve him, there is no way back. For me private prayer and Bible reading are climaxed in the liturgy, which is living with God and serving him through the ministry I render to my brothers and sisters in my parish.”

2. Called to Communicate God to the People of God. Holy God wants the brothers to be holy (cf. 1 Cor 3.17) in their commitment to serve him. Their mission should be to radiate their being in constant communion with God and taking him to his people, as Jesus had advised his apostles: “Go therefore and make disciples of all

nations” (Matt 28.19). The Trinitarian reality of mutual relationships, radical equality and communal diversity is key to apprehending how to be in communion with God and to communicate him to others.

Brother Soghomon of Group One underlined the significance of holiness when he affirmed:

People are disoriented in our world today. The life of holiness is not only our calling but can serve as a compass for bewildered folks to find God. After all, we are accountable to God for each person who is entrusted to our care. We cannot ignore God’s command, “Mortal, I have made you a sentinel for the house of Israel” (Ezek 3.17).

Brother Yovsēp‘ shared his experience of being captivated by God and made this sanguine remark:

God finds us and invites us to fellowship with him. He never abandons us, unless we insist on leaving him. Although he remains a mystery that we cannot fully fathom, he extends an appealing invitation for service to the community of faith entrusted to our care. For me the unswerving service to God is through the people of God.

For Brother Addē of Group Two, bringing God to the faithful of the Armenian Church is the collective mission of the Brotherhood:

Wherever we are, we feel ourselves as one entity driven by the grace of God to grasp his divine wisdom, considering God’s plan more expansive than our human limitations. When the veil that separates us from God is opened, we will be ushered into the heart of God and enabled to make our spiritual lives impact the reality of our larger social context.

Brother Samuēl felt that the unreserved self-giving of the Brotherhood to God enables them to convey God’s message to the people, and he elaborated:

To reveal the compelling message of God to our believers we need to show them that the presence of God in their lives is the ultimate defeat of sin. The yardstick of this truth is the fact that God invites each believer to write his or her own gospel of life based on the ideal of Jesus – the incarnated God, without any accrued efforts but by just responding positively to God’s invitation to discipleship. And here our lifestyle of simplicity, humility, and compassion will display a motivating role model for the church.

Brother Gabriël made a short and convincing statement: “I consider myself a messenger of God for my people to make myself available to fulfill their Christian and Armenian needs and to stimulate them by the spiritual values sustaining their lives.”

For many in Group Three the main reason for their being in the Brotherhood was that they saw their role as teachers of the Gospel message and national values. No doubt that this teaching ministry is a sacred mission and embraces all realms of Christian, human, and national education and formation for “a new life, a new vision, and a new determination to walk in the footsteps of our ancestors,” as Brother Yartut’iwn stated. Brother Art’un felt this specific calling to be a teacher, “especially when I was sent to serve our people in a parish, where I found myself to be an educator at large.”

Brother Armēn, another brother serving in a parish, anchors his teaching vocation in the *lectio divina*:

Romans 10.1-2 became the motto of my monastic life. I study the Holy Bible daily and share its good news with my people. I am a member in the body of Christ. Therefore, the main goal of my life is to know, to worship, to love and to teach Christ, and by obedience to his Gospel to be loyal to the calling of my Brotherhood.

The holistic ministry of the Brotherhood is sustained by prayer. To serve God is not a personal choice but a calling. Brother Eznik says: “From my childhood I was raised

in the church. When God ignites the spark of unconditional service in your heart, nobody can extinguish it. Prayer empowers me to take God to my people and to make them a holy nation (cf. 1 Pet 2.9).” Brother T‘adēos characterized the seminary years of theological formation as “a warm family atmosphere where I felt my calling and decided to follow Christ to disseminate the divine commandments.” Brother Awetis also felt his calling “to serve my Church, my much-suffered nation and my homeland by bringing the Gospel to them as a life-long commitment.”

To always make God and his saving grace (cf. Eph 2. 8) present in the life of the faithful of the Armenian Church, brothers confirm that they need to be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 15.10). The grace of God transforms their lives to lives of holiness, humility, and caring in their service to the people of God (cf. 1 Pet 4.10). They are called to be open to the action of grace and to a lifestyle based on the discipleship of Jesus by discovering their spiritual maturity in learning and teaching God’s Word (cf. John 8.31), in bearing fruit (cf. John 15.7-8), and in fellowship of love (cf. John 13.34-35). Group Three adds the dimension of a new, shared vision, with respect for the past and hope for an enlivened future within the Reign of God.

D. Potential for Change in the Leadership Style

All three groups agreed that change in the leadership would bring revitalization to the Brotherhood and would correspond with the contemporary style of authority and obedience in Christian charity. In this model, governing would be done with the heart of a humble and affectionate servant, with democratic participation in decision-making and in communicating a shared vision.

According to all the brothers, the axis of authority is the Catholicos, who, as Brother Vērēzh of Group One put it “is in charge of the supervision of the Brotherhood as a spiritual father in consultation with his brothers who hold leadership positions.”

Group One was more openly critical of the *status quo*. Being long enough in the Brotherhood and following the development of the leadership style made them less satisfied. Brother Eghia underlined the importance of consulting an individual brother when he is assigned for a responsibility. He voiced out his disappointment by saying:

I wanted to be more dedicated to teaching and intellectual work, but against my will I remained in diocesan service for a long time. Well, I understand that I cannot always go with my own preferences, but a compromise should be possible for a better ministry. I am only asking to be treated with respect and dignity. I am willing to obey my leader and submit to him, as long as he is keeping watch over my soul (cf. Heb 13.17).

Brother Matt‘ēos went much further in expressing his concern:

From his own perspective, the head might be right in his decisions, but the one who has to obey him must also be considered. In order to have the right person in the right place you need transparent collegiality among people of the same mind, commitment and vision. Evolution of leadership and not revolution against the leadership is the solution.

Brother Ařak‘el pressed for structural changes “in the Administrative Council, which has to really administer all the areas of the Brotherhood in the spirit of obedience to the superior and justice towards the brothers.” Finally, Brother T‘at‘ul identified a shortcoming of some brothers who, “although [they] participate in the assignment of their preferred position, they create artificial problems by not demonstrating full obedience to the leadership authorities.”

The Rule operates to bridge theory and practice. Each brother freely binds himself to be committed to the Rule as an invitation to live the Gospel with his brothers and to minister effectively. A strong sense of ownership of the Rule as the indispensable touchstone of authority and obedience was found in many members of Group Two, who longed to see it as a covenantal bond for community concerns and not a juridical imposition for performing a task. Brother T'ovmas encouraged the revision of the Rule and granted the right of decision-making to the Catholicos to safeguard the interests of the Brotherhood and to lead the brothers on the path of participation, cooperation, and law-abiding. He added:

The Rule is essential for us. It specifies our duties and our rights. We have to obey the Rule even if some parts do not correspond to the inter-relatedness of authority and obedience in our current life, until we re-write a better Rule. It is better to have even an incomplete Rule than to have no Rule. Rule is the sole authority that can protect us from a self-centered attitude and unnecessary exploitation.

Brother Vēlas spoke about flexibility in obeying the Rule that is composed of fundamental, secondary and supplementary articles, and he added this practical observation:

We obey the Rule because we belong to a community guided by it. If we do not want to practice the Rule, we have to opt for one of two choices: (a) to impose myself and secure a favorable decision; (b) to leave the Brotherhood by my free will and become a faithful lay member of the Armenian Church. There is a big difference between becoming a lay Christian and remaining in the Brotherhood but not responding to your call in fraternal spirit of obedience. I am for a good Christian layperson.

The interaction of the present and past norms of monastic leadership were brought up by Brother Khach'atur, who underlined the importance of preserving the tradition as “the correct way of guiding our lives in the service of God and our people.”

Brother Shēnorhk' rebuked the leadership for practicing “excessive injustice against some brothers,” and he concluded his frustration:

We are a corporate entity. Our collective strength is in our unity. We are a handful of people and cannot afford to lose anyone by creating an intentional imbalance of a tiny group of oppressors controlling a large group of deprived brothers. Reformation is possible when we abolish super-ordination and subordination, and put humility at the core of our lives.

Brother Movsēs underlined:

Today challenges are changing very rapidly. The first responsibility of the leader, the Catholicos, is to define and re-define the mission of the Brotherhood in a goal-oriented leadership in consultation with all the brothers, in order to nurture good will and a shared vision, and to discern the call to service in a more egalitarian and dialogical way. As the superior, he has the freedom to decide about community policy on his own authority, but the limit of his freedom is defined by the Rule of the Brotherhood and sustained by the collective wisdom of the brothers.

Brother Gabriēl mused over the past and stated:

I recall that there was a time when the common interests of our Brotherhood outweighed the personal petty concerns. Although we have a superior, in a certain sense we are servants and leaders at the same time. First of all, our supreme leader is God himself who disciplines us for our common good (cf. Job 5.17) and makes us work for the good of each other. Secondly, I like to see in our earthly leader a Spirit-driven leadership – a person who responds to the grace of God and by life and example is guided by the Holy Spirit. Only then the discipline “yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Heb 12.5-11).

Group Three, being the youngest generation and the most open to the spirit of constant renewal, looked for leadership changes as a mandate of God and had mixed

feelings regarding the fine line between authority and obedience. Brother Sargis made a general comment: “Eventually, the Catholicos is the decision-maker. It is good when you have a father as your head, but it is very bad when he is an oppressor.” The intergenerational gaps in leadership impelled him to add:

The decisions are made by the Catholicos and a group of senior bishops. God calls us all to lead his church according to the charisms he has granted us. I would prefer to participate in the decision-making when I am still young and bring my humble contribution to mature by the experiences shared by all the brothers.

Brother Garnik expressed the same sentiment more tactfully: “God is our guide. Sometimes out of obedience we agree with the *status quo*, but each brother likes to give his opinion and likes to be heard.”

On the other hand, Brother Hērayr was happy with the current situation, where “the Catholicos and leader brothers are trying to do their best by their life-long experience to accommodate all our longings. They deserve our respect for their understanding.” And Brother Aristakēs found the activities of the Administrative Council and Brotherhood General Assembly sufficient “for implementing the decisions of the Brotherhood democratically.”

Brother Vērt’anēs viewed the urgency of long-awaited renewal from a broader perspective and spoke about the cooperation of clergy and laity:

The National Constitution, which governs the Catholicosate and is interconnected with the Rule, needs immediate changes. The pilgrimage of faith has been slowed down by lay people of little faith and has marginalized the spiritual mission of the Church. The Catholicos and other brothers in decision-making positions are facing very difficult obstacles to overcome this limitation.

The challenge of potential changes in the leadership style of the Brotherhood stirred a hot discussion; existentially, it was touching on all the aspects of life and ministry of the brothers. All the research participants longed for change that would bring a participatory spirit and loving leadership with non-abusive authority.

Many brothers in Group One, because of their seniority, shared leadership roles with the Catholicos. These brothers seemed the most satisfied, although they too raised their voices asking for evolution of leadership and structural changes in consultation with brothers of all age-brackets. The authority of the Catholicos needs to be trusted, but he should not impose control. Group Two was the harshest in its criticism, though these brothers also valued the Rule as the final authority that helps them live their lives in contact with God, loving and serving him and their brothers. They refused to see the will of the superior as the will of God; rather, they saw in the centrality of the Rule the avoidance of judgmental dealings and excessive injustice. The key to relationships administered by the Rule, they felt, were the open-minded and open-hearted consultations between the superior and the brothers. Group Three considered leadership changes as authorized by God. In an ideal sense, they saw the image of a Spirit-filled father in the superior, one who cultivates with his sons a frank relationship that is based on shared vision and purpose as they work together for sustainable changes. But these brothers went even further, desiring a participatory Armenian Church with the cooperation of clergy and laity.

E. The Old and New in the Brotherhood

All three groups shared the opinion that like any corporate entity, the Brotherhood also needs renewal. Only by renewal will it be able to redefine its identity, sort out its priorities, and rededicate itself to its missionary calling amid the changing circumstances around it. Renewal gives an opportunity to reevaluate the old and experiment with the new in a process of self-assessment and transformation in adaptation to modern needs. Renewal is a committed response to changes in the contemporary world and to the original purpose of the Brotherhood, the permanent call to proclaim the Gospel. Genuine renewal is possible by the animation of team-spirit and full cooperation of all for a better service to God and to the Armenian Church. The renewal starts by prayer for a change of heart and a conversion of life; it is not meant for self-fulfillment but for Christ-like communal self-emptying (cf. Phil 2.7). The renewal of the Brotherhood enhances its unaltered commitment to serve God and the Armenian people.

Three themes emerged from the responses to this question on change and renewal. These deal with people-oriented ministry, the national versus spiritual mission, and changes in the communal life.

1. From Narrow to Broad People-oriented Ministry. The theological seminary was moved to the vicinity of the summer residence of the Brotherhood, to Bikfaya, ten kilometers away from Antelias, in 1978. This move was necessary to provide a quiet atmosphere for living and studying to the seminarians. Some respondents considered it a beneficial arrangement, while others thought that the brothers and the seminarians have to be in the same place to intermingle as one entity.

In Group One, Brother Yovsēp[՛] was not in favor of the move. He supported his position by stating:

We already are small in number at the Catholicosate; not having the seminarians with us makes it more difficult to create a good community life. I especially regret that we do not have the spiritually enriching experience of the daily prayer hours with the seminarians.

Brother Markos appreciated the centuries-old continuity of the communal prayer life in the Armenian Church and in the Brotherhood, but regretted that “the brothers are in much greater number in diocesan and parish service than in the past.” Brother Zak[՛]aria said: “Our brothers are more in contact with the life of the city than they used to be. Antelias is not anymore a monastery, but the headquarters of the Catholicosate of Cilicia where some brothers live and serve.”

Brother Eghia made a bolder statement: “We have become more like a secular association. In order to return to our spiritual mission we need a superior other than the Catholicos, conceivably an abbot, to concentrate his energy on the monastic matters.”

For Brother T[՛]ovmas of Group Two the most significant change was the broadening of the mission components. “To be responsive to our people we need to give better education in the theological seminary, and we need to emphasize communal responsibility in the Brotherhood.”

Brother Khach[՛]atur saw the presence of the Brotherhood in the midst of the world in the broader context of the Armenian Church, and said:

We are called to bring our people to communion with Christ, to work out their salvation (cf. Phil 2.12) in prayer, fellowship and discipleship, and to uphold them by our prayer (cf. 1 Thes 1.2) and care (cf. Matt 25.40). Making people Christian means to teach them the Holy Bible and to encourage them to apply its message

to their daily lives, to lead them in the life of prayer, and to enable them to imitate Christ in their human and social lives, nurtured by the centuries-old Armenian Christian values.

Brother Garegin of Group Three preferred to see the service of the Brotherhood “maintained by the strict observance of the Rule and not by bending it for adaptability.” Brother Eznik, however, felt that the success of the growing ministry is conditioned “by our ability to bring in people through our own dedicated example (cf. Titus 1.7-9) as Spirit-filled witnesses of Jesus (cf. Acts 1.8).”

2. From the Mission of National Preservation to Salvation of Souls. There is tension in the Armenian Church between the two sides of its mission: one is the national concern for the survivors of the 1915 Genocide and the organization of the Armenian Diaspora, the other is the spiritual mission of bringing people closer to God for the sake of their salvation. Ninety-five years have elapsed since the Genocide, and now the Armenian Diaspora is well established. The Brotherhood has to concentrate more on carrying out its main mission of making disciples for God out of the Armenian people.

Brother T‘at‘ul of Group One wanted the Brotherhood to assume its spiritual role, and saw it as a major shift in its life:

The clarity of our mission is a must. To be a national Church does not mean to be responsible for all the concerns of the nation. Our primary goal is to work for the glory of God and the salvation of our people. We have to fulfill our mission in a demanding and ever-changing Diaspora, and adjusting to the evolving situations we must focus our attention on the spiritual development of our people.

Brother Eghia preferred the traditional approach and said:

Balancing the spiritual and national aspects of the mission of the Brotherhood is crucial. One is conditioned by the other, because we are called to serve our people holistically. Preserving the Armenian Christian identity of Armenians will be possible only when we take care of both the Christian and national needs of the people entrusted to us. In order to keep the new generation of the Armenian Diaspora in the Armenian Church, we need to communicate with them in a language they could understand, but without compromising the Armenian values that sustain them as Armenians.

Brother Movsēs in Group Two expressed the pressing need of human resources:

In the past it was easier to recruit seminarians. Today, membership in the Brotherhood is an act of deep commitment. We thought that Diaspora was a temporary reality, but we see it now as a multi-faceted way of being Armenian in the changing environments where Armenians are becoming adapted to their new ‘homes,’ yet their shared values are greater than their divergences. In this context, we have to find a spiritual hope that gives our Armenian Christian life a meaning, to follow God’s commands (cf. Ps 32.8).

Brother Samuēl responded to the mission of saving souls by the following statement:

Our mission is to help our people face the profound questions of life, to respond responsibly to the proclaimed invitation that “the kingdom of God has come near” (Luke 10.9). It is also to prepare our people for the final goal of life which is to love God, so that they may be worthy of being with him in eternity through practicing the presence of God on earth and attaining the propitiation of sins.

Brother Ghukas of Group Three admitted his limited experience in the Brotherhood and lamented: “The previous generations devoted more energy to the preservation of religious and national values. Today many brothers are overwhelmed only by administrative responsibilities.”

To transform the nation into a people of God, Brother Eznik in Group Three believed that the brothers should inspire them by their life of discipleship. He said:

Today people hear more about God and the necessity of the spiritual life than they see models embodying them. We can bring others to God only when we ourselves have intimate relationship with him. God can make the miracle of transformation happen also today (cf. Acts 4.30-31; Mark 16.17-18) through his faithful servants.

Brother Armēn was more eschatological in his remark:

The challenge for Armenians is to lead ‘lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God’ (2 Pet 3.11-12), because if we stop treating this life as paving the way to the Reign of God we are doomed for eternity. At the end, at the judgment seat of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5.10), we will not be asked to which nationality we belong, but what we have done for Christ, so that we may dwell in “the city that is to come” (Heb 13.14).”

The brothers made a clear distinction between serving a national church and the church of a nation – Armenians. The priority was to serve God through the Armenian nation and to assist in the salvation of souls for Jesus Christ. “God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5.11-12).

3. The Longing for Positive Changes in the Monastic Communal Life. Almost all the brothers sincerely expressed their desire for renewal, revitalization, and change. They agreed that change will be possible if it begins in the inside, in the heart, is guided by the transformative power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ezek 36.26-27), and is responded to by the commitment and cooperation of the brothers.

Brother Pōghos of Group One was willing to work within the monastic system, but regretted the impossibility of speaking out his mind. Therefore, he posed the following questions, urging others to answer them:

How do we create a community in which people live together in daily prayer? How do we stress the need to be missionaries to our people, to take the message of salvation to them? In the face of growing needs, what renewal have we realized in our individual and collective lives? Are we more conscious of the necessity of maintaining our monastic identity or of being in the world and yet apart from the world?

Brother Aharon considered changes as a continuous process as he stated:

As far as I remember, our Brotherhood has kept pace with the changes. Brothers who had the opportunity to obtain university education abroad and serve in the West greatly contributed to this endeavor by the utilization of their knowledge, specialties and experience. God uses a process of transformation to develop us into his image.

Brother Barsegh of Group Two viewed the existence of the old and new in material changes. The new buildings did not contribute much to the internal edification of good moral credibility; this stems from the calling of the Brotherhood to holy life. He summed up his satisfaction with an invitation to rely on Christ:

We have better living conditions and all the necessary means to be in touch with the outside world. From the old times we have lost beloved brothers who are with the Lord. Fraternal love still connects me to them. My unceasing prayer is to have Jesus Christ as our Master who can replace the old with the new and transform our shortcomings to successes in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect.

For Brother Gabriël, change and renewal were communal efforts that were accomplished through being responsive to adaptations and through communicating a shared purpose.

He described these efforts by saying:

Our communal life and service are formed and re-formed by the call of Christ to accept one another as we are in our own complexities and imperfectness. On one hand, in a spirit of humility we have to live in Christ by mutual love and obedience towards each other, and depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. On

the other hand, we have to be receptive to the necessary changes making our ministry more relevant and responsive to the challenges of the present times.

In Group Three Brother Gēorg voiced out his frustration for the shortcomings in the monastery setting, comparing the ideal material conditions with the absence of right attitude among the brothers:

With my due respect to all and appreciating the exceptions, I regret that the changes are only negative. The junior brothers do not demonstrate respect to their senior brothers and they do not have fraternal love to the new generation. Only mutual love, respect and trust, not the improvements of material needs, will make our cross bearable.

Brother Aristakēs found the positive side of the combination of the old and new “in the balancing of tradition and modernity in our life,” and he hoped that “senior and junior brothers can live and serve together by finding a common environment of mutual enrichment in the two trends of preservation and innovation.”

Brother Yovhanēs appreciated “the opportunity of getting university education” as an important change, especially in the life of the new generation of brothers.

The three groups appreciated the desire for renewal and change as a healthy sign of vitality in the Brotherhood. They accepted that their life has many grey areas, and for real transformation to happen they should not keep an embarrassing silence about them. Also, they underscored the importance of higher education and service in the dioceses as possibilities of being in touch with the real world and bringing their talents back to the monastery for revitalized ministry.

F. Serve Only One Master with Renewed Dedication

When the crucial issue of serving God through the Armenian people in changing times and spheres came up, it brought to light the inter-connectedness of faith and nation in the Armenian reality. Inspired by the admonition of the Lord, “You cannot serve God and wealth” (Luke 16.13), the brothers underlined the fact that to serve God every day is non-negotiable. It is their primary calling and their ultimate fulfillment that takes place in the distinct sphere of the Armenian people.

In Group One, Brother Pōghos said:

Our mission field is the Church. We have to take better care of the preaching of the Gospel and of making Christ present in the life of our people. The theological seminary has a great responsibility in the preparation of a dedicated generation of clergy for the service of God, whose calling is to bring our people to God for their salvation. We have to collaborate with the married clergy of our Church, because they play a pivotal role in this area by their daily contacts with the people.

Brother Markos spoke about the growing danger of egocentrism in the brothers, and added: “We have to constantly examine ourselves, are we missionaries or employees? What does our inner voice tell us? Are we yielding our wills to God?” Brother Petros’ comment sounded like an answer to these pertinent questions: “Christ invites us to be perfect (cf. Matt 5.48). Perfection matures in the service of God. Our Brotherhood has tried its best to be the obedient servant of God and we have to continue our mission with a renewed dedication.” Brother Ařak‘el recalled the apostolic times, when the Christians were invited to turn from idols and to serve a living and true God (cf. 1 Thes 1.9), and pleaded for the same attitude: “In these very hard times of moral decay, consumerism, selfishness and wordliness, our goal has to be to reach out – with God’s help – to our people.” Brother Vērēzh reminded of another saying of the Lord – “The harvest is

plentiful, but the labourers are few” (Matt 9.37) – and added: “Even during the earthly ministry of Christ there was a shortage of laborers. But he taught us how to overcome the difficulties of this world. Let us commit ourselves to better serve him through our people.”

Brother Hayrapet of Group Two found the service to God and to the nation as complementary to each other:

Although sometimes nation, language, culture, and history occupy more time in our ministry, we are still serving God through the nation, because ultimately all service is rendered for the building up the Church of God as a body, an organism and a fellowship. Our faith in Jesus is expressed through our service to the people gathered in his name as a community of committed men and women who bear witness of their salvation in him.

Brother Vēlas introduced the biblical metaphor of the body and commented:

All of us have our deficiencies. Our mission is accomplished by the participatory spirit of all, because we contribute by our personal abilities to the one mission of God. Let us remember that we are one body with many members and we do our best for the health of the body. The rest is left to God to judge.

In Group Three, Brother Garnik was brief but to the point: “Jesus teaches us to love God first and then our neighbor (cf. Mark 12.29-31). Therefore, we serve God first and then our nation.” And Brother Yovhanēs added a twist to it: “My simple definition is that our Brotherhood tries to do its utmost not only in the spiritual field, but also in national, cultural and social fields.” For Brother Vērt’anēs the real challenge was the correspondence of our mission with the spiritual needs of the modern Armenian, and he commented: “The way I see it, our efforts are more administrative and cultural than spiritual and evangelical. How far are we reaching out to convey the message of salvation to the prodigal children of God (cf. Luke 15.11-32)?” No matter how much we serve, it is

still inadequate when we look into the immense needs around us. Brother Aristakēs evoked the promise we make during our priestly ordination, “when we publicly undertake to do our best despite our human weaknesses and limitations.” Humility is an important virtue in our service to God. We have to acknowledge that none of us is indispensable, but we are still needed to try to make a positive contribution, using our talents given to us by the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 12.7). Brother Garegin underlined this point by saying: “Let us be satisfied only by saying ‘we are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’ (Luke 17.10). There is no such thing as adequately serving God.” Brother Vanakan renewed the commitment of his young brothers to serve God and the Armenian people, when he promised:

The new generation of clergy will bring its full contribution to the mission of God with a new vision and dedication. Our prophetic role is to remind people of their calling of being children of God and to facilitate their search for dwelling in God.

The respondents to the question “Do you think that the Brotherhood is fulfilling its calling by adequately serving God through the Armenian Church?” confirmed that the unconditional service rendered to God through the Armenian people is their utmost response to the invitation of God (cf. Isa 6.8). This response is cultivated in the theological seminary as a ministry for the salvation of souls, and is expressed in the collaboration with the married clergy in the parishes. The Brotherhood transforms itself into service in fulfilling God’s mission and rejoicing in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 10.21) who enables us to pray, to provide care and to preach. The Brotherhood seeks the way to God by avoiding anthropocentrism and adopting a Christocentric communal lifestyle of love and humility, so that the Holy Spirit may become our

inspiration for every initiative we take for the ministry entrusted to us by God (cf. 1 Cor 2.12).

G. Relations of the Resident and Non-resident Members of the Brotherhood

This domain is very crucial for preserving the Brotherhood as one body that is called to serve in the monastery and in the worldwide dioceses, where it faces many different challenges but has to maintain its unity of identity and ministry. In Chapter Three the solid fraternal relationships of the internal and external brothers were taken up as a vital area for revitalization of the calling of the Brotherhood.

The growing gap between those serving at the Catholicosate and those in the dioceses is a very sensitive area. It would have been less complicated if the Brotherhood were a monastic order that lived in a monastery. But we have to struggle with the categories of bishops and priests, and insiders and outsiders, among us. Therefore, the fraternal relations between the resident and non-resident members are existential challenges that we are facing. The culture of mobility is breeding disconnectedness in our inherited communal life and making relationships superficial.

It is unfortunate that the entire Armenian Church does not have a single traditional monastery. The Church has to re-start a genuine monastic movement. Under these circumstances, for Brother Nazarēt' the option was to always pray for each other:

Through prayer we can strengthen each other. We know that we do not have an ideal communal life. But we strongly feel that we are called by God to be together for his sake. God has his plan for all of us joined together as a Brotherhood. Our daily prayer should be to have the courage to be available for God's mission in purity of heart.

Since the majority of the brothers serve in dioceses and parishes, the impact of our relations with each other will have repercussions on laity and clergy interactions. Brother Věřzh of Group One referred to this dimension when he remarked: “I have heard very positive comments from many lay people who admire our warm relations and cooperation. We are stronger when we lead a harmonious life and manifest our unity of vision and service.”

According to Brother Matt'eos, the return to the monastery of a brother who has served in a diocese or a parish for a certain period will not improve the relations. He said:

The burning issue is the stability of the Brotherhood in the monastery. We need an atmosphere of communal life sustained by mutual love and respect. Again we come to the foundational education and formation at the theological seminary. Being a democratic Church has its loopholes. When you are not elected as a diocesan bishop you have to go back to the monastery, where sometimes you feel alone. It is very complicated. We need professional advice to put our home in order.

Seminarians are enrolled in the theological seminary when they are 11 to 12 years old and after eight years those who join the Brotherhood undertake a vow to remain in its membership for life. The monastery becomes their home where they share their hopes and disappointments and grow in maturity of service. Those who love their new home with its successes and shortcomings feel they are in a paradise on earth where brothers live together in unity (cf. Ps 133.1) and pursue their holiness (cf. 2 Cor 1.12, Heb 12.10).

Brother Khad of Group One reiterated this reality when he related his story:

When I was eleven years old, God called me to come to the monastery and told me to stay there until he calls me back to my eternal home in heaven. I was raised in a Christian home, where prayer and reading of the Holy Bible were our daily spiritual food. When I entered the theological seminary I found myself in the upper room where Jesus had the last supper with his disciples.

To encourage the acquaintance of the diocesan bishops with the seminarians, Brother Petros proposed “to organize regular encounters between the diocesan brothers and the seminarians when they visit the Catholicosate.”

The frequency of the annual meetings of the diocesan bishops at the Catholicosate has been lately increased. Brother Zak‘aria considered these meetings “important occasions for the diocesan and monastic brothers to see each other more often and establish minimum contact.”

Articles 9 and 17 of the Rule make a provision for monthly and weekly spiritual and social gatherings for the brothers at the monastery. Article 8 specifies an annual allocation of one week to meditation for all the brothers. Article 36 invites the brothers to convene their Brotherhood General Assembly once every two years. Brother Afak‘el is appreciative of these prerequisites as precious occasions for being, praying, and reflecting together, and he concludes: “Another channel of doing all these more frequently is the telephone conversation. Brothers in the dioceses can at least call us in the monastery on holidays, because oral communication generates intimacy.”

Brother Vēlas of Group Two adds a pragmatic point to the last comments:

To deepen the fraternal love between the brothers at the Catholicosate and in the dioceses, we need continuous communication and mutual visitations. Diocesan brothers can express their considerate attitude by their moral and tangible support toward the brothers in the monastery.

The brothers in Group Two were in favor of more annual retreats, meetings and gatherings at the Catholicosate. Brother Hayrapet said that “opportunities for more personal contacts will keep us in the mutual love, respect and trust,” while Brother

Shēnorhk' liked to see the flow of the Holy Spirit "in more sincere discussions on our mission and brotherly ties than in decision-making synthetic meetings." Brother T'ovmas wanted the brothers to rely on the example of Christ: "Let us not forget that our Lord Jesus Christ will give us the wisdom to fulfill our mission, and he is our prime model of relation and communication. We can live out the holiness and eminence of our calling only being one with him."

Articles 27, 28, 29 and 30 of the Rule are about brothers serving outside the monastery. Although these articles spell out certain dispositions regarding the brothers' mobility, more precise provisions are always welcomed. Brother Barsegh encouraged the leadership of the Brotherhood to look into these from a relational angle and proposed "to send out brothers to the dioceses and bring back those who have been in the dioceses for a certain time. This will also minimize the sensitivities between insiders and outsiders."

We are living in an era of technological innovations. Beside the personal and communal touch there are various ways of communication. Group Three was more open to electronic interactions in addition to the traditional types of gatherings. Speaking of visitations, Brother Awetis switched the order: "Not only the diocesan brothers should come to visit the Catholicosate, but also brothers of the Catholicosate should visit their brothers in the dioceses and acquaint themselves with their world." For Brother Ghukas the usage of internet "will make us feel closer to each other no matter how far we live. But the driving-force for any communication is the need of feeling intimate with those with whom we share common values in mutual love, respect, sincerity and loyalty." Brother Aristakēs linked the traditional and modern relational systems by asking "to have weekly annual retreats – not necessarily at the Catholicosate – for all the brothers and to

send congratulatory e-mails to each other on the occasions of birthdays and ordination anniversaries.”

The brothers feel at home in the monastery, where they share the warmth of a family. They are in daily contact with each other, though most of the time – being pre-occupied with their responsibilities – they do not cherish these relationships. Therefore, it is not only the difference between being at the Catholicosate or in the dioceses that is creating relational difficulties, but also the failure of paying attention to the richness of the communal life. Brother Vanakan elaborated this point by underlining the importance of open heart-to-heart conversations:

We need the fatherly care of the Catholicos and our senior brothers to feel that we belong to each other. We, the young generation of brothers, are not only potential for service, but each one of us is a distinct human being with his longings of sharing of his personal frustrations and shortcomings. We have our psychological needs and look for guidance and encouragement. Our corporate lifestyle and mission must be analyzed and evaluated, and essential advice must be provided.

Brother Věrt’anēs thought that the role of the advisor and counselor could be entrusted to the bishop who had ordained the brother.

I understand that many bishops who had ordained us and are our spiritual fathers do not live with us at the Catholicosate, but still they can reach their junior brothers in many ways. The personal bond between them makes us feel that they are interested in us. The other practical thing could be to visit our spiritual father in his diocese and spend time with him for spiritual nurture and counseling.

To summarize the vitality of inter-connectedness, brothers agreed that they do not live a life of cloistered contemplative spirituality but rather of priestly service both in the monastery and the dioceses and parishes. Therefore, their disconnected and mobile lifestyle needs an extra effort through traditional means of meetings, gatherings and

visitations and the modern technological innovations to strengthen the fraternal relations between the resident and non-resident brothers. But above all to pray for each other remains the most secure path to commend each other to God's care and to establish an authentic relationship with each other. The foundational role of the theological seminary for the formation of brothers for communal life of mutual love, respect and care is indispensable. Also, the younger brothers yearn to have a spiritual father as a counselor and caretaker to help them to fully respond to God's call in the commitment which motivates them to serve God's people. The Brotherhood is the collective servant of God "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Eph 2.10).

In summary, I find in these responses a resonance with a prayer of the Armenian Church: "We raise our hands in sanctity to receive from you grace, mercy and success for our virtuous deeds."¹⁰⁸ The becoming (formation), the being (identity), and the outgoing (ministry) of the Brotherhood always rely on God who through his infinite goodness grants us the possibility to know him, to live in him and to take him to the world. The brothers are initially formed in their families and in the theological seminary, then continuously formed/re-formed in the monastery and in their mission contexts of the Armenian Diaspora for discipleship of Christ, in order to fulfill their God-pleasing and people-oriented ministry in the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The brothers live and serve together by prayer and obedience to the authority of the superior in Christian love and compassion, as spelled out in the Rule, being open to

¹⁰⁸ *Zhamagirk' Hayastaneyts' Ekeghets'wo* [*The Book of Hours of the Armenian Holy Church*] (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1986), 139.

renewal to face the emerging challenges in the society, and to meet the needs of their growing mission.

The 1915 Genocide obliged the Brotherhood not only to leave its historical headquarters and ministry milieu, but also to resume the burdensome task of the organization of the Armenian Diaspora. Sometimes the preservation of the survivors occupied priority and the main calling of the salvation of souls was sidetracked. The brothers were caught in the difficult situation of switching the role of serving God with serving the Armenian national interests. Finally, like Mary, they made the right choice of taking the good path (cf. Luke 10.38-42) to serve only their Master and to make disciples out of the Armenian people for the Reign of God.

To secure the inter-connectedness of the resident and non-resident members of the Brotherhood, the brothers utilize traditional and modern mediums to solidify their fraternal relationships, to revitalize their ministry, and to strengthen laity and clergy collaboration in the Armenian Church.

IV. Recommendations by the Brothers

The following recommendations were made by the brothers for the betterment of their formation, identity, and ministry, and for the revision of their Rule:

Recommendation 1: Revise the curriculum of the theological seminary to make it more relevant to the pastoral responsibilities of the brothers.

Recommendation 2: Ordain theological seminary graduates at a more mature age, in the meantime providing them the opportunity to serve as deacons in dioceses and parishes.

Recommendation 3: Organize annual retreats for brothers to share their spiritual experiences and to discuss theological and doctrinal issues.

Recommendation 4: Embark on the renewal of the Armenian Church through ongoing educational programs for personal and collective formation in the faith.

Recommendation 5: To harvest good results of belonging to the Brotherhood, develop a lifestyle of joining with those brothers who share common interests in a service area, and assign to them tasks that are closer to their hearts.

Recommendation 6: Professionalism is the demand of our times. Include in the theological seminary curriculum courses that will provide adequate professional tools to the future clergy in their service in the worldwide Armenian Diaspora.

Recommendation 7: To include in the Rule an article on poverty and to make a provision for the brothers serving in the dioceses to share a given percentage of their income with their brothers at the monastery – as with members of the same family.

Recommendation 8: In the Rule introduce a clear rotation system to give opportunities to all brothers for diocesan service.

V. Conclusion

The Brotherhood is a relational body called by God to serve him in the spirit of fraternal love reinforced by the bonding nature of the Holy Trinity. When God brings together a group of people of different ages and backgrounds, he preserves the uniqueness of each person and at the same time unites them to him and to one another. Thus, the brothers form a community where one supports the others in the process of their inward journey of putting on Christ by the outpouring power of the Holy Spirit. The corporate grateful response to God for the gift of community transforms the brothers to disciples of service to God and to the Armenian Church. In its faithfulness toward God, the Brotherhood fulfills its calling “to preach the Gospel of Christ and fulfill the spiritual and other needs of the Armenian nation, as well as the maintenance and development of Armenian culture, through their service to the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church,” as Article 1 of the Rule reads.

With changing times and generations, the identity and formation of the brothers face new challenges that affect their relationships with each other and their mission. Prayer, authority, obedience, rules, individuality, sharing responsibilities, participation, dialogue, communal decision-making and communication with one another acquire new approaches to keep the Brotherhood together and make renewal happen.

The Brotherhood was conscious that communities pass through a building and rebuilding process. This survey helped inspire the Brotherhood to recommit itself to renewal and to place itself in the caring hands of God by accepting its limitations and longing for modifications. It was very clear that the brothers were open to changes by

relying not on their human abilities but on the dynamic presence of God in their lives and in their companionship of interdependence on one another's gifts.

Prayer, revision of the Rule, and the practice of a lifestyle of interconnectedness were proposed by the brothers to enable them to make their life and service more meaningful both at the Catholicosate and in the ministry of the Church. There was a strong emphasis in the responses on investing more in theological seminary education and formation, developing a life-style of walking in the light of Christ (cf. John 8.12).

In the Armenian Church, the symbol of the teaching authority of a celibate priest is the staff he carries when delivering a sermon. While receiving this mandate, he is reminded of his need to fully trust in God when teaching the Gospel, comforting the vulnerable, bringing the lost souls to God and inviting the faithful to become inheritors of the Reign of God. This is the path of renewal for the Brotherhood, which could be summed up as its spiritual perspective and life commitment.

The field research served the goal of collecting the thoughts, feelings, and expectations of the brothers. These inform the recommendations and conclusions discussed in the last chapter. The insights gained from this research will also play a role in the formation, identity, and ministry of the Brotherhood and the revision of their Rule.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The Rule of the Brotherhood regulates the formation, identity and ministry of the brothers, and guides their life and service. As a code, it is subject to change as different needs arise, including the need for deeper spirituality and equity. Here I will highlight the relevant Articles of the proposed revised Rule as found in Appendix 3 and will draw special attention to the 16 proposals for change (A). Likewise, I will highlight the relevant Articles of the proposed revised Bylaws of the Catholicosate as found in Appendix 5, with five proposals for change (B). I will then refer to the recommendations of Chapter 4 part IV with necessary revisions in related Articles of the Rule (C), will make four additional proposals based on the outcome of my project and my personal experience in the Brotherhood (D), and will propose steps for the implementation process of my project (E).

All proposals and recommendations are made to bring renewal and revitalization to the Brotherhood and to encourage the brothers to lead a life worthy of their calling, which matures in our union with the true Vine (cf. John 15.4-5), a life in peace and holiness (cf. Heb 12.14), a life which builds on the past, adapts to the present, and gives hope for the future.

In what follows, old readings in the Rule and the Bylaws are crossed out, and the text in bold stands for the proposed or new readings.

I. Recommendations

A. Proposed Modifications in the Rule of the Brotherhood

1. In the Introduction, Article 4 reads:

The Brotherhood is ~~subject~~ **obedient** to the Catholicos of Cilicia...

The monastic vows of poverty, obedience and celibacy disconnect the brothers from the world and through their voluntary surrender connect them to the sacred environment of communal fellowship. By the vow of poverty they sacrifice the worldly attractions, by the vow of celibacy they give up the bodily desires and by the vow of obedience they yield their will to their superior. Therefore, they are not subject to the Catholicos, but gracefully obedient to him, because “power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12.9). The resignation from their own will and obedience to the superior’s will is a gesture of humility and accord.

2. In the Spiritual Life, Article 7 reads:

A brother regularly fulfills his share of ~~obligation~~ **responsibility** ...

I have replaced the word ‘obligation’ with ‘responsibility,’ because obligation implies coercion, while responsibility is the outcome of freedom that entails trust and obedience in a relationship of love. The same applies to all the appropriate articles of the modified Rule in Appendix 3.

3. In the Spiritual Life, Article 8 reads:

To allocate one week in the year (preferably the five days related to St. Gregory the Illuminator's Pilgrimage Day of the Antelias Cathedral) for the spiritual gathering of all the brothers at the monastery.

I have quoted Article 8 in full to propose the following schedule for the spiritual retreat:

Day One, Monday

Arrival of diocesan brothers

Day Two (Tuesday), Day Three (Wednesday) and Day Five (Friday)

7:00-8:00 A.M.	breakfast in the monastery dining room
8:00-9:00 A.M.	matins in the cathedral
9:00-10:00 A.M.	opening remarks by the catholicos, bible study on an appropriate topic (e.g. love, grace, holiness, humility, patience, joy, hospitality, peace, sin, prayer, service, obedience, witness) and small group discussion
10:00-10:30 A.M.	coffee/tea break
10:30 A.M.-12:00 M.	readings from Armenian Church fathers on the topic of the morning bible study and small group discussion
12:00 M.-1:00 P.M.	lunch in the monastery dining room
1:00-3:30 P.M.	rest and informal encounters in the monastery
3:30-5:00 P.M.	readings from Armenian Church fathers on an appropriate topic and small group discussion
5:00-6:00 P.M.	vespers and confession of sins in the cathedral
6:00-7:00 P.M.	dinner in the monastery dining room
7:00-8:30 P.M.	sharing of pastoral experiences in an atmosphere of social gathering
8:30-9:30 P.M.	bible study on the topic of the readings from Armenian Church fathers and small group discussion
9:30-10:00 P.M.	reflections on the day and closing prayer

Day Four (Thursday)

Dedicate the whole day to pray all the nine prayer hours of the Armenian Church, according to the following schedule:

6:30-7:30 A.M.	matins and lauds
7:30-8:00 A.M.	breakfast in the monastery dining room
8:00-9:00 A.M.	private bible reading

9:00-10:00 A.M.	prime
10:00-11:00 A.M.	small group bible study
11:00 A.M.-12:00 M.	terce, sext and none
12:00 M.-1:00 P.M.	lunch in the monastery dining room
1:00-5:00 P.M.	rest and informal encounters in the monastery
5:00-5:30 P.M.	vespers and confession of sins in the cathedral
6:00-7:00 P.M.	dinner in the seminary dining room and encounters with the seminarians
7:00-8:00 P.M.	compline and rest service with the seminarians in the seminary chapel
8:00-9:30 P.M.	sharing of pastoral experiences in an atmosphere of social gathering in the seminary
9:30-10:00 P.M.	reflections on the day and closing prayer in the seminary

Day Six (Saturday)

8:00 A.M.-12:00 M.	matins and Holy Eucharist in the cathedral on the feast day of St. Gregory the Illuminator. All the brothers receive holy communion as a sign of their belonging to Christ and his Church
12:00 M-1:00 P.M.	lunch in the monastery dining room
1:00-5:00 P.M.	visit to an Armenian Church parish diaconal project
5:00-7:00 P.M.	vespers and evening prayer hour in the cathedral
7:00-8:00 P.M.	dinner in the monastery dining room
8:00-9:30 P.M.	sharing of pastoral experiences in an atmosphere of social gathering
9:30-10:00 P.M.	reflections on the day and closing prayer

Day Seven (Sunday)

7:00-8:00 A.M.	breakfast in the monastery dining room
8:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M.	matins, Holy Eucharist and procession of relics in the cathedral on the pilgrimage day of St. Gregory the Illuminator
1:00-7:00 P.M.	free time to visit family and friends
7:00-8:00 P.M.	dinner in the monastery dining room
8:00-9:30 P.M.	sharing of pastoral experiences in an atmosphere of social gathering
9:30-10:30 P.M.	reflections on the day, closing remarks by the catholicos and prayer

Day Eight (Monday)

Departure of diocesan brothers

The following provisions need to be made for the full success of the spiritual retreat:

- a) The prayer and liturgical hours will grant the possibilities for rich experiences of inward reflection and spiritual nurture.
- b) The small groups will be composed of five brothers of varying age and service components.
- c) Tuesday to Friday all the brothers will stay all the time in the monastery and in the seminary.
- d) Tuesday to Friday only emergency use of the internet, email and telephone will be allowed.
- e) The informal and social gatherings will give opportunity for brothers to intermingle with one another.

4. To resolve the imbalance between the Spiritual Life and the Communal Life (Articles 14 to 32), I am proposing four additions to be incorporated in the Spiritual Life section of the Rule (Articles 6 to 9). An increased spirituality of centeredness in Christ in a communal setting of prayer and service will renew the Brotherhood to face the challenges of contemporary society, and prevent brothers from being absorbed in their work to the point of losing sight of their spiritual underpinning.

- a) Celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Thursdays as a Mid-week Source of Spiritual Sustenance**

At the Catholicosate life starts at 7:00 A.M. with the matins and is followed by breakfast. Lay employees arrive at 8:00 A.M. and the Directorships work 8:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. One possible rescheduling could be on Thursdays to wake up at 6:00 A.M., celebrate the Holy Eucharist and receive holy communion 6:30 to 7:30 A.M., have breakfast 7:30 to 8:00 A.M. and be at the office at 8:00 A.M.

b) The Introduction of Midday Prayer Hour and Meditation for the Brothers and Lay Employees

To have in the cathedral a midday prayer hour and meditation, 12:00 M. to 12:30 P.M., for the brothers and lay employees of the Catholicosate Monday to Saturday, excluding Thursday, which will be reserved for the Holy Eucharist as indicated above in point a). Many employees already arrive at the Catholicosate at 7:45 A.M. and enter the cathedral for a short prayer. The midday prayer will give an opportunity for all lay employees working in a religious institution to actively participate in its spirituality.

c) The Possible Participation of the Members of Various Catholicosate Committees in the Daily Vespers

The daily vespers is prayed in the cathedral at 5:00 P.M. Couple of times a week various committees of the Catholicosate hold their meetings in the afternoon. If we start these meetings at 5:30 P.M., we could encourage lay members of these committees to

arrive half an hour early and participate in the vespers. This could enhance their spirituality while they serve the Church.

d) The Celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Additional Specific Days

At the Catholicoosate the Holy Eucharist is celebrated on Sundays and on major holy days. I propose to celebrate the Holy Eucharist on the following additional five occasions:

- (1) The naming day of our Lord Jesus Christ on 13 January
- (2) The feast day of the sons and grandsons of St. Gregory the Illuminator (a movable feast, which was on 5 February 2011)
- (3) The Annunciation of St. Mary the Theotokos on 7 April
- (4) The Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ (a movable feast, which will be on 2 June 2011)
- (5) The feast day of the Apostles St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew (a movable feast, which will be on 3 December 2011)

An increased spirituality during these feast days of our founding apostles, which also coincide with certain Dominical feasts, will fortify the brothers and will inspire them to render better service. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist during these days is all the more necessary since – unlike other monastic communities – we do not celebrate the Holy Eucharist daily.

5. In the Communal Life, Article 15 reads:

In the monastery, the brothers receive room, board, clothing (or clothing allowance), **full** medical care, medicines and treatment and stipend; if incapacitated, special care.

I highlighted **full**, because so far the brothers do not have dental care coverage, which is very expensive in Lebanon and they cannot afford it. Also, the full dedication of the brothers to the monastery needs to be reciprocated by a full coverage of all the necessities, including local ground transportation, which needs to be included in Article 15.

6. In the Communal Life, Article 17 reads:

The brothers have a weekly hour to be together for a special time in spiritually profitable group conversation.

These gatherings are good opportunities to express love towards one another, to share experiences, to deepen friendship, to identify common joys and concerns, to grow up in relationships, to encourage one another, to admonish one another and to forgive each other.

7. In the Communal Life, Article 20, b. reads:

When a monastery resident brother leaves the country for vacation or for Brotherhood business ... his travel expenses are covered by the Brotherhood.

The same logic of Article 15 applies here. The travel expenses of the brothers residing in the monastery have to be fully covered, because if they do not receive the financial assistance from an external source they cannot afford their travel by the symbolic stipend they receive at the Catholicosate.

8. In the Communal Life, Article 22 reads:

~~The brothers are to convey their concerns and problems to His Holiness the Catholicos, either verbally or in writing, through the Administrative Council.~~

His Holiness the Catholicos infuses in the brothers the joy of being loved by Christ and invites them to live in harmony with one another, by guiding them in the unity of service. If these efforts do not produce a positive outcome, the brothers are to convey their concerns and problems to His Holiness the Catholicos, either verbally or in writing, through the Administrative Council.

I rephrased the whole article to show that when the brothers commit themselves wholly to the Catholicos' care and judgment, his understanding and mercy, they are driven by love and trust. In the trusting dialogue between the brothers and the Catholicos, the courage of speaking and the obedience of listening are conditioned by the full confidence of the brothers to accept the Catholicos' will knowing that it will serve their own good.

9. In the Communal Life, Article 24 reads:

A brother cannot be a member of another organization except for highly professional/academic organizations.

As the article does not seem to allow any other organization, exceptions should be made for joining highly professional/academic organizations that would enhance the mission of the Brotherhood.

10. In the Communal Life, Article 27 reads:

a. A brother is sent away from the monastery for ministry by the decision of His Holiness the Catholicos in consultation with the Administrative Council.

b. When a brother holds an elected position outside the monastery, he could serve two consecutive terms only and then returns to the monastery for at least two years.

c. When a brother holds a non-elected position outside the monastery, he could serve for four years only and then returns to the monastery for at least two years.

d. The extension of the ministry of a brother is decided by His Holiness the Catholicos in consultation with the Administrative Council.

These additions to Article 27 spell out the term limit for the diocesan and parish service of the brothers, underscore the preference of communal life and service at the monastery as the environment for ideal formation and contemplation, and allows outreach opportunities to other brothers.

11. In the Estates and Wills, Article 33 reads:

a. When a brother dies in the monastery or outside of it, his only legal heir is the ~~Catholicosate~~ **Brotherhood**.

b. In those countries, where the disposition of the aforementioned clause is not applicable in terms of local laws, brothers ~~must~~ **will** make the ~~Catholicosate~~ **Brotherhood** the beneficiary of their will and furnish the Chancery of the Catholicosate with a final copy thereof.

c. Considering that the laws pertaining to wills vary from one country to another, His Holiness the Catholicos shall decide on the execution of this article **for the brothers serving outside the monastery**, in consultation with the Diocesan Bishops.

An ideal monastic community is upheld by the vows of poverty, obedience and celibacy. Although the vow of poverty is never mentioned in the Rule, but still Article 33 contradicts the spirit of poverty and creates serious sensitivities between the resident and non-resident brothers. Those who serve in the dioceses and the parishes accumulate wealth and sometimes rely on their possessions and not on God, while those who are in the monastery receive a symbolic stipend.

At this stage, one possible solution could be the willingness of the diocesan brothers to share their financial resources with the monastery brothers in the spirit of Christ's commands, "Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (Luke 12.15) and "I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing" (Luke 12.22-23), and the apostolic exhortations, "I know what is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Phil 4.12-13) and "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6.2).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Saint John Chrysostom on this point underlines compassionate attitude: "Do you want to show honor to Christ's Body? Don't despise it when it is naked. Don't honor it with silks here in the church while outside you leave it shivering with cold and naked. For he who said: "This is my body" (Mt 26, 26), ratifying it with his words, is the same who said: "You saw me hungry and gave me no food" and also: "What you did

The whole issue of financial compensation needs serious revision and must be incorporated in appropriate Articles of the Rule. Through the vow of poverty – as well as the vows of obedience and celibacy – we depend on God’s abundant blessing (cf. 2 Cor 9.8), we avoid to make God’s house a market-place (cf. John 2.13-17) and we stay away from the love of money (cf. Heb 13.5). The vow of poverty is based on our total disposition for God’s service (cf. Matt 19.16-30; Mark 12.41-44; Luke 12.33-34; Rom 12.1; 1 Tim 6.17-19).

12. In the Brotherhood General Assembly, Article 36 reads:

The Brotherhood General Assembly is convened once every two years.

It will be useful to extend the Brotherhood General Assembly over three days and organize it in the following way:

Day One

7:00-8:00 A.M.	breakfast in the monastery dining room
8:00-9:00 A.M.	matins in the cathedral
9:00-10:00 A.M.	opening remarks by the catholicos, bible study on an appropriate topic (e.g. vocation, responsibility, vision, accountability, authority, community, communication, management, technology) and small group discussion
10:00-10:30 A.M.	coffee/tea break
10:30-11:30 A.M.	administrative council report and discussion
11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.	monastic directorships reports and discussion
12:30 M.-1:30 P.M.	lunch in the monastery dining room
1:30-2:30 P.M.	rest and informal encounters in the monastery
2:30-3:30 P.M.	monastic directorships’ reports and discussion
3:30-4:00 P.M.	coffee/tea break
4:00-5:00 P.M.	monastic directorships’ reports and discussion
5:00-5:30 P.M.	vespers in the cathedral
5:30-6:30 P.M.	informal encounters in the monastery

not do for one of these little ones, you did not do for me” (Mt 25, 42, 45)” <http://www.dailygospel.org> accessed on 26 September 2010.

6:30-7:30 P.M.	dinner in the monastery dining room
7:30-8:30 P.M.	monastic directorships' reports and discussion
8:30-9:30 P.M.	sharing of pastoral experiences in an atmosphere of social gathering
9:30-10:00 P.M.	reflections on the day and closing prayer

Day Two

7:00-8:00 A.M.	breakfast in the monastery dining room
8:00-9:00 A.M.	matins in the cathedral
9:00-10:00 A.M.	bible study on an appropriate topic and small group discussion
10:00-10:30 A.M.	coffee/tea break
10:30-12:30 P.M.	monastic directorships' reports and discussion
12:30 M.-1:30 P.M.	lunch in the monastery dining room
1:30-2:30 P.M.	rest and informal encounters in the monastery
2:30-3:30 P.M.	diocesan reports and discussion
3:30-4:00 P.M.	coffee/tea break
4:00-5:00 P.M.	diocesan reports and discussion
5:00-5:30 P.M.	vespers in the cathedral
5:30-6:30 P.M.	informal encounters in the monastery
6:30-7:30 P.M.	dinner in the monastery dining room
7:30-8:30 P.M.	diocesan reports and discussion
8:30-9:30 P.M.	sharing of pastoral experiences in an atmosphere of social gathering
9:30-10:00 P.M.	reflections on the day and closing prayer

Day Three

7:00-8:00 A.M.	breakfast in the monastery dining room
8:00-9:00 A.M.	matins in the cathedral
9:00-10:00 A.M.	bible study on an appropriate topic and small group discussion
10:00-10:30 A.M.	coffee/tea break
10:30-11:30 A.M.	general discussion on monastic and diocesan concerns
11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.	evaluation of monastic and diocesan ministry
12:30 M.-1:30 P.M.	lunch in the monastery dining room
1:30-2:30 P.M.	rest and informal encounters in the monastery
2:30-3:30 P.M.	monastic planning for the next two years
3:30-4:00 P.M.	coffee/tea break
4:00-5:00 P.M.	diocesan planning for the next two years
5:00-5:30 P.M.	vespers in the cathedral
5:30-6:30 P.M.	informal encounters in the monastery
6:30-8:30 P.M.	dinner in the seminary dining room and encounters with the seminarians

8:30-9:30 P.M.	sharing of pastoral experiences in an atmosphere of social gathering in the seminary
9:30-10:00 P.M.	reflections on the day, closing remarks by the catholicos and closing prayer in the seminary

The following points need to be considered:

- a) During the three days of the assembly all the brothers will be together all the time in the monastery and in the seminary.
- b) During the three days of the assembly only urgent use of the internet, email and telephone will be allowed.
- c) The assembly will develop the organizational plans and will set up the short term and the long term ministry goals of the Brotherhood.

13. In the Responsibilities of the Brotherhood General Assembly, Article 42 reads:

Prepare a list of five candidates **selected from the bishops of the Armenian Church** for Catholicosal election.

Article 42 reflects the unity of the Armenian Church. The highest hierarchical position of the Catholicos is open to all the bishops of the Armenian Church and is not restricted to just the bishops of our Brotherhood.

Article 31 of the Communal Life (“A brother may serve within the confines of another hierarchical See of the Armenian Apostolic Church (monastic or diocesan), when the head of the given hierarchical See expresses such a wish in writing to His Holiness the Catholicos of our Holy See...”) is based on the same awareness of the unity of the Armenian Church.

14. Before Article 48, the introductory lines of Administrative Council reads:

Replace the term ‘Administrative Council’ by ‘Advisory Council’ in all articles of the Rule.

I am proposing this replacement, because the ‘Administrative Council’ only has a consultative character. The Catholicos consults with the ‘Administrative Council’ and acts on his own authority.

15. In the Monastic Directorships, Article 55 reads:

~~The monastic directorships are: Grand Sacristan, Choirmaster, Dean of the theological seminary, Library, Museum, Publications, Printing House, ‘Hask’ editorship, Hospitality, Bookstore, Chief Steward, Pantry Chief, and Property Maintenance.~~

The monastic directorships are: Grand Sacristan, Choirmaster, Dean of the theological seminary, Library, Printing House, Publications, Bookstore, ‘Hask’ editorship, Museum, Hospitality, Chief Steward, Pantry Chief, and Property Maintenance.

The following 15 missing responsibilities have to be put on the agenda for future revision of the Rule:

1. communications officer
2. ecumenical officer
3. youth department director
4. archives department director
5. Christian education director
6. Sunday schools director
7. university students association spiritual advisor
8. special courses for married clergy candidates director
9. boarding school spiritual advisor
10. Christian education board membership
11. ecumenical relations committee membership
12. ‘Hask’ Armenological editorial committee membership
13. Armenian education board membership

14. literary funds membership
15. university students scholarships funds membership

This addition reflects the multidimensional growth of the Brotherhood's ministry.

16. In the Monastic Directorships, Article 59 reads:

The **lay** employees subject to each Directorship are directly linked and are accountable to the Director of the given Directorship...

The lay employees and the brothers together carry out the ministry of the Catholicosate. They share the same mission of the Armenian Church and are responsible for its common service to the Armenian faithful.

B. Proposed Modifications in the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia

By visiting the Bylaws of the Catholicosate I show the inter-connectedness of the Brotherhood and the Catholicosate.

1. In the Catholicosate, Article 1 reads:

Moved to Antelias-Lebanon in 1930, the Catholicosate of Cilicia is the continuation of centuries-old Armenian Catholicosate. The Catholicosate of Cilicia is an indivisible part of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church and is one of its Hierarchical Holy Sees, sustained by the blessing of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. His Holiness the Catholicos of Cilicia is the Spiritual Leader of the Armenian people in the dioceses of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the President of all the national assemblies, the Head and Administrator of the Executive Authority and the Head of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

The Catholicosate of Cilicia is one of the two Catholicosates of the Armenian Church and the Catholicos holds the positions of the spiritual leader of the Catholicosate and the superior of the Brotherhood. The Catholicosate and the Brotherhood are united in their service to God through the Armenian people entrusted to their care.

2. In the Catholicosate, Article 2 reads:

It is the ~~obligation~~ **responsibility** of His Holiness the Catholicos to ensure the prosperity of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church...

I have substituted the word ‘obligation’ with ‘responsibility,’ because the Catholicos is not obliged to perform his task but is responsible to take care of his people out of his love, commitment, courage, authority and vision, and to proclaim the saving grace of Christ and the dawning of his day (cf. Tit 2.1-15; 1 Pet 3.10-11; 1 Cor 2.9). The same applies to all the revised appropriate articles of the Bylaws in Appendix 5.

3. In the Catholicosate, Article 3 reads:

In the event of illness, lengthy absence or other urgent reasons involving His Holiness the Catholicos, He shall ... appoint, by a pontifical encyclical, a Vicar General **from the members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia** to conduct the affairs of the Catholicosate ...

And in the Election of the Catholicos, Article 5 reads:

When His Holiness the Catholicos passes away and/or if the See remains vacant for any reason, the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, with the participation of the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the National General Assembly and the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the

General Assembly of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia shall elect the Catholicosal Locum Tenens **from the members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.**

The addition **from the members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia** is essential to indicate the inter-relation of the Brotherhood and the Catholicosate, and to prevent the interference of the other hierarchical Sees of the Armenian Church in the decision of the Catholicosate.

4. In the Election of the Catholicos, Article 7 reads:

After a forty-day period of mourning, the Locum Tenens shall convene the Brotherhood General Assembly, which, by secret ballot, shall compile a list containing the names of five candidates selected from among the bishops of the Armenian **Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church.**

The execution of the selection of five candidates from among the bishops of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church is conditioned upon the application of the principle of reciprocity by the Catholicosate of all Armenians of Holy Ējmiatsin.

Whereas the Catholicosate of Cilicia accepts the candidacy of all bishops of the Armenian Church for its hierarch, the Catholicosate of All Armenians of Holy Ējmiatsin allows only members of its Brotherhood to be candidates for the election of the Catholicos in Holy Ējmiatsin. To underscore the necessary principle of reciprocation, I have added the second paragraph of Article 7.

5. In the Election of the Catholicos, Article 12 reads:

~~The Mother See~~ **The Catholicosate of all Armenians** of Holy Ējmiatsin shall be invited to participate in the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly with two

representatives (preferably one clergyman and one layperson) with the right to vote.

“Mother See” is mostly used by the Catholicosate of all Armenians of Holy Ējmiatsin. In general the Catholiosate of Cilicia refers to its sister Catholicosate as the Catholicosate of all Armenians of Holy Ējmiatsin and at the same time esteems its primacy of honor.

C. Recommendations of the Field Research

The eight recommendations made in Chapter 4 part IV need to be taken into consideration for the revision of the following articles of the Rule:

Recommendation 1: Revise the curriculum of the theological seminary to make it more relevant to the pastoral responsibilities of the brothers.

Article 47

Develop the theological seminary’s educational plan and determine the principles and direction of the theological seminary’s educational task.

Article 62

The Dean of the theological seminary creates a spiritual and moral atmosphere, which is faithful to the spirit and sacred traditions of the Armenian Church, for the preparation of future clergymen.

Article 63

The responsibility of the Dean of the theological seminary is to:

- a. Implement the spiritual and educational program of the theological seminary.

Recommendation 2: Ordain theological seminary graduates at a more mature age, meantime providing them the opportunity of serving as deacons in the dioceses and parishes.

Have the Administrative Council consider the age of maturity for candidates presented for ordination as celibate priests and forward its recommendation to the next Brotherhood General Assembly for further action.

Recommendation 3: Organize annual retreats for the brothers to share their spiritual experiences and discuss theological and doctrinal issues.

Article 8

To allocate one week in the year (preferably the five days related to the St. Gregory the Illuminator's Pilgrimage Day of the Antelias Cathedral) for the spiritual gathering of all the brothers at the monastery.

Article 9

Once a month, the brothers have a time of collective reflection, devoted mostly to the study of the Holy Bible and the Church fathers.

Article 17

The brothers have a weekly hour to be together for a special time in spiritually profitable group conversation.

Recommendation 4: Embark on the renewal of the Armenian Church through ongoing educational programs for personal and collective formation in the faith.

Have the Administrative Council increase the role and the budget of the Christian education department.

Recommendation 5: To harvest good results of belonging to the Brotherhood, to develop a lifestyle of joining with those brothers who share common interest in a service area and assign to them tasks which are closer to their hearts.

Article 22

His Holiness the Catholicos infuses in the brothers the joy of being loved by Christ and invites them to live in harmony with each other, by guiding them in the unity of service.

Article 53

The decisions and arrangements of the Administrative Council are subject to the approval and validation of His Holiness the Catholicos. With this understanding, besides the responsibilities spelled out in specific articles, the responsibilities of the Administrative Council are to:

- a. Appoint the Directors of the monastic Directorships and supervise their activities.
- b. Appoint brothers in charge of other monastic functions, as needed.

Recommendation 6: Professionalism is the demand of our times. Include in the theological seminary curriculum courses which will provide adequate professional tools to the future clergy in their service in the worldwide Armenian Diaspora.

Article 47

Develop the theological seminary's educational plan and determine the principles and direction of the theological seminary's educational task.

Article 62

The Dean of the theological seminary creates a spiritual and moral atmosphere, which is faithful to the spirit and sacred traditions of the Armenian Church, for the preparation of future clergymen.

Article 63

The responsibility of the Dean of the theological seminary is to:

- a. Implement the spiritual and educational program of the theological seminary.

Recommendation 7: To include in the Rule an article on poverty and to make a provision for the brothers serving in the dioceses to share a given percentage of their income with their brothers at the monastery – as with members of the same family.

Article 1 (“The Brotherhood is composed of celibate clergymen, who are called to the service of God, and the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church; who have vowed to live in a fraternal and communal manner, with Christian love and the spirit of obedience inspired by said Rule, and whose calling is to preach the Gospel of Christ and fulfill the spiritual and other needs of the Armenian nation, as well as the maintenance and development of Armenian culture, through their service to the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church”) needs to have an appropriate inclusion of the vow of poverty.

The following articles lend themselves to the implementation of Recommendation 7:

Article 15

In the monastery, the brothers receive room, board, clothing (or clothing allowance), full medical care, medicines and treatment and a stipend; if incapacitated, special care.

Article 53

The decisions and arrangements of the Administrative Council are subject to approval and validation by His Holiness the Catholicos. With this understanding, besides the responsibilities spelled out in specific articles, the responsibilities of the Administrative Council are to:

- i. Determine the form and extent of the brothers’ financial compensation.

Recommendation 8: To introduce in the Rule a clear rotation system to give opportunities to other brothers for diocesan service.

Article 27

a. A brother is sent away from the monastery for ministry by the decision of His Holiness the Catholicos in consultation with the Administrative Council.

b. When a brother holds an elected position outside the monastery, he could serve two consecutive terms only and then returns to the monastery for at least two years.

c. When a brother holds a non-elected position outside the monastery, he could serve for four years only and then returns to the monastery for at least two years.

d. The extension of the ministry of a brother is decided by His Holiness the Catholicos in consultation with the Administrative Council.

Article 29

A brother shall return to the monastery at the end of his diocesan ministry.

Article 30

When a brother in the service of a diocese is summoned at any time back to the monastery by His Holiness the Catholicos, he returns immediately.

The Rule will be reviewed at the next Brotherhood General Assembly in 2011 and according to the disposition of Article 86 will be approved by the encyclical of the Catholicos for execution.

D. Additional Proposals Emanating from the Project

1. Need for Spiritual Fathers

In the field research young brothers expressed the need of having a spiritual father. Traditional monastic orders have the benefit of the loving and caring presence of spiritual fathers. The spiritual father of a brother could serve as mentor, confessor and model of unconditional attention, physical affection and fraternal living in the service of

the church. The spiritual father helps a brother to know what God wants from him, accompanies him in doing the will of God and leads him in the way of Christian holiness.

2. Birthdays and Ordination Anniversaries as Occasions for Further Inter-connectedness among Brothers

The Catholicosate publishes an annual liturgical calendar in the form of a book and at the end lists the members of the Brotherhood with brief information on each brother. This information needs to be elaborated to include day, month and year of birth and ordination of each brother. The Administrative Council has to circulate the new information and encourage all the brothers to congratulate one another's birthdays and ordination anniversaries.

3. Publication of Christian Education Booklets and Online Articles

To sharpen the Christian education of the Armenian faithful I propose to establish a series of booklets under the general title "Christ in our midst has been revealed – Let us embrace the Christian faith of our ancestors" with supplemental online articles. Article 9 of the Rule ("Once a month, the brothers have a time of collective reflection, devoted mostly to the study of the Holy Bible and the Church fathers") could provide the basic material for the series.

4. Special Care for the Youth

In 2009 I received a personal letter from a friend, in which he referred to the Armenian Church's mission to the youth and quoted the following paragraph:

Our prime objective in this modern day is to win over our young people, to educate them, to cause them to grow in Christ, to lead them to salvation. Our mission in life is not just to make them Armenians, but to make them Christian Armenians. We are failing. We all recognize the fact that we are failing. We are all trying to combat that failure. We must take a long hard look at what we are doing and what we must do to regain our youth and lead them back into the fold. We must set up seminars for them. Organize a church youth group through which we can reach these young people. Involve them more in the administrative and liturgical life of the church. Take an active interest in those issues that are important to them – and believe me, they are not as interested in ancient history as they are in drugs, sex and punk rock. The future of our church is in the hands of our youth. If we do not invest more time and energies in them, make them strong in their commitment to Christ and His Holy Church, then the church will have no future. Remember, Our Lord Himself took a special interest in the children.

He then added: “Do you know that I am quoting from a presentation made to the clergy conference of the National Representatives’ Assembly of the Prelacy of the Eastern United States and Canada in 1980 – 29 years ago!”

The youth department of the Brotherhood requires particular attention. Our outreach to the Armenian youth has to secure their permanent involvement in the Church. Through digital media and technological innovations in communication, we have to make Armenian Church teaching, spirituality and liturgy more relevant, accessible and fulfilling to the new generations. Youth challenge beliefs and order. They want to be given the opportunity to express their own opinions by questioning. They want proof. Re-attracting youth to the church will not be easy. Engaging the younger members of the Brotherhood in this special mission requires equally special training with focus on the youth.

To integrate the youth in ongoing spiritual formation, I further propose that the youth department director of the Brotherhood invite a small youth group representing the dioceses to the Catholicosate on a regular basis (perhaps twice a year) and listen to their

expectations and concerns, and develop a program of interaction with them. The youth will come to know that the church has something to offer to them, it will embrace them as an authentic community, it will accompany them in their search for meaning in Christianity and it will strive to answer their deepest theological questions and personal needs.

E. Proposal for the Implementation of the Project

I will present the project to my Brotherhood to explore appropriate and effective ways for its experimentation. I anticipate a process of evaluation, modification, and eventual adoption of most of the proposals made in the project. I will follow these specific steps:

1. Submit the project to the superior of the Brotherhood, the Catholicos, for his blessing and evaluation.
2. Share the project (or the resultant proposals) with the members of the Brotherhood by email and personal contact to give them a sense of its ownership and to get their feedback as to how they understand and value it.
3. Meet with the members of the Administrative Council to reflect on the project and discuss if the proposed changes in the Rule could be tried for an interim period.
4. Implement a process of making particular changes in the Rule, according to the provisions stated in Article 84 (“The review of the present Rule shall be carried out on justified written request from one third of the Administrative

Council or the Brotherhood General Assembly”) and Article 85 (“The decision to modify the articles of the present Rule will be taken by the members of the Brotherhood present at the session of the Brotherhood General Assembly, based on a two-thirds majority”).

It is hoped that the adoption of the proposals will usher in a spirit of renewal that will secure the networking of a community of brothers of multiple gifts, as they continue their mission creatively, headed by a prudent and visionary superior surrounded by dedicated and obedient brothers.

II. Conclusion

Most of the preceding recommendations emanate from the project – the field work in particular – that endeavored to examine nearly every link that binds together the Brotherhood of which I am a member. From the outset, my purpose has been to identify the weaker links so as to strengthen the spiritual bond that binds the brothers and to enhance the mission of the Brotherhood. The mission is invariably that of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, itself a major part of the world-wide Armenian Church. Ours, then, is the mission of the Armenian Church. From its monastic setting and through the network of its Catholicosal dioceses, the Brotherhood serves the Armenian people in the Diaspora.

The formation of the brothers takes place in their family and school environments and later on in the theological seminary, where their priestly identity is forged and their ministry is directed. As a relational body, a group of people of different ages and

backgrounds, united to one another and to God, the Brotherhood is further united in its service to God through the Armenian Church and nation.

The project probed the Brotherhood’s contextualized communal life and outreach mission that thrusts through the dynamic crosscurrents of church and nation, faith and culture in the post-Genocide Armenian Diaspora. The survey uncovered the spiritual perspectives of the brothers, the degrees of their “monastic” contentment, their hopes and aspirations for the Brotherhood, the Catholicosate, and the Armenian Church and nation. Their views inform the recommendations for the revised Rule of the Brotherhood and for the revised Bylaws of the Catholicosate discussed in this last chapter.

I offer my modest contribution to my Brotherhood with the words of a late Archbishop of the Armenian Church: “During our priestly service we should have – as if in a sacred ark – a staff in one hand, which is the priestly zeal, and in the other a jar of sweet manna, which is humility and compassion,”¹¹⁰ and with a prayer quoted by a much loved, late Bishop of our own Brotherhood: “Benevolent Lord, you told us ‘I am with you always, to the end of the age’ (Matt 28.20). Do not abandon us. Strengthen us in your will and enable us to endure this earthly battle for the sake of your great name, and to praise you and accept you as our Lord and God.”¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Khorēn Ashēgean, *Kents’agh Ekeghets’akanats’* [The Lifestyle of the Clergy] (Constantinople, 1891), 45.

¹¹¹ Zareh Aznavorean, *Im Aghōt’agirk’s* [My Prayerbook] (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2005), 64-65.

APPENDIX 1

The Letter and the Seven Questions Sent to the Members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia for the DMin Research Project

7 June 2007

Dear Bishop/Father ...,

I am nearing the completion of my Doctor of Ministry degree at the Vancouver School of Theology, in Canada.

I hope I can obtain the permission of His Holiness Aram I to spend this summer in Vancouver and write my project. The topic of my project is “Celibate Priesthood in the 21st Century Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church: The Model of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, Antelias-Lebanon.”

My doctoral committee asked for a qualitative research to be incorporated with my project. Because it will be impossible to meet with each of you in person, I will try to reach you by the email or by phone to have a frank discussion with you on our Brotherhood. To facilitate our conversation, I have attached seven questions to this letter addressed to all the brothers.

Please read these questions, feel free to respond to them and reflect on other areas of interest in your life and ministry. Your confidentiality will be respected and pseudonyms will be used when I refer to you in the project.

I am planning to be in touch with you until 30 June 2007. If you have any suggestions for a convenient time for our contact, please let me know.

Thank you in advance.

I remain yours in prayers,

Bishop Nareg Alemezian

Questions

1. What and/or who do you consider to be the key movements, structures, and people (role models) who have shaped and are shaping the identity of the Brotherhood? What is the significance of their contribution? What is the effect of their efforts?
2. Do you believe that by a modified process of our personal and corporate formation the Brotherhood might have more members and could carry out better ministry?
3. Why are you in the Brotherhood today? What do you consider the ultimate fulfillment of life, as a member of this corporate body?
4. Who are the decision-makers and influence-bearers in the Brotherhood? Are you satisfied with the status quo? If not, do you see any possibilities for change? How?
5. In the Brotherhood, which things have endured, which things have changed, and which things have disappeared as time has passed?
6. Do you think that the Brotherhood is fulfilling its calling by adequately serving God through the Armenian Church?
7. What suggestions do you have for the linkage of the resident and non-resident members of the Brotherhood?

APPENDIX 2

The Rule of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia

Article 1

The Brotherhood is composed of celibate clergymen, who are called to the service of God, the Armenian Church and people; who have vowed to live in a fraternal and communal manner, with Christian love and the spirit of obedience inspired by said Rule, and whose calling is to preach the Gospel of Christ and fulfill the spiritual and other needs of the Armenian nation, as well as the maintenance and development of Armenian culture, through their service to the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church.

Article 2

The Brotherhood is an indivisible part of the Armenian Church and is faithful to its creed, teachings and traditions.

Article 3

His Holiness the Catholicos is the head of the Brotherhood.

Article 4

The Brotherhood is subject to the Catholicos of Cilicia and is governed by this Rule, which shall be put into effect after being sanctioned through an Encyclical issued by His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 5

The Brotherhood may be joined by:

- a. Those who apply to the Directorship of the theological seminary of the Catholicosate, after completing their course of study there, and are ordained as celibate clergy after being accepted according to the dispositions of Article 63.e.
- b. Those, who have the corresponding religious preparation and are deemed suitable by the Administrative Council, and who, by written vow, promise to obey His Holiness the Catholicos and execute the Brotherhood's Rule.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Article 6

The daily spiritual life of a brother revolves around personal and communal prayer, which is also his source of nourishment. Brothers are obliged to regularly participate in the liturgical ceremonies and all other religious services.

Article 7

A brother is obliged to regularly fulfill his share of obligation in the administration of the Holy Sacraments at the monastery.

Article 8

To allocate one week in the year (preferably the week of the St. Gregory the Illuminator's Pilgrimage Day of the Antelias Cathedral) to meditation, with the participation of all the brothers.

Article 9

Once a month, the brothers have a time of collective reflection, devoted mostly to the study of the Holy Bible and the Church fathers.

INTELLECTUAL LIFE

Article 10

The brothers are obliged to cultivate and develop their intellectual interests with consistent regularity, and increase their ecclesiastical and cultural knowledge.

Article 11

The brothers are required to assume the obligations of teacher-educator in the theological seminary of the Catholicosate and, if necessary, in other educational institutions.

Article 12

The brothers are obliged to collaborate on '*Hask*', the official periodical of the Catholicosate, and its other publications.

Article 13

a. The brothers are obliged to produce works and studies pertaining to the Armenian Church, the Armenian people and other topics.

b. The brothers are obliged to receive permission from His Holiness the Catholicos in connection with the publication of works pertaining to the history, rites and creed of the Armenian Church, as well as the activities and history of the Holy See of Cilicia.

COMMUNAL LIFE

Article 14

The brothers conduct a communal life inside the monastery, in an atmosphere of fraternal love and respect, through the employment of the same rules.

Article 15

In the monastery, the brothers receive room, board, clothing (or clothing allowance), medical care, medicines and treatment and stipend; if incapacitated, special care.

Article 16

Meals are served collectively and at specified hours. Any arrangement resulting from illness or lateness with a reasonable explanation may be made only with the knowledge of the Chief Steward.

Article 17

The brothers have a weekly hour to be together for a special time in spiritually profitable group conversation.

Article 18

The brothers are obliged to attend religious ceremonies, national observances and official public events organized by the Catholicosate or having immediate connection to its life.

Article 19

When a brother leaves the monastery to make a visitation or go on other business, he must inform the person designated by the Administrative Council.

Article 20

a. When a monastery resident brother wishes to leave the country, he must request the special permission from His Holiness the Catholicos.

b. Brothers serving in dioceses are obliged to inform His Holiness the Catholicos in the event they make a visitation outside of their diocese or region.

Article 21

When making a visit anywhere, a brother represents himself to the religious authority of the local Armenian Church and, in the event of any ecclesiastical or community activity, act with the knowledge and arrangement of the respective authority.

Article 22

The brothers are to convey their concerns and problems to His Holiness the Catholicos, either verbally or in writing, through the Administrative Council.

Article 23

When non-resident brothers are in the monastery on a visit or for business, they are obliged to follow the rules of the monastic life.

Article 24

A brother cannot be a member of another organization.

Article 25

The brothers are obliged to meticulously perform those responsibilities, which are entrusted to them by the Administrative Council, through official writ of His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 26

A brother cannot resign from his responsibility, except in the event that the Administrative Council finds the explanations for his resignation to be valid.

Article 27

A brother is sent away from the monastery for a period of ministry of three years at most, the extension of which is decided exclusively by His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 28

Brothers called to perform ministry in dioceses serve according to the dispositions of the Diocesan Bylaws, obeying the local Diocesan Bishop, while at the same time maintaining contact with the Brotherhood.

Article 29

A brother shall return to the monastery at the end of his diocesan ministry.

Article 30

When a brother in the service of a diocese is summoned at any time back to the monastery by His Holiness the Catholicos, he is obliged to return immediately.

Article 31

A brother may serve within the confines of another hierarchical See of the Armenian Apostolic Church (monastic or diocesan), when the head of the given hierarchical See expresses such a wish in writing to His Holiness the Catholicos of our Holy See. Said service must be for a specified period of time, with the agreement of the Administrative Council and the blessing of His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 32

Any brother, who is not serving in a diocese, or has not been sent on a special mission by His Holiness the Catholicos, cannot remain a clergyman outside of the monastery.

ESTATES AND WILLS

Article 33

a. When a brother dies in the monastery or outside of it, his only legal heir is the Catholicosate.

b. In those countries, where the disposition of the aforementioned clause is not applicable in terms of local laws, brothers must make the Catholicosate the beneficiary of their will and furnish the Chancery of the Catholicosate with a final copy thereof.

c. Considering that the laws pertaining to wills vary from one country to another, His Holiness the Catholicos shall decide on the execution of this article, in consultation with the Diocesan Bishops.

BROTHERHOOD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 34

His Holiness the Catholicos or the Catholicosal Locum Tenens is the President of the Brotherhood General Assembly and the Bodies originating from it.

Article 35

The Brotherhood General Assembly is convened by His Holiness the Catholicos or the Catholicosal Locum Tenens.

Article 36

The Brotherhood General Assembly is convened once every two years.

Article 37

In the event of necessity, an exceptional session shall take place, when two-thirds of the Brotherhood presents a written proposal to the Chair and Secretariat of the Brotherhood General Assembly, composed of First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries.

Article 38

The meeting of the Brotherhood General Assembly is considered legitimate with a simple majority quorum.

Article 39

The Brotherhood General Assembly has its Chair and Secretariat, composed of First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries. Their term of office extends from one Brotherhood General Assembly to the next. They can be reelected.

Article 40

The Brotherhood General Assembly is convened behind closed doors.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE BROTHERHOOD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 41

Prepare the Rule of the Brotherhood and, if necessary, revise it according to the dispositions of Articles 84 and 85.

Article 42

Prepare a list of five candidates for Catholicosal election.

Article 43

Elect the brother delegates to the National General Assembly.

Article 44

Elect the brother delegates to the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly.

Article 45

Elect the Administrative Council, which receives its validation from His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 46

Examine and evaluate the activity of the Administrative Council, in which the reports of the Directorships subject to it must be presented.

Article 47

Develop the theological seminary's educational plan and determine the principles and direction of the theological seminary's educational task.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Article 48

The Administrative Council is composed of three or five brothers.

Article 49

Brothers are eligible for election to the Administrative Council for a two-year term, and can be reelected.

Article 50

Brothers with a minimum of five years' experience can be elected to membership in the Administrative Council.

Article 51

When an Administrative Council, owing to circumstances, loses the majority of its members, His Holiness the Catholicos or the Catholicos Locum Tenens shall appoint a provisional Administrative Council that would serve until the next Brotherhood General Assembly.

Article 52

The Chairman of the Administrative Council cannot assume another responsible position.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Article 53

The decisions and arrangements of the Administrative Council are subject to the approval and validation of His Holiness the Catholicos or the Catholicos Locum Tenens. With this understanding, the responsibilities of the Administrative Council are to:

- a. Appoint the Directors of the monastic Directorships and supervise their activities.
- b. Appoint brothers in charge of other monastic functions, as needed.

- c. Occupy itself with daily monastic issues.
- d. Pursue stability and harmony in the monastic life, and create the most suitable conditions and means of life and work.
- e. Appoint the most suitable brothers to positions outside the monastery, according to the dispositions of Article 27.
- f. Give the brothers the opportunity to pursue higher education, preferably in Lebanon, for two to four years.
- g. Send circulars to all the brothers, when required to do so.
- h. Prepare the annual budget of the Brotherhood and the Directorships subject to it and present it to the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee.
- i. Determine the form and extent of the brothers' financial compensation.
- j. Examine the deficiencies of the brothers and do what is necessary and proper to remedy them. In the event of grave culpability, review the matter and resolve it according to the disposition of Article 82.

Article 54

The Administrative Council is accountable to the Brotherhood General Assembly.

MONASTIC DIRECTORSHIPS

Article 55

The monastic directorships are: Grand Sacristan, Choirmaster, Dean of the theological seminary, Library, Museum, Publications, Printing House, 'Hask' editorship, Hospitality, Bookstore, Chief Steward, Pantry Chief, and Property Maintenance.

Article 56

Directors and their Assistants are appointed by the Administrative Council and are approved by His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 57

Directors are obliged to present a six-month activity report to the Administrative Council.

Article 58

Directors are obliged to prepare the budget of their annual expenses and present it to the Administrative Council.

Article 59

The employees subject to each Directorship are directly linked and are accountable to the Director of the given Directorship. Their monthly salaries and annual vacations are coordinated by the Chancery of the Catholicosate, with the agreement of the given Director.

GRAND SACRISTAN

Article 60

The responsibility of the Grand Sacristan is to:

- a. Ensure the regular and flawless implementation of religious services and sacraments.
- b. Coordinate all the religious services taking place in the Cathedral, particularly in consultation with the Choirmaster and the Dean of the theological seminary.
- c. Ensure the proper care and maintenance of ecclesiastical goods and vessels.
- d. Keep a complete and detailed list of the goods and vessels of the Cathedral and Treasury, furnishing the Administrative Council a copy as well.
- e. See to it that the Cathedral, the Memorial Chapel, the Brotherhood Mausoleum and the Bikfaya Chapel are kept neat and clean.
- f. Supervise the work of the employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

CHOIRMASTER

Article 61

- a. The responsibility of the Choirmaster is to secure the harmonious singing of the religious services.
- b. During the religious services, the Choirmaster follows the arrangements made by the Grand Sacristan.

DEAN OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Article 62

The Dean of the theological seminary is obliged to create a spiritual and moral atmosphere, which is faithful to the spirit and sacred traditions of the Armenian Church, for the preparation of future clergymen.

Article 63

The responsibility of the Dean of the theological seminary is to:

- a. Implement the spiritual and educational program of the theological seminary.
- b. Carry out the selection of new seminarians, according to the number determined together with the Administrative Council, and decide, if necessary, on the discharge of seminarians.
- c. Hire teachers, in agreement with the Administrative Council, and discharge them, if necessary.
- d. Attentively supervise the theological seminary's spiritual-moral life, the instruction given by the teachers, the mutual relations of the seminarians, and the regularity of meals and health care.
- e. Present the candidates for the ordination of deacon and celibate priest to His Holiness the Catholicos, through the Administrative Council.
- f. Supervise the work of the employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

LIBRARY

Article 64

The responsibility of the Librarian is to:

- a. Keep the Library in an orderly, secure and neat condition; classify the books according to a modern scientific cataloguing system.
- b. Enrich the Library with new publications in Armenian and foreign languages – particularly religious and Armenological books – and Armenian periodicals.
- c. Encourage the use of the Library's holdings, for scholarly research.
- d. Keep the Library open according to the specified schedule.
- e. Supervise the work of the employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

MUSEUM

Article 65

The Museum Director shall have a committee composed of brothers and preferably experts, who shall jointly make all the decisions pertaining to the Museum and perform its work.

Article 66

The Museum shall have its internal Bylaws, which shall lay out all the details of the preservation of the priceless treasures preserved there, their removal or, if necessary, their exchange.

Article 67

The responsibility of the Museum Director is to:

- a. Keep the Museum of the monastery in an orderly, secure and neat condition, seeing to it that the objects entrusted to its care are maintained in good condition, by utilizing a modern scientific system.
- b. Carefully maintain a catalogue of the items put on exhibition or kept in storage, furnishing a copy to the Administrative Council as well.
- c. Always endeavor to enrich the Museum with new Armenian or foreign artifacts, and seek out of obtaining artifacts of religious or secular riches of Cilician Armenia.
- d. Cooperate with Lebanon's Tourism Ministry, to acquaint the Ministry with the Museum, as well as to render it an attractive destination for foreign tourists.
- e. Keep the Museum open according to the specified schedule.
- f. Supervise the work of the employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

PUBLICATIONS

Article 68

The Publications Committee is composed of three to five persons, whose obligation is to plan and synthesize the publishing work of the various Directorships of the Catholicosate and particularly to encourage the printing of the works of the Brotherhood members.

PRINTING HOUSE

Article 69

The responsibility of the Director of the Printing House is to:

- a. Oversee all the work involved with the Printing House, and ensure the regular and punctual work of the employees.
- b. Ensure the proper use and maintenance of the Printing House's equipments and fixtures.
- c. Expand the Printing House's financial productivity by modern printing means.

EDITORSHIP OF 'HASK'

Article 70

- a. The members of the "*Hask*" Editorial Board are appointed by the Administrative Council.

Article 71

- b. The responsibility of the '*Hask*' Editorial Board is to publish '*Hask*' regularly and with proper content and secure corresponding contributors.

BOOKSTORE

Article 72

The responsibility of the Bookstore Manager is to:

- a. Acquire all the publications of the Catholicosate from the Printing House or Directorships and seek to sell them as quickly as possible.
- b. Establish verbal or written contact with bookstores in Lebanon and abroad, and present them with the overall publications of the Catholicosate. Maintain the same contact with the dioceses of the Catholicosate.
- c. Organize exhibitions within the monastery from time to time, or participate in exhibitions organized elsewhere.

Article 73

The Directorship of the Bookstore has two assistants. The first is in charge of the Bookstore; the second, in charge of the Warehouse.

1. The obligations of the person in charge of the Bookstore are to:

- a. Receive the necessary books from the person in charge of the Warehouse for sale in the Bookstore.
- b. Arrange the books in the Bookstore in an attractive manner, always inviting attention to the new releases.

- c. Maintain a precise record of books sold.
2. The obligations of the person in charge of the Warehouse are to:
 - a. Maintain a precise record of books in storage.
 - b. Become the practical link with bookstores in Lebanon, abroad and in the dioceses, in order for the books to reach their destination, and to follow up on the work involved in tracking their sales and receiving payments.
 - c. Receive book orders from foreign countries and take care of expediting them.
 - d. Engage in efforts to distribute ‘*Hask*’ in Lebanon and abroad, and take care of its subscriptions.

CHIEF STEWARD

Article 74

The responsibility of the Chief Steward is to:

- a. Ensure the regularity of meals and nourishment.
- b. Oversee purchases.
- c. Ensure the cleanliness of the kitchen and dining hall.
- d. Supervise the work of the employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

Article 75

The chief steward has, as immediate helper, a steward, who handles the purchases, based on his orders.

PANTRY CHIEF

Article 76

The responsibility of the pantry chief is to:

- a. Take care of the pantry and foodstuffs, the recording of their procurement and usage, as well as their proper maintenance.
- b. Give the necessary supplies to the cook, according to the suggestion of the Chief Steward and the menu.

c. From month to month, or as required, furnish the members of the Brotherhood supplies needed by them.

d. As needed, provide the wardrobe keeper, the cleaning persons and the gardener the supplies required for their work.

HOSPITALITY

Article 77

The Administrative Council appoints a brother in charge of the hospitality, whose obligation is to greet and receive guests in the monastery and ensure their comfortable stay.

PROPERTY MANAGER

Article 78

The responsibility of the property manager is to:

a. Oversee and ensure the proper use, maintenance and repair of the monastery's property.

b. Oversee the overall cleanliness of the monastery and the work of the cleaning persons.

c. Oversee the regular and clean maintenance of the guest quarters, as well as impeccable service to the guests.

d. Supervise the work of the employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

CONFERRING OF TITLES

Article 79

Titles are conferred by His Holiness the Catholicos, according to the traditions and canons of the Armenian Church.

Article 80

In the event of the conferring of the titles of Four Orders of Doctor of Divinity and Ten Orders of Doctor of Divinity and other titles, the candidate's service, position held, and worthiness are taken into consideration, and a request is presented by the Administrative Council to His Holiness the Catholicos, for suitable disposition.

Article 81

a. The elevation of a Celibate Priest to the rank of Bishop is connected to the offices of diocesan Prelate or Vicar General, and is carried out on the basis of a petition from the diocesan authorities.

b. The elevation of a Celibate Priest, who is not a diocesan brother, to the rank of Bishop is carried out by proposal of the Administrative Council and by petition from a two-third's majority of the Brotherhood General Assembly.

c. In both cases, the petition is presented to His Holiness the Catholicos, for his consideration and suitable disposition.

PUNITIVE MEASURES

Article 82

The circumstance of severe culpability on the part of a member of the Brotherhood is reviewed by the Administrative Council and, if necessary, by the Chair and Secretariat of the Brotherhood General Assembly; the decision is presented to His Holiness the Catholicos for proper resolution.

VARIOUS DISPOSITIONS

Article 83

The resolution of unforeseen issues in the present Rule is to be effected by the Administrative Council and Chair and Secretariat of the Brotherhood General Assembly.

Article 84

The review of the present Rule shall be carried out on justified written request from one thirds of the Administrative Council or the Brotherhood General Assembly.

Article 85

The decision to modify the articles of the present Rule will be taken by the members of the Brotherhood present at the session of the Brotherhood General Assembly, based on a two-thirds majority.

Article 86

The present Rule consist of 86 (eighty six) articles. It assumed its final form in the 9th Brotherhood General Assembly, 4 June 2002, and was approved by the Encyclical of His Holiness the Catholicos dated ... and numbered ... for execution.

APPENDIX 3

The Proposed Modifications ¹¹² in the Rule of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia

INTRODUCTION

The Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia¹¹³ was established in Antelias-Lebanon, in 1930, as the continuation of centuries-old Armenian monasticism.

God the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – calls us from varied places and backgrounds to become the Brotherhood to share in the royal priesthood of the people of God (cf. 1 Pet 2.9) and serve him in filial obedience in response to the apostolic exhortations: “If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ... be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil 2.1-3; 12-13) and “Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers” (Rom 12.10-13).

Our Rule is composed by a shared endeavor of the brothers to enable us to stand before God (1 Kgs 17.1) in purity of heart (Ps 51.10), to be governed by mutual love (John 13.35) built upon a rock (Luke 6.47-48), to heed the call of our Lord to follow him (Mark 8.34), to become fruitful laborers in his vineyard (Luke 10.2), to dwell in the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 1.14), to be marked by the seal of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1.13) and to inherit the Kingdom (Matt 25.34).

Article 1

The Brotherhood is composed of celibate clergymen, who are called to the service of God, **and the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church** ~~and people~~; who have vowed to live in a fraternal and communal manner, with Christian love and the spirit of obedience inspired by said Rule, and whose calling is to preach the Gospel of Christ and fulfill the spiritual and other needs of the Armenian nation, as well as the maintenance

¹¹² The modifications are marked in bold letters.

¹¹³ Hereafter in the Rule the Armenian Church will refer to the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church, the Brotherhood to the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the Catholicosate to the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the Catholicos to the Catholicos of Cilicia and the theological seminary to the theological seminary of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

and development of Armenian culture, through their service to the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church.

Article 2

~~The Brotherhood is an indivisible part of the Armenian Church and is faithful to its creed, teachings and traditions.~~

a. The Brotherhoods in the Armenian Church are of the Catholicosate of All Armenians, the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

b. These Brotherhoods are an indivisible part of the one Armenian Church and are faithful to its creed, teachings and traditions.

Article 3

His Holiness the Catholicos **or the Catholicos Locum Tenens** is the head of the Brotherhood.

Article 4

The Brotherhood is ~~subject~~ **obedient** to the Catholicos of Cilicia and is governed by this Rule, which shall be put into effect after being sanctioned through an Encyclical issued by His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 5

The Brotherhood may be joined by:

a. Those who apply to the Directorship of the theological seminary ~~of the Catholicosate~~, after completing their course of study there, and are ordained as celibate clergy after being accepted according to the dispositions of Article 63.e.

b. Those, who have the corresponding religious preparation and are deemed suitable by the Administrative Council, and who, by written vow, promise to obey His Holiness the Catholicos and execute the Brotherhood's Rule.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Article 6

The daily spiritual life of a brother revolves around personal and communal prayer, which is also his source of nourishment. Brothers ~~are obliged to~~ regularly participate in the liturgical ceremonies and all other religious services.

Article 7

A brother ~~is obliged to~~ regularly fulfills his share of ~~obligation~~ **responsibility** in the administration of the Holy Sacraments at the monastery.

Article 8

~~To allocate one week in the year (preferably the week of the St. Gregory the Illuminator's Pilgrimage Day of the Antelias Cathedral) to meditation, with the participation of all the brothers.~~

To allocate one week in the year (preferably the five days related to the St. Gregory the Illuminator's Pilgrimage Day of the Antelias Cathedral) for the spiritual gathering of all the brothers at the monastery.

Article 9

Once a month, the brothers have a time of collective reflection, devoted mostly to the study of the Holy Bible and the Church fathers.

INTELLECTUAL LIFE

Article 10

The brothers ~~are obliged to~~ cultivate and develop their intellectual interests with consistent regularity, and increase their ecclesiastical and cultural knowledge.

Article 11

The brothers are required to assume the ~~obligations~~ **role** of teacher-educator in the theological seminary ~~of the Catholicosate~~ and, if necessary, in other educational institutions.

Article 12

The brothers ~~are obliged to~~ collaborate on 'Hask', the official periodical of the Catholicosate, and its other publications.

Article 13

a. The brothers ~~are obliged to~~ produce works and studies pertaining to the Armenian Church, the Armenian people and other topics.

b. The brothers ~~are obliged to~~ receive permission from His Holiness the Catholicos in connection with the publication of works pertaining to the history, rites and creed of the Armenian Church, as well as the activities and history of the Holy See of Cilicia.

COMMUNAL LIFE

Article 14

The brothers conduct a communal life inside the monastery, in an atmosphere of fraternal love and respect, through the employment of the same rules.

Article 15

In the monastery, the brothers receive room, board, clothing (or clothing allowance), **full** medical care, medicines and treatment and stipend; if incapacitated, special care.

Article 16

Meals are served collectively and at specified hours. Any arrangement resulting from illness or lateness with a reasonable explanation may be made only with the knowledge of the Chief Steward.

Article 17

The brothers have a weekly hour to be together for a special time in spiritually profitable group conversation.

Article 18

The brothers ~~are obliged to~~ attend religious ceremonies, national observances and official public events organized by the Catholicosate or having immediate connection to its life.

Article 19

When a brother leaves the monastery to make a visitation or go on other business, he ~~must~~ informs the person designated by the Administrative Council.

Article 20

a. When a monastery resident brother wishes to leave the country, he ~~must~~ requests the special permission from His Holiness the Catholicos.

b. When a monastery resident brother leaves the country for vacation or for Brotherhood business, he requests permission from His Holiness the Catholicos and his travel expenses are covered by the Brotherhood.

c. Brothers serving in dioceses ~~are obliged to~~ inform His Holiness the Catholicos in the event they make a visitation outside of their diocese or region.

Article 21

When making a visit anywhere, a brother represents himself to the religious authority of the local Armenian Church and, in the event of any ecclesiastical or community activity, act with the knowledge and arrangement of the respective authority.

Article 22

~~The brothers are to convey their concerns and problems to His Holiness the Catholicos, either verbally or in writing, through the Administrative Council.~~

His Holiness the Catholicos is responsible for infusing in the brothers the joy of being loved by Christ and invites them to live in harmony with each other, by guiding them in the unity of service. If these efforts do not produce a positive outcome, the brothers are to convey their concerns and problems to His Holiness the Catholicos, either verbally or in writing, through the Administrative Council.

Article 23

When non-resident brothers are in the monastery on a visit or for business, they ~~are obliged to~~ follow the rules of the monastic life.

Article 24

A brother cannot be a member of another organization **except for highly professional/academic organizations.**

Article 25

The brothers ~~are obliged to~~ meticulously perform those responsibilities, which are entrusted to them by the Administrative Council, through official writ of His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 26

A brother cannot resign from his responsibility without the consent of the Administrative Council.

Article 27

~~A brother is sent away from the monastery for a period of ministry of three years at most, the extension of which is decided exclusively by His Holiness the Catholicos.~~

a. A brother is sent away from the monastery for ministry by the decision of His Holiness the Catholicos in consultation with the Administrative Council.

b. When a brother holds an elected position outside the monastery, he can serve two consecutive terms only and then returns to the monastery for at least two years.

c. When a brother holds a non-elected position outside the monastery, he can serve for four years only and then returns to the monastery for at least two years.

d. The extension of the ministry of a brother is decided by His Holiness the Catholicos in consultation with the Administrative Council.

Article 28

Brothers called to perform ministry in dioceses serve according to the dispositions of the Diocesan Bylaws, obeying the local Diocesan Bishop, while at the same time maintaining contact with the Brotherhood.

Article 29

A brother shall return to the monastery at the end of his diocesan ministry.

Article 30

When a brother in the service of a diocese is summoned at any time back to the monastery by His Holiness the Catholicos, he ~~is obliged to~~ returns immediately.

Article 31

A brother may serve within the confines of another hierarchical See of the Armenian Apostolic Church (monastic or diocesan), when the head of the given hierarchical See expresses such a wish in writing to His Holiness the Catholicos of our Holy See. Said service ~~must~~ **will** be for a specified period of time, with the agreement of the Administrative Council and the blessing of His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 32

Any brother, who is not serving in a diocese, or has not been sent on a special mission by His Holiness the Catholicos, cannot remain a clergyman outside of the monastery.

ESTATES AND WILLS

Article 33

a. When a brother dies in the monastery or outside of it, his only legal heir is the ~~Catholicosate~~ **Brotherhood**.

b. In those countries, where the disposition of the aforementioned clause is not applicable in terms of local laws, brothers ~~must~~ **will** make the ~~Catholicosate~~ **Brotherhood** the beneficiary of their will and furnish the Chancery of the Catholicosate with a final copy thereof.

c. Considering that the laws pertaining to wills vary from one country to another, His Holiness the Catholicos shall decide on the execution of this article **for the brothers serving outside the monastery**, in consultation with the Diocesan Bishops.

BROTHERHOOD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 34

His Holiness the Catholicos ~~or the Catholicosal Locum Tenens~~ is the President of the Brotherhood General Assembly and the Bodies originating from it.

Article 35

The Brotherhood General Assembly is convened by His Holiness the Catholicos ~~or the Catholicosal Locum Tenens~~.

Article 36

The Brotherhood General Assembly is convened once every two years.

Article 37

In the event of necessity, an exceptional session shall take place, when two-thirds of the Brotherhood presents a written proposal to the Chair and Secretariat of the Brotherhood General Assembly, composed of First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries.

Article 38

The meeting of the Brotherhood General Assembly is considered legitimate with a simple majority quorum.

Article 39

The Brotherhood General Assembly has its Chair and Secretariat, composed of First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries. Their term of office extends from one Brotherhood General Assembly to the next. They can be reelected.

Article 40

The Brotherhood General Assembly is convened behind closed doors.

THE OBLIGATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BROTHERHOOD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 41

The General Assembly prepares the Rule of the Brotherhood and, if necessary, revise it according to the dispositions of Articles 84 and 85.

Article 42

The General Assembly prepares a list of five candidates **selected from the bishops of the Armenian Church** for Catholicosal election.

Article 43

The General Assembly elects the brother delegates to the National General Assembly.

Article 44

The General Assembly elects the brother delegates to the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly.

Article 45

The General Assembly elects the Administrative Council, which receives its validation from His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 46

The General Assembly examines and evaluates the activity of the Administrative Council, in which the reports of the Directorships subject to it ~~must~~ **will** be presented.

Article 47

The General Assembly develops the theological seminary's educational plan and determine the principles and direction of the theological seminary's educational task.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Replace the term ‘Administrative Council’ by ‘Advisory Council’ in all articles of the Rule.

Article 48

The **Advisory** Council is composed of three or five **monastery resident** brothers.

Article 49

Brothers are eligible for election to the **Advisory** Council for a two-year term, and can be reelected.

Article 50

Brothers with a minimum of five years’ **ordination experience** can be elected to membership in the **Advisory** Council.

Article 51

When an **Advisory** Council, owing to circumstances, loses the majority of its members, His Holiness the Catholicos ~~or the Catholicos al Locum Tenens~~ shall appoint a provisional **Advisory** Council that would serve until the next Brotherhood General Assembly.

Article 52

The Chairman of the **Advisory** Council cannot assume another responsibility **at any Directorship**.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Article 53

The decisions and arrangements of the **Advisory** Council are subject to the approval and validation of His Holiness the Catholicos ~~or the Catholicos al Locum Tenens~~. With this understanding, **besides the responsibilities spelled out in specific articles**, the responsibilities of the **Advisory** Council are to:

- a. Appoint the Directors of the monastic Directorships and supervise their activities.
- b. Appoint brothers in charge of other monastic functions, as needed.
- c. Occupy itself with daily monastic issues.
- d. Pursue stability and harmony in the monastic life, and create the most suitable conditions and means of life and work.
- e. Appoint the most suitable brothers to positions outside the monastery, according to the dispositions of Article 27.

f. Give the brothers the opportunity to pursue higher education, preferably in Lebanon, for two to four years.

g. Send circulars to all the brothers, when required to do so.

h. Prepare the annual budget of the Brotherhood and the Directorships subject to it and present it to the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee.

i. Determine the form and extent of the brothers' financial compensation.

j. Examine the deficiencies of the brothers and do what is necessary and proper to remedy them. In the event of grave culpability, review the matter and resolve it according to the disposition of Article 82.

Article 54

The **Advisory** Council is accountable to the Brotherhood General Assembly.

MONASTIC DIRECTORSHIPS

Article 55

~~The monastic directorships are: Grand Sacristan, Choirmaster, Dean of the theological seminary, Library, Museum, Publications, Printing House, 'Hask' editorship, Hospitality, Bookstore, Chief Steward, Pantry Chief, and Property Maintenance.~~

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Article 56

Directors and their Assistants are appointed by the **Advisory** Council and are approved by His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 57

Directors ~~are obliged to~~ **present** a six-month activity report to the **Advisory** Council.

Article 58

Directors ~~are obliged to~~ **prepare** the budget of their annual expenses and present it to the **Advisory** Council.

Article 59

The **lay** employees subject to each Directorship are directly linked and are accountable to the Director of the given Directorship. Their monthly salaries and annual vacations are coordinated by the Chancery of the Catholicosate, with the agreement of the given Director.

GRAND SACRISTAN

Article 60

The responsibility of the Grand Sacristan is to:

- a. Ensure the regular and flawless implementation of religious services and Holy Sacraments **administered by the brothers**.
- b. Coordinate all the religious services taking place in the Cathedral, particularly in consultation with the Choirmaster and the Dean of the theological seminary.
- c. Ensure the proper care and maintenance of ecclesiastical goods and vessels.
- d. Keep a complete and detailed list of the goods and vessels of the Cathedral and Treasury, furnishing the **Advisory** Council a copy as well.
- e. See to it that the Cathedral, the Memorial Chapel, the Brotherhood Mausoleum and the Bikfaya Chapel are kept neat and clean.
- f. Supervise the work of the **lay** employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

CHOIRMASTER

Article 61

- a. The responsibility of the Choirmaster is to secure the harmonious singing of the religious services.
- b. During the religious services, the Choirmaster follows the arrangements made by the Grand Sacristan.

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The Dean of the theological seminary ~~is obliged to~~ creates a spiritual and moral atmosphere, which is faithful to the spirit and sacred traditions of the Armenian Church, for the preparation of future clergymen.

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~~b. Carry out the selection of new seminarians, according to the number determined together with the Administrative Council, and decide, if necessary, on the discharge of seminarians.~~

b. Carry out the selection of new seminarians, and discharge them, if necessary, in agreement with the Advisory Council.

~~e. Hire teachers, in agreement with the Administrative Council, and discharge them, if necessary.~~

c. Hire teachers and discharge them, if necessary, in agreement with the Advisory Council.

d. Attentively supervise the theological seminary's spiritual-moral life, the instruction given by the teachers, the mutual relations of the seminarians, and the regularity of meals and health care.

e. Present the candidates for the ordination of deacon and celibate priest to His Holiness the Catholicos, through the **Advisory Council**.

f. Supervise the work of the **lay** employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

LIBRARY

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The responsibility of the Librarian is to:

a. Keep the Library in an orderly, secure and neat condition; classify the books according to a modern scientific cataloguing system.

b. Enrich the Library with new publications in Armenian and foreign languages – particularly religious and Armenological books – and Armenian periodicals.

c. Encourage the use of the Library's holdings, for scholarly research.

d. Keep the Library open according to the specified schedule.

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- a. **Oversee all the work involved with the Printing House, and ensure the regular and punctual work of the employees.**
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- c. Always endeavor to enrich the Museum with new Armenian or foreign artifacts, and seek out of obtaining artifacts of religious or secular riches of Cilician Armenia.**
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- ~~b. Carefully maintain a catalogue of the items put on exhibition or kept in storage, furnishing a copy to the Administrative Council as well.~~
- ~~c. Always endeavor to enrich the Museum with new Armenian or foreign artifacts, and seek out of obtaining artifacts of religious or secular riches of Cilician Armenia.~~

~~d. Cooperate with Lebanon's Tourism Ministry, to acquaint the Ministry with the Museum, as well as to render it an attractive destination for foreign tourists.~~

~~e. Keep the Museum open according to the specified schedule.~~

~~f. Supervise the work of the employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.~~

PUBLICATIONS

Article 68

~~The Publications Committee is composed of three to five persons, whose obligation responsibility is to plan and synthesize the publishing work of the various Directorships of the Catholicosate and particularly to encourage the printing of the works of the Brotherhood members.~~

PRINTING HOUSE

Article 69

~~The responsibility of the Director of the Printing House is to:~~

~~a. Oversee all the work involved with the Printing House, and ensure the regular and punctual work of the employees.~~

~~b. Ensure the proper use and maintenance of the Printing House's equipments and fixtures.~~

~~c. Expand the Printing House's financial productivity by modern printing means.~~

EDITORSHIP OF 'HASK'

Article 70

~~a. The members of the "Hask" Editorial Board are appointed by the Administrative Council.~~

Article 71

~~b. The responsibility of the 'Hask' Editorial Board is to publish 'Hask' regularly and with proper content and secure corresponding contributors.~~

BOOKSTORE

Article 72

The responsibility of the Bookstore Manager is to:

- ~~a. Acquire all the publications of the Catholicosate from the Printing House or Directorships and seek to sell them as quickly as possible.~~
- ~~b. Establish verbal or written contact with bookstores in Lebanon and abroad, and present them with the overall publications of the Catholicosate. Maintain the same contact with the dioceses of the Catholicosate.~~
- ~~c. Organize exhibitions within the monastery from time to time, or participate in exhibitions organized elsewhere.~~

Article 73

The Directorship of the Bookstore has two *brother or lay* assistants. The first is in charge of the Bookstore; the second, in charge of the Warehouse.

1. The obligations *responsibilities* of the person in charge of the Bookstore are to:

- ~~a. Receive the necessary books from the person in charge of the Warehouse for sale in the Bookstore.~~
- ~~b. Arrange the books in the Bookstore in an attractive manner, always inviting attention to the new releases.~~
- ~~c. Maintain a precise record of books sold.~~

2. The obligations *responsibilities* of the person in charge of the Warehouse are to:

- ~~a. Maintain a precise record of books in storage.~~
- ~~b. Become the practical link with bookstores in Lebanon, abroad and in the dioceses, in order for the books to reach their destination, and to follow up on the work involved in tracking their sales and receiving payments.~~
- ~~c. Receive book orders from foreign countries and take care of expediting them.~~
- ~~d. Engage in efforts to distribute 'Hask' in Lebanon and abroad, and take care of its subscriptions.~~

CHIEF STEWARD

Article 75

The responsibility of the Chief Steward is to:

- a. Ensure the regularity of meals and nourishment.
- b. Oversee purchases.
- c. Ensure the cleanliness of the kitchen and dining hall.
- d. Supervise the work of the **lay** employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

Article 76

The chief steward has, as immediate helper, a **lay** steward, who handles the purchases, based on his orders.

PANTRY CHIEF

Article 77

The responsibility of the pantry chief is to:

- a. Take care of the pantry and foodstuffs, the recording of their procurement and usage, as well as their proper maintenance.
- b. Give the necessary supplies to the cook, according to the suggestion of the Chief Steward and the menu.
- c. From month to month, or as required, furnish the members of the Brotherhood supplies needed by them.
- d. As needed, provide the **lay** wardrobe keeper, the cleaning persons and the gardener the supplies required for their work.

HOSPITALITY

Article 77

~~The Administrative Council appoints a brother in charge of the hospitality, whose obligation is to greet and receive guests in the monastery and ensure their comfortable stay.~~

PROPERTY MANAGER

Article 78

The responsibility of the property manager is to:

- a. Oversee and ensure the proper use, maintenance and repair of the monastery's property.
- b. Oversee the overall cleanliness of the monastery and the work of the **lay** cleaning persons.
- c. Oversee the regular and clean maintenance of the guest quarters, as well as impeccable service to the guests.
- d. Supervise the work of the **lay** employees in his charge; ensure their loyalty and good working relationship.

CONFERRING OF TITLES

Article 79

Titles are conferred by His Holiness the Catholicos, according to the traditions and canons of the Armenian Church.

Article 80

In the event of the conferring of the titles of Four Orders of Doctor of Divinity and Ten Orders of Doctor of Divinity and other titles, the candidate's service, position held, and worthiness are taken into consideration, and a request is presented by the **Advisory** Council to His Holiness the Catholicos, for suitable disposition.

Article 81

- a. The elevation of a Celibate Priest to the rank of Bishop is connected to the offices of diocesan Prelate or Vicar General, and is carried out on the basis of a petition from the diocesan authorities.
- b. The elevation of a Celibate Priest, who is not a diocesan brother, to the rank of Bishop is carried out by proposal of the **Advisory** Council and by petition from a two-third's majority of the Brotherhood General Assembly.
- c. In both cases, the petition is presented to His Holiness the Catholicos, for his consideration and suitable disposition.

PUNITIVE MEASURES

Article 82

The circumstance of severe culpability on the part of a member of the Brotherhood is reviewed by the **Advisory** Council and, if necessary, by the Chair and Secretariat of the Brotherhood General Assembly; the decision is presented to His Holiness the Catholicos for proper resolution.

VARIOUS DISPOSITIONS

Article 83

The resolution of unforeseen issues in the present Rule is to be effected by the **Advisory** Council and Chair and Secretariat of the Brotherhood General Assembly.

Article 84

The review of the present Rule shall be carried out on justified written request from one thirds of the **Advisory** Council or the Brotherhood General Assembly.

Article 85

The decision to modify the articles of the present Rule will be taken by the members of the Brotherhood present at the session of the Brotherhood General Assembly, based on a two-thirds majority.

Article 86

The present Rule consist of 86 (eighty six) articles. It assumed its final form in the 9th Brotherhood General Assembly, 4 June 2002, and was approved by the Encyclical of His Holiness the Catholicos dated ... and numbered ... for execution.

APPENDIX 4

Pontifical Encyclical for the Approval of the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia and the Bylaws

ARAM I

Servant of Jesus Christ and, by the will of the incomprehensible God and by the selection of our nation, Chief Bishop and Catholicos of Cilicia, pontifical greeting with the love transmitted by Jesus among us, and blessing by the Right Arm of our father, St. Gregory the Illuminator, to the diocesan primates, archbishops and bishops, archimandrites and priests, National General Assembly and Executive Council, representatives, delegates, provincial and diocesan assemblies and all the faithful of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church. May the peace of God the Father, the love of His Only-Begotten Son, and the grace of the Holy Spirit be with all. Amen.

Along with the essential mission of being sent to the world by Christ, the Christian Church is also a community, a totality of individuals professing Christ as the focal point of their life. Indeed, the Church expresses itself through a collective life welded with the same faith, love and hope, by means of various liturgical, administrative and hierarchical structures. Therefore, the Church, as a divine-human institution, as a community living and witnessing in the present society, has a requisite need of laws and canons to organize and maintain its thinking, decisions, activity and, generally speaking, its life, as well as to give it clear boundaries and direction.

Such has been the history of the Church, beginning from the apostolic period, when the Church established in various places by Christ's disciples had begun to assume institutional expression and communal formation. When we view the evolution of the Church's formation and development in subsequent centuries, we will see that the necessity of law and order became imperative, as a result of both internal and external reasons. The Universal Church has had its canons, established by ecumenical councils. The national or local Churches, alongside the canons of the Universal Church, have also had their own internal canons and laws, which were established by the supreme council or synod of each Church. The Bylaws of the Churches have always been made to conform to their times and environment, as well as to the ever-changing social-cultural and religious-political conditions.

Starting from the early centuries, the Armenian Church too has established canons pertaining to the various aspects of the spiritual and communal life of our people. These canons are assembled in the *Liber Canonis* of the Armenian Church. Owing to historical circumstances, coupled with the fact that our people have been in a state of constant movement and have lived in different geopolitical and religious-cultural environments, our Church has not felt the necessity of a complete and permanent set of regulations. The institution of the *Polozhenie* in the 19th century for the Armenian Church under Russian rule, and the proclamation of the *National Constitution* (1863) for the Armenian Church

functioning within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, independent of their political nature, were also serious efforts to subject the ethnic-religious life of Armenian communities to internal arrangement and organization around the Church.

From Sis to Antelias, and from its establishment in Antelias to the present day, the Catholicosate of Cilicia has methodically and meticulously followed the National Constitution. In Lebanon and Syria, the National Constitution is officially recognized, and our Dioceses have full respect for the principles and dispositions of the National Constitution. The Bylaws of all the Dioceses subject to our Holy See are inspired by the basic principles and overall direction of the National Constitution, with unique local conditions always being taken into consideration.

In 1941, the Catholicosate of Cilicia, guided by the spirit and fundamental principles of the National Constitution, drafted separate Bylaws unique to it. Following a trial period of some twenty-four years, the said Bylaws were subjected to revision in 1965 by the National General Assembly of the Catholicosate of Cilicia. In 1992, the National General Assembly again made certain changes in said Bylaws. The National General Assembly that was convened in the year 2002 also subjected certain articles of the Bylaws to review. Thus, today the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia are more complete and crystal clear, having been adapted to the greatest extent possible to the present conditions of life of our people.

The Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia has totally respected the creed and traditions and historical experience, as well as the administrative and synodical systems of the Holy and Orthodox Armenian Apostolic Church. It has also taken important note of the national character of our Church, enriched by the centuries-long experience of our people and expressed through the National Constitution, the Church's democratic principles and the people's active participation in the communal life and mission of the Church. Indeed, with its characteristic identity of being the Church of the people, the Armenian Church occupies a unique place in the great family of the world's Churches.

Our Lord Jesus Christ placed the emphasis not so much on the literal application of the law, as on the values and truths stemming from the law but transcending it (Mark 2.27). With the same approach, the apostle Paul, while stressing the importance of the law, issues an appeal for the enrichment of life, so that we may enrich our lives through faith and spiritual and moral values (Rom 6.7; 2 Cor 3.6). We too must have the same approach. Any Bylaws related to our Church must become a guide to regulate our spiritual house, to put our national-ecclesiastic life on healthy foundations, to determine our interrelationships and to plan our activity, guided by the principles of mutual respect and trust, responsibility and accountability. Any Bylaws connected with the life of our Church must also become utilitarian in terms of further deepening our spiritual life and making our national life more prosperous.

Now, by confirming and approving the changes in the Bylaws adopted during the 7 June 2002 session of the National General Assembly with this Pontifical Encyclical, we call upon the National General Assembly, the Religious and Lay Councils of the Central Executive Committee, our Diocesan Prelates and National Authorities, and the sons and daughters of our people subject to our spiritual care, to remain faithful to the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia. We are certain that the present revised Bylaws

shall further contribute to the organization of the life of our Holy See, strengthen its mission and make our Holy Church more prosperous.

May you live abide in the Lord, be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and be blessed forever.

ARAM I
CATHOLICOS OF CILICIA

This encyclical was issued from the St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral of the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias-Lebanon, on 6 December 2002 A.D., and the year 1451 of the Armenian calendar. No. 3000/220.

The Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia

INTRODUCTION

With its spirit and essential principles, the National Constitution, which was officially recognized in 1863, constitutes the foundation of the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia.

Taking into consideration the Bylaws drawn up in 1941, as well as the modifications made in 1965, and the present structure and status quo and special conditions of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the National General Assembly, which was convened in 1992 (16-20 November) revised and approved the said Bylaws. Moreover, the National General Assembly convened in 2002 (6-11 June) carried out certain revisions. Presented below are the Bylaws in its final form.

CATHOLICOSATE

Article 1

His Holiness the Catholicos of Cilicia is the Spiritual Leader of the Armenian people in the dioceses of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the President of all the national assemblies, the Head and Administrator of the Executive Authority.

Article 2

It is the obligation of His Holiness the Catholicos to ensure the prosperity of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church and the welfare of the dioceses, in keeping with the spirit and fundamental principles of the National Constitution, and the dispositions of the present Bylaws.

Article 3

In the event of illness, lengthy absence or other urgent reasons involving His Holiness the Catholicos, He shall take the initiative and, in agreement with the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, or by accepting the proposal of the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, shall appoint, by a pontifical encyclical, a Vicar General to conduct the affairs of the Catholicosate, to preside over the Religious Council, Lay Council and Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, and to determine what is best and proper in accordance with the decisions taken by them.

ELECTION OF THE CATHOLICOS

Article 4

When His Holiness the Catholicos passes away and/or if the See remains vacant for any reason, the most senior bishop of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia shall manage the current affairs of the Catholicosate until the election of the Catholicosal Locum Tenens, which shall take place 48 hours after the burial of the deceased Pontiff.

Article 5

When His Holiness the Catholicos passes away and/or if the See remains vacant for any reason, the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, with the participation of the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the National General Assembly and the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the General Assembly of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia shall elect the Catholicosal Locum Tenens.

Article 6

It is the function of the Catholicosal Locum Tenens to manage the affairs of the Catholicosate until the election of the new Catholicos.

Article 7

After a forty-day period of mourning, the Locum Tenens shall convene the Brotherhood General Assembly, which, by secret ballot, shall compile a list containing the names of five candidates selected from among the bishops of the Armenian Church.

Article 8

Again, after a forty-day period of mourning, the Locum Tenens, together with the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, shall decide the date of the Catholicosal election and shall determine the number of participating delegates in the following manner:

- a. One delegate shall be designated for every five thousand persons.
- b. When a fraction greater than half (two thousand five hundred) is left after dividing the number of people by five thousand, an additional delegate shall be considered.
- c. When a diocese has less than 5,000 people, it shall send one delegate.

Article 9

One third of the number of delegates must be clergy, and two thirds laypersons.

Article 10

The clergy delegates are:

- a. The diocesan clergy: Prelates, Vicars, and/or Catholicosal Diocesan Vicars and Pontifical Legates, ex officio.

b. The representatives of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, who are elected by the Brotherhood General Assembly.

c. The married clergy, who are numbered among the one third of the ecclesiastical delegates and who also are elected by the National Representatives Assembly of each diocese or by its corresponding assemblies.

Article 11

The lay delegates shall be elected by the National Representatives Assembly or its corresponding assemblies of the dioceses.

Article 12

The Mother See of Holy Ējmiatsin shall be invited to participate in the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly with two representatives (preferably one clergyman and one layperson) with the right to vote.

The execution of this article is conditioned upon the application of the principle of reciprocity.

Article 13

After the determination of the number of delegates, the Locum Tenens shall instruct the dioceses to elect their delegates.

Article 14

The Catholicosal Electoral Assembly shall be convened no later than six months after the passing of His Holiness the Catholicos or the Catholicosal See remaining vacant for any reason. In the event of necessity, the authority to postpone the Catholicosal election for more than six months belongs to the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee or the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly.

Article 15

The obligation of the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly is solely to carry out the election of His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 16

The Catholicosal Electoral Assembly shall prepare, by secret ballot, a new list containing the names of three candidates from the list of five names drawn up by the Brotherhood General Assembly, or from outside that list, without distinction as to Brotherhood. His Holiness the Catholicos of Cilicia shall be elected from this list of three names, by secret ballot and with two-thirds majority.

If a two-thirds majority does not exist in the first ballot, a simple majority vote in the second ballot shall be considered sufficient.

Article 17

Immediately following the Catholicosal election, the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly shall record the election report in its minutes and certify the election with its signature.

Article 18

The Locum Tenens, or, in the event of the Locum Tenens being elected Catholicos, the most senior bishop of the Brotherhood, shall present the newly-elected Catholicos to Governmental Authorities by means of an official letter.

Article 19

Immediately following his election, the newly-elected Catholicos shall declare his obligation to the ad hoc Catholicosal Electoral Assembly to steadfastly adhere to the principles of the National Constitution. He shall perform his Catholicosal oath during the consecration.

LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSEMBLIES

Article 20

The Catholicosate of Cilicia has the following permanent Assemblies:

- a. Brotherhood General Assembly, which is convened according to the Rule of the Brotherhood.
- b. National General Assembly.
- c. Central Executive Committee with its Religious and Lay Councils.

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 21

The National General Assembly is the Supreme Legislative Assembly of the Catholicosate of Cilicia. Its obligations are:

- a. To firmly adhere to the basic principles and spirit of the National Constitution.
- b. To oversee the strict execution of the present Bylaws.
- c. To see to it that, along with taking local conditions into consideration, the diocesan Bylaws correspond to the spirit of the National Constitution and its fundamental principles (see the Introduction to the National Constitution).

- d. To elect the Religious and Lay Councils of the Central Executive Committee and draft the general outline of their activity.
- e. To be the overseer and supervisor of the activities of the Religious and Lay Councils of the Central Executive Committee.
- f. To make the necessary changes in the present Bylaws, according to the dispositions of these Bylaws.
- g. To review and approve the projected budget.
- h. To appoint an Auditing Committee composed of three to five persons to examine the accounts of the Catholicosate and present its report to the National General Assembly.

Article 22

One seventh of the members of the National General Assembly must be comprised of clergy and six sevenths of laypersons.

- a. The lay delegates of the National General Assembly are elected by the National Representatives Assembly of the dioceses for a four-year term.
- b. The delegates of the National General Assembly can be reelected.
- c. The National General Assembly keeps its legal authority until its next session is convened.

Article 23

The clergy members of the National General Assembly are:

- a. Diocesan clergy: Prelates, Vicars and Catholicosal Diocesan Vicars and Pontifical Legates, ex officio.
- b. Two representatives elected by the Brotherhood General Assembly of the Catholicosate of Cilicia and, in the event of necessity, clergy elected by Religious Councils of the dioceses, in order to complete the projected one-seventh ratio.

Article 24

The population figure of each diocese is taken into consideration in order to determine the number of members of the National General Assembly. For each ten thousand people, there shall be one member.

- a. When the fraction of the population figure is greater than five thousand, one extra member is elected.
- b. Those dioceses, whose population figure is less than ten thousand, send one lay member.

c. When the number of clergy members is greater than the one-seventh number of elected members in relation to the overall population figure, the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, in order to maintain the six-sevenths ratio, shall increase the number of lay members to the corresponding degree and distribute that additional number among the dioceses, in relation to their population figure.

d. Membership in the National General Assembly ceases for those who resign, are sentenced on criminal charges, or whose relationship with a given diocese is permanently severed.

Article 25

The National General Assembly shall convene once every four years, by the invitation of His Holiness the Catholicos or the Locum Tenens. Extraordinary National General Assemblies can be convened under conditions foreseen by the National Constitution (See Articles 61 and 62).

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Article 26

The Central Executive Committee, with its Religious and Lay Councils, is the Executive Body of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

The Religious and Lay Councils of the Central Executive Committee shall respectively consist of equal number of members –seven, nine or eleven– to be elected by the National General Assembly.

Article 27

The Central Executive Committee is elected for a four-year term, and the period of its activity extends until the next regular National General Assembly is convened. Members of the Central Executive Committee, whose terms have expired, may be reelected.

Article 28

Clergy, who are members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, and married clergy, if need be, can be elected as members of the Religious Council of the Central Executive Committee. Candidates must be ordained for at least five years.

Article 29

1. RELIGIOUS COUNCIL

The primary obligations of the Religious Council of the Central Executive Committee are:

- a. To ensure the prosperity of the Armenian Church, through the spread of the principles of the Christian religion, according to the Orthodox creed and authentic tradition of the Armenian Church.
- b. To ensure the regular and effective performance of the Armenian Church rites and to see to it that the doctrines of the Armenian Church and national-ecclesiastic traditions are kept alive.
- c. Organize and put on sound foundations the preparation and religious education of worthy clergy, through Armenian schools, Sunday schools, religious publications and other means of dissemination into the life of the people.
- d. To watch for the material/financial security of all clergy (celibate or married) connected with the Catholicosate of Cilicia.
- e. To pursue the beneficial cultivation and further strengthening of ecumenical relations.
- f. To examine matters of religious nature having originated in the dioceses and to decide what is good and proper for their resolution.

2. LAY COUNCIL

The primary obligations of the Lay Council Political Assembly of the Central Executive Committee are:

- a. To ensure the development of the national-ecclesiastical life of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, to maintain close contact with national authorities and encourage inter-diocesan cooperation.
- b. To examine matters of administrative and economic nature arising from dioceses.
- c. To appoint the bodies directing institutions subject to or connected with the Catholicosate and to ensure their salutary and beneficial activity.
- d. To oversee and maintain control over the income-generating properties and institutions belonging to the Catholicosate, ensuring their sound administration.
- e. To supervise the execution of the budget approved by the National General Assembly.
- f. To execute the decisions taken by the National General Assembly.
- g. To strive for the advancement of Armenian values and education in the dioceses.
- h. To examine all matters related to the Catholicosate, which are not of a purely religious nature, and do what is good and proper for their resolution.

3. JOINT COUNCIL

The primary obligations of the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee are:

- a. To review and approve the Bylaws of the dioceses or the changes proposed in existing Bylaws, according to the dispositions of this Bylaws, and, if necessary, present them to the National General Assembly.
- b. To prepare the draft budget of the Catholicosate and present it to the National General Assembly.
- c. To prepare the agenda of the National General Assembly in consultation with the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the National General Assembly.
- d. To pursue good relations between the Catholicosate and the other Hierarchical Sees of the Armenian Church.
- e. To monitor the activity of the Seminary of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

Article 30

The Central Executive Committee works through the appropriate diocesan assemblies in connection with matters related to the dioceses.

Article 31

The Central Executive Committee is accountable to the National General Assembly, to which it must present its activity report at the end of its term.

INCOME AND ACCOUNTING

Article 32

The Catholicosate of Cilicia enjoys all the legal rights and privileges appropriated for real persons. It can hold movable and immovable goods and receive wills.

The sources of the Catholicosate's income are:

- a. Diocesan dues.
- b. Revenues generated by properties belonging to the Cilician See.
- c. Allocations realized through wills.
- d. Donations and various proceeds.

Article 33

The Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee drafts the budget of the Catholicosate and presents it to the National General Assembly for review and approval.

Article 34

The Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee is responsible for the execution of the budget, as well as accounts, of the Catholicosate of Cilicia before the National General Assembly.

VARIOUS DISPOSITIONS

Article 35

The solution of unforeseen administrative-constitutional problems in the present Bylaws and the explication of any disposition shall be done by the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, according to the principles of the National Constitution.

Article 36

The review of the present Bylaws shall be made by the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee and/or by the written demand, supported by reason and proof, of one third of the National General Assembly.

Article 37

The decision to modify the articles of the present Bylaws is given to a two-thirds majority of the overall number of members of the National General Assembly.

Article 38

The present Bylaws consist of 38 articles. It assumed its final form in the National General Assembly of 11 June 2002, and took effect with the encyclical of His Holiness the Catholicos dated 6 December 2002 and bearing the number 3000/220.

APPENDIX 5

The Proposed Modifications¹¹⁴ in the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia

INTRODUCTION

With its spirit and essential principles, the National Constitution, which was officially recognized in 1863, constitutes the foundation of the Bylaws of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia.

Taking into consideration the Bylaws drawn up in 1941, as well as the modifications made in 1965, and the present structure and status quo and special conditions of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the National General Assembly, which was convened in 1992 (16-20 November) revised and approved the said Bylaws. Moreover, the National General Assembly convened in 2002 (6-11 June) carried out certain revisions. Presented below are the Bylaws in its final form.

CATHOLICOSATE

Article 1

Moved to Antelias-Lebanon in 1930, the Catholicosate of Cilicia is the continuation of centuries-old Armenian Catholicosate. The Catholicosate of Cilicia is an indivisible part of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church and is one of its Hierarchical Holy Sees, sustained by the blessing of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. His Holiness the Catholicos of Cilicia is the Spiritual Leader of the Armenian people in the dioceses of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the President of all the national assemblies, the Head and Administrator of the Executive Authority **and the Head of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.**

Article 2

It is the ~~obligation~~ **responsibility** of His Holiness the Catholicos to ensure the prosperity of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church and the welfare of the dioceses, in keeping with the spirit and fundamental principles of the National Constitution, and the dispositions of the present Bylaws.

Article 3

In the event of illness, lengthy absence or other urgent reasons involving His Holiness the Catholicos, He shall take the initiative and, in agreement with the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, or by accepting the proposal of the Joint Council of the

¹¹⁴ The modifications are marked in bold letters.

Central Executive Committee, shall appoint, by a pontifical encyclical, a Vicar General **from the members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia** to conduct the affairs of the Catholicosate, to preside over the Religious Council, Lay Council and Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, and to determine what is best and proper in accordance with the decisions taken by them.

ELECTION OF THE CATHOLICOS

Article 4

When His Holiness the Catholicos passes away and/or if the See remains vacant for any reason, the most senior bishop of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia shall manage the current affairs of the Catholicosate until the election of the Catholicosal Locum Tenens, which shall take place 48 hours after the burial of the deceased Pontiff.

Article 5

When His Holiness the Catholicos passes away and/or if the See remains vacant for any reason, the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, with the participation of the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the National General Assembly and the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the General Assembly of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia shall elect the Catholicosal Locum Tenens **from the members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia**.

Article 6

It is the function of the Catholicosal Locum Tenens to manage the affairs of the Catholicosate until the election of the new Catholicos.

Article 7

After a forty-day period of mourning, the Locum Tenens shall convene the Brotherhood General Assembly, which, by secret ballot, shall compile a list containing the names of five candidates selected from among the bishops of the **Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church**.

The execution of the selection of five candidates from among the bishops of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church is conditioned upon the application of the principle of reciprocity by the Catholicosate of All Armenians of Holy Ējmiatsin.

Article 8

Again, after a forty-day period of mourning, the Locum Tenens, together with the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, shall decide the date of the Catholicosal election and shall determine the number of participating delegates in the following manner:

- a. One delegate shall be designated for every five thousand persons.

b. When a fraction greater than half (two thousand five hundred) is left after dividing the number of people by five thousand, an additional delegate shall be considered.

c. When a diocese has less than 5,000 people, it shall send one delegate.

Article 9

One third of the number of delegates must be clergy, and two thirds laypersons.

Article 10

The clergy delegates are:

a. The diocesan clergy: Prelates, Vicars, and/or Catholicosal Diocesan Vicars and Pontifical Legates, ex officio.

b. The representatives of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, who are elected by the Brotherhood General Assembly.

c. The married clergy, who are numbered among the one third of the ecclesiastical delegates and who also are elected by the National Representatives Assembly of each diocese or by its corresponding assemblies.

Article 11

The lay delegates shall be elected by the National Representatives Assembly or its corresponding assemblies of the dioceses.

Article 12

~~The Mother See~~ **The Catholicosate of All Armenians** of Holy Ējmiatsin shall be invited to participate in the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly with two representatives (preferably one clergyman and one layperson) with the right to vote.

The execution of this article is conditioned upon the application of the principle of reciprocity.

Article 13

After the determination of the number of delegates, the Locum Tenens shall instruct the dioceses to elect their delegates.

Article 14

The Catholicosal Electoral Assembly shall be convened no later than six months after the passing of His Holiness the Catholicos or the Catholicosal See remaining vacant for any reason. In the event of necessity, the authority to postpone the Catholicosal election for more than six months belongs to the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee or the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly.

Article 15

The ~~obligation~~ **responsibility** of the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly is solely to carry out the election of His Holiness the Catholicos.

Article 16

The Catholicosal Electoral Assembly shall prepare, by secret ballot, a new list containing the names of three candidates from the list of five names drawn up by the Brotherhood General Assembly, or from outside that list, without distinction as to Brotherhood. His Holiness the Catholicos of Cilicia shall be elected from this list of three names, by secret ballot and with two-thirds majority.

If a two-thirds majority does not exist in the first ballot, a simple majority vote in the second ballot shall be considered sufficient.

Article 17

Immediately following the Catholicosal election, the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the Catholicosal Electoral Assembly shall record the election report in its minutes and certify the election with its signature.

Article 18

The Locum Tenens, or, in the event of the Locum Tenens being elected Catholicos, the most senior bishop of the Brotherhood, shall present the newly-elected Catholicos to Governmental Authorities by means of an official letter.

Article 19

Immediately following his election, the newly-elected Catholicos shall declare his ~~obligation~~ **role** to the ad hoc Catholicosal Electoral Assembly to steadfastly adhere to the principles of the National Constitution. He shall perform his Catholicosal oath during the consecration.

LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSEMBLIES

Article 20

The Catholicosate of Cilicia has the following permanent Assemblies:

- a. Brotherhood General Assembly, which is convened according to the Rule of the Brotherhood.
- b. National General Assembly.
- c. Central Executive Committee with its Religious and Lay Councils.

NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 21

The National General Assembly is the Supreme Legislative Assembly of the Catholicosate of Cilicia. Its ~~obligations~~ **responsibilities** are:

- a. To firmly adhere to the basic principles and spirit of the National Constitution.
- b. To oversee the strict execution of the present Bylaws.
- c. To see to it that, along with taking local conditions into consideration, the diocesan Bylaws correspond to the spirit of the National Constitution and its fundamental principles (see the Introduction to the National Constitution).
- d. To elect the Religious and Lay Councils of the Central Executive Committee and draft the general outline of their activity.
- e. To be the overseer and supervisor of the activities of the Religious and Lay Councils of the Central Executive Committee.
- f. To make the necessary changes in the present Bylaws, according to the dispositions of these Bylaws.
- g. To review and approve the projected budget.
- h. To appoint an Auditing Committee composed of three to five persons to examine the accounts of the Catholicosate and present its report to the National General Assembly.

Article 22

One seventh of the members of the National General Assembly must be comprised of clergy and six sevenths of laypersons.

- a. The lay delegates of the National General Assembly are elected by the National Representatives Assembly of the dioceses for a four-year term.
- b. The delegates of the National General Assembly can be reelected.
- c. The National General Assembly keeps its legal authority until its next session is convened.

Article 23

The clergy members of the National General Assembly are:

- a. Diocesan clergy: Prelates, Vicars and Catholicosal Diocesan Vicars and Pontifical Legates, ex officio.

b. Two representatives elected by the Brotherhood General Assembly of the Catholicosate of Cilicia and, in the event of necessity, clergy elected by Religious Councils of the dioceses, in order to complete the projected one-seventh ratio.

Article 24

The population figure of each diocese is taken into consideration in order to determine the number of members of the National General Assembly. For each ten thousand people, there shall be one member.

a. When the fraction of the population figure is greater than five thousand, one extra member is elected.

b. Those dioceses, whose population figure is less than ten thousand, send one lay member.

c. When the number of clergy members is greater than the one-seventh number of elected members in relation to the overall population figure, the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, in order to maintain the six-sevenths ratio, shall increase the number of lay members to the corresponding degree and distribute that additional number among the dioceses, in relation to their population figure.

d. Membership in the National General Assembly ceases for those who resign, are sentenced on criminal charges, or whose relationship with a given diocese is permanently severed.

Article 25

The National General Assembly shall convene once every four years, by the invitation of His Holiness the Catholicos or the Locum Tenens. Extraordinary National General Assemblies can be convened under conditions foreseen by the National Constitution (See Articles 61 and 62).

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Article 26

The Central Executive Committee, with its Religious and Lay Councils, is the Executive Body of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

The Religious and Lay Councils of the Central Executive Committee shall respectively consist of equal number of members –seven, nine or eleven– to be elected by the National General Assembly.

Article 27

The Central Executive Committee is elected for a four-year term, and the period of its activity extends until the next regular National General Assembly is convened. Members of the Central Executive Committee, whose terms have expired, may be reelected.

Article 28

Clergy, who are members of the Brotherhood of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, and married clergy, if need be, can be elected as members of the Religious Council of the Central Executive Committee. Candidates must be ordained for at least five years.

Article 29

1. RELIGIOUS COUNCIL

The primary obligations of the Religious Council of the Central Executive Committee are:

- a. To ensure the prosperity of the Armenian **Apostolic Orthodox Holy** Church, through the spread of the principles of the Christian religion, according to the Orthodox creed and authentic tradition of the Armenian **Apostolic Orthodox Holy** Church.
- b. To ensure the regular and effective performance of the Armenian **Apostolic Orthodox Holy** Church rites and to see to it that the doctrines of the Armenian **Apostolic Orthodox Holy** Church and national-ecclesiastic traditions are kept alive.
- c. Organize and put on sound foundations the preparation and religious education of worthy clergy, through Armenian schools, Sunday schools, religious publications and other means of dissemination into the life of the people.
- d. To watch for the material/financial security of all clergy (celibate or married) connected with the Catholicosate of Cilicia.
- e. To pursue the beneficial cultivation and further strengthening of ecumenical relations.
- f. To examine matters of religious nature having originated in the dioceses and to decide what is good and proper for their resolution.

2. LAY COUNCIL

The primary ~~obligations~~ **responsibilities** of the Lay Council Political Assembly of the Central Executive Committee are:

- a. To ensure the development of the national-ecclesiastical life of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, to maintain close contact with national authorities and encourage inter-diocesan cooperation.
- b. To examine matters of administrative and economic nature arising from dioceses.
- c. To appoint the bodies directing institutions subject to or connected with the Catholicosate and to ensure their salutary and beneficial activity.

- d. To oversee and maintain control over the income-generating properties and institutions belonging to the Catholicosate, ensuring their sound administration.
- e. To supervise the execution of the budget approved by the National General Assembly.
- f. To execute the decisions taken by the National General Assembly.
- g. To strive for the advancement of Armenian values and education in the dioceses.
- h. To examine all matters related to the Catholicosate, which are not of a purely religious nature, and do what is good and proper for their resolution.

3. JOINT COUNCIL

The primary ~~obligations~~ **responsibilities** of the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee are:

- a. To review and approve the Bylaws of the dioceses or the changes proposed in existing Bylaws, according to the dispositions of this Bylaws, and, if necessary, present them to the National General Assembly.
- b. To prepare the draft budget of the Catholicosate and present it to the National General Assembly.
- c. To prepare the agenda of the National General Assembly in consultation with the Chair and Secretariat (First and Second Chairmen and First and Second Secretaries) of the National General Assembly.
- d. To pursue good relations between the Catholicosate and the other Hierarchical Sees of the Armenian **Apostolic Orthodox Holy** Church.
- e. To monitor the activity of the Seminary of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

Article 30

The Central Executive Committee works through the appropriate diocesan assemblies in connection with matters related to the dioceses.

Article 31

The Central Executive Committee is accountable to the National General Assembly, to which it must present its activity report at the end of its term.

INCOME AND ACCOUNTING

Article 32

The Catholicosate of Cilicia enjoys all the legal rights and privileges appropriated for real persons. It can hold movable and immovable goods and receive wills.

The sources of the Catholicosate's income are:

- a. Diocesan dues.
- b. Revenues generated by properties belonging to the Cilician See.
- c. Allocations realized through wills.
- d. Donations and various proceeds.

Article 33

The Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee drafts the budget of the Catholicosate and presents it to the National General Assembly for review and approval.

Article 34

The Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee is responsible for the execution of the budget, as well as accounts, of the Catholicosate of Cilicia before the National General Assembly.

VARIOUS DISPOSITIONS

Article 35

The solution of unforeseen administrative-constitutional problems in the present Bylaws and the explication of any disposition shall be done by the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee, according to the principles of the National Constitution.

Article 36

The review of the present Bylaws shall be made by the Joint Council of the Central Executive Committee and/or by the written demand, supported by reason and proof, of one third of the National General Assembly.

Article 37

The decision to modify the articles of the present Bylaws is given to a two-thirds majority of the overall number of members of the National General Assembly.

Article 38

The present Bylaws consist of 38 articles. It assumed its final form in the National General Assembly of 11 June 2002, and took effect with the encyclical of His Holiness the Catholicos dated 6 December 2002 and bearing the number 3000/220.

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