

On The Occasion Of The
Newly Ordained Priests

The ordination last month of three young, energetic priests by His Beatitude, Patriarch Torkom Manoogian, is indeed a most significant event in the history of the Armenian Community in Jerusalem; three new ministers who have chosen to dedicate their lives for the service of the Armenian church and nation by taking a blinding vow.

Taking the vow of priesthood is by no means an easy decision. First and foremost, there should be that inner urge, that call from within, the vocation without which all that anybody tries to do ends up in failure; it is that basic ingredient that crowns any undertaking with success. Priesthood is the loftiest, the most highly sensitive calling, it embraces a host of qualities, courage, tenacity, eloquence, selflessness, self sacrifice and self denial. The best qualities of a soldier, a leader, states man, a teacher, an orator combine to make the ideal church minister. A priest's primary duty is to lead and shepherd a flock entrusted to his care; He will then need all the qualities that were so painstakingly inculcated in him throughout the period that he was preparing to don the robe of priesthood.

Experienced teachers were entrusted with the highly responsible task of instilling in our young priests the best possible education and the noblest virtues that go to make the ideal priest; yes, the education that they received, will stand them in good stead as they now embark on their new calling.

Education is of paramount importance for a priest. Woe be to that community whose clergymen are ignorant; the thirst for the acquisition of education should remain an unquenchable thirst in them, the well known chinese proverb goes: "Seek education from the cradle to the grave." Every human being earns his livelihood by selling something; thus, the baker sells bread, the green-grocer fruits and vegetables, the doctor his skill, the teacher his knowledge and the priest solace, consolation, advice, guidance, spiritual comfort; imparting these abstract needs is of course, much more sensitive than catering people with concrete or palpable commodities.

Education for a priest is not enough, but he should possess at the same time the noblest traits of a virtuous character; a magnanimity and nobility of spirit is the loftiest adornment a priest can boast of, only thus, can he set the good example to his flock. A priest should always bear in mind that whatever heights he can achieve, no matter how sublime his aspirations might be, humility is the cornerstone and groundwork of all christian virtues. Heartiest felicitations to our three young priests. Soon, their novitiate period will be over, and they will celebrate their maiden mass (Antranig Badarak) and then embark on a new life.

May the almighty guide their footsteps along the right path, and may they remain for ever faithful to that sublime, sacred vow to which they have pledged to dedicate all their life.

Yeghia H. Dickranian