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NEWS IN BRIEF

Schiff Urges Nobel Prize for Pope Francis

LOS ANGELES (Politico) – A leading House Democrat is urging members of the committee charged with awarding Nobel Peace prizes to grant the honor to Pope Francis.

California Rep. Adam Schiff began circulating Wednesday a letter among his House colleagues that calls for the pope to be given the highly-touted humanitarian award for using his “pulpit to exhort people and nations around the world to conduct their affairs with spirituality, morality and integrity.”

The letter says, “Pope Francis has been a powerful advocate for peace, urging an end to conflict and support for constitutive ties among nations. He has called on the world to use diplomacy and discussion to solve disputes, rather than military force, coercion or intimidation. This commitment to nonviolence, which the Pope has put into practice every day, is at the core of the principles behind the Nobel Peace Prize.”

“As the world struggles to cope with a flood of refugees not seen since the end of World War II, the Pope has emerged as perhaps the leading advocate for relief,” he wrote.

“The Pontiff has called on the international community to respond meaningfully to this unsurpassed humanitarian disaster. His compassion has also taken the concrete form of inviting a Syrian refugee family to reside in his residence at the Vatican.”

After gathering signatures he will send the letter to the Nobel Committee.

Argentine Armenians Celebrate Homeland's Independence

BUENOS AIRES (Agencia Prensa Armenia) – On September 25, the Armenian community of Argentina celebrated the 24th anniversary of Armenia's independence with a concert in Teatro Colon, the main opera house here.

The Armenian ambassador to Argentina Alexan Harutiunian gave a welcoming speech and National Deputy Graciela Boyadjian spoke on behalf of the Armenian community. Later, the choir Hai Folk and the group Camerata Bariloche played traditional Argentine tangos and Armenian music.

“As was the case with the first Armenian Republic in 1918, Argentina was one of the first nations to recognize our country and extend their hand of friendship,” said Harutiunian in his speech.

After recalling the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by former Argentine President Raul Alfonsin, the Armenian ambassador stressed the importance of the recognition law enacted by another former president, Nestor Kirchner, in 2007. He declared, “Today our two countries are not only friends, but cooperate in political, economic, cultural and other fields.”

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Watertown Inspired

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Azeri Army Increases Attacks on Karabagh, Armenia

Foreign Minister Meets With Azeri Counterpart in New York

NEW YORK and YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – During the past week, Azeri attacks have escalated. The Nagorno Karabagh Defense Army issued a statement saying that a total of nine Azerbaijani soldiers were killed in two separate attacks, by Armenian forces defending the line of contact.

Despite the losses, Azerbaijan continued the shelling, the army spokesman said, noting 110 ceasefire violations were registered on September 28-29, with more than 1600 shots fired from various caliber weapons, including 60-, 82-, and 120-mm



Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian with his Azeri counterpart in New York

mortars, AGS-17 grenade launchers, as well as Turkish-made TR-107 rocket launchers.

Karabagh armed forces took retaliatory measures and continue to be in control of the situation.

The artillery shelling of villages in Armenia's Tavush province also resulted

see ATTACKS, page 16



Archbishop Barsamian greets Pope Francis following the Pontifical Mass at Madison Square Garden.

Eastern Diocese, Abp. Barsamian Welcome Pope to the US

NEW YORK – The eyes of much of the world were focused on America's northeast corridor last week, as Pope Francis made his first pontifical visit to the United States. Among the millions of people anticipating his appearances in Washington, New York, and Philadelphia, members of the Armenian Church community made special efforts to welcome the Pope with characteristic warmth and affection.

On Friday morning, September 25, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, took part in the papal prayer service at “Ground Zero” – the former site of the World Trade Center, now a place of “pilgrimage” honoring those slain during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America. There, the Primate had an occasion to personally greet the Pope on behalf of the Armenian Church of America.

That afternoon, he attended the Pontifical Mass at Madison Square Garden. Archbishop Barsamian was one of only two non-Catholic religious dignitaries (the other was Archbishop Demitrios of the Greek Orthodox Church) who were specially invited by the city's Roman Catholic hierarchy to be a part of the liturgical service.

Over the course of his ministry, Barsamian has had a fruitful friendship with the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, beginning with his student days at the Vatican's Pontifical Oriental Institute. Since becoming Primate of the

see POPE, page 6

Mansurian Reveals Roots of His Music

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – Tigran Mansurian is one of the leading contemporary composers of Armenian classical music. One of his important works, *Requiem*, will premiere in Boston on October 18 as part of “Resilient Voices: 1915-2015,” a Friends of Armenian Culture Society (FACS) concert, in collaboration with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), in commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

The Harvard Radcliffe Collegium Musicum and the Boston University Marsh Chapel Choir will join with BMOP, led by the latter's music director, Gil Rose.

Mansurian agreed to speak about his work and life via Skype on this occasion.

Mansurian spent around a decade trying to compose the *Requiem*. Requiems were originally

see MANSURIAN, page 5



Community News

Walter Karabian to Receive the ANCA-WR Legacy Award

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian National Committee of America, Western Region (ANCA-WR) has announced that former Majority Leader of the California State Assembly and veteran attorney, Walter J. Karabian will be honored with the Legacy Award at its Annual Gala Banquet on October 25, at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel.

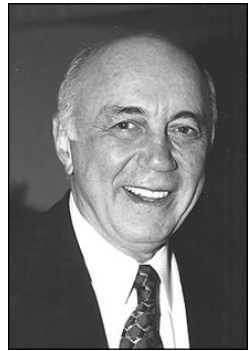
Born in Fresno, Karabian is the oldest son of John Karabian and Zevart Shishmanian. Karabian's paternal family arrived in Fresno in 1896 from Bitlis, and his maternal family were from Dikranagert.

Karabian graduated from Roosevelt High School in Fresno and later continued his education at the University of Southern California (USC), where he earned a Bachelor's of Arts in history, a master's in public administration and a Juris Doctorate from the USC Law School.

After completing his education, Karabian served as Deputy District Attorney for Los Angeles County for two years. Soon after, Karabian became active in the Democratic Party and moved directly into politics. In 1966, he was elected to the California State Assembly. He was one of the youngest men to ever be elected to the Assembly and only the third American-Armenian to be elected to public office in the history of the United States.

While a member of the Legislature, Karabian published various legal articles and gained a

reputation as a significant legal author as well as a legislator. He made substantial contributions to the development of California law concerning crime, prison reform, education, civil rights, free speech and the preservation of endangered species in California.



Walter Karabian

Notably, Karabian used his influence to bring awareness to the Armenian Genocide in California. In 1967, at a time when most people were not aware of the Genocide, Karabian authored the first resolution commemorating the Armenian Genocide in the State Assembly.

In 1972, Karabian introduced California's ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment which was designed to guarantee equal rights to women. Karabian also authored the first Freedom Act protecting sources of news information, the Endangered Species Act, which preceded the National Endangered Species Act and legislation requiring child IQ testing be completed in the child's native language.

In 1972, he was selected to serve in the powerful position of Majority Leader. At the time, he was only 33 years old and became the youngest Majority Leader in California's history. Later, he would become a member of the important Rules Committee.

After leaving the California Legislature in 1975, he established and led his Los Angeles law practice for 45 years. Karabian was selected as the co-chairman of a trade delegation that visited Cuba during Jimmy Carter's presidency, and served as the legal counsel for a legislative delegation to the Philippines in 1979. Karabian was also selected to speak on behalf of a number of Armenian organizations relating to Armenian grievances and objectives before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council.

Karabian has had a lasting impact on the political landscape of America, particularly in California. Politically sharp and insightful on public policy, he has the unique ability of identifying promising individuals and supporting

see KARABIAN, page 7



AGBU New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP) interns during a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

AGBU Offers Young Adults An Enriching Array of Summer Programs

NEW YORK – For students about to enter the professional world, AGBU offers an array of programs that not only allow them to prepare for their futures, but also learn about their Armenian heritage. This year, Armenian youth participated in internship, musical and community service programs that helped them solidify their career aspirations and strengthen their ties to Armenians around the globe.

This year marked the first year of the London Summer Internship Program (LSIP), placing 13 students from Argentina, Belgium, Canada, France, Lebanon, the United Kingdom and the United States in internships at Amber Capital, Newscape Capital, White Cube Art Gallery, Wigmore Medical and other prestigious firms and companies.

"LSIP was the perfect catalyst to show the great potential London has as a European networking hub for Armenians," said LSIP organizer Camilio Azzouz.

In addition to their daily work schedules, the interns took trips to iconic British landmarks, visited the Google headquarters in London and attended a gala dinner in honor of President of Nagorno-Karabagh Bako Sahakyan and Baroness Cox of Queensbury. They also met with Vartkess Knadjian, CEO of the diamond company Backes & Strauss, as well as other professionals who shared their expertise.

For Sarkis Petrosian, a recent graduate of the Université catholique de Louvain in Belgium, LSIP ended with a full-time job offer at his internship site, StoneHedge Partners. "The London Summer Internship Program was a tremendous opportunity for me to make my first professional steps in one of the biggest financial hubs in the world. My internship was at a British brokerage firm and I was in charge of helping the equities trading desk with its research. This experience helped me to consolidate my recently acquired theoretical knowledge with practical know-how. From a personal standpoint, I engaged in this experience trying to see if there was a place for someone like me in a highly competitive market like London. Eventually I got my answer in the form of a proposal from my manager to stay within the company. I feel extremely delighted and very grateful to all the people who organized the program."

New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP)

Twenty four interns participated in the New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP). As the first of the organization's cadre of internship programs, NYSIP empowers young Armenians to achieve success by providing meaningful, purpose-driven professional opportunities and social activities.

This year, interns arrived from Armenia, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, the United Kingdom and across the United States to spend the summer contributing to their professional development and enhancing their involvement in the Armenian community. During the eight-week program, participants worked in various fields at prestigious companies and organizations, including Columbia Medical Center, the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations, AXA Advisors, Mirrorball, SnackBare.com and TheMedNet.org.

Artoun Festekjian, a student at Tufts University studying cognitive brain science and drama, spent the summer as a production intern at Locomotive Film, gaining insight into the inner-workings of a production studio: "On certain days, I got to read scripts and short stories, but by far, my favorite part of the internship has been going on set for a film that the company is currently working on. I got to meet the directors and actors and see the whole crew working, which was unbelievably exciting."

Yerevan Summer Internship Program (YSIP)

The Yerevan Summer Internship Program (YSIP) welcomed 16 diasporan Armenians. The program provides students with an edge in a new global market

see INTERNS, page 9

Celebration Of Life

By Kevork Keushkerian

ALTADENA, Calif. – Tekeyan Cultural Association's Los Angeles Chapter honored the memories of several of the prominent members of Tekeyan Cultural Association who had passed away. Those departed members had served the Association in various capacities to make a difference in the organization's mission and vision in the Diaspora.

This memorial took place on Sunday, September 20, at the Tekeyan Cultural Association's Beshgeturian Center. The immediate family members of those departed were invited to this gathering, which started with a light buffet dinner.

Vatche Semerdjian, chairman of TCA Los Angeles Chapter, welcomed the guests and then invited Master of Ceremonies Dikran Ekizian to introduce the speakers, who were there to present the lives and achievements of the deceased honorees.

Vartkes Kourouyan enumerated world events that coincided with Kevork Kupelian's birth in 1947. In that year, a peace accord was finally signed to end World War II, meanwhile, the renowned leader, Gandhi, embarked on his equally significant "March toward peace." Kevork Kupelian was born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1947. After graduating from the elementary school there, he went to Jerusalem to study at the Patriarchate Seminary for a while.

Kupelian immigrated to the United States in 1971, and settled in Los Angeles. He was very active in the community, serving St. John Armenian Church as Deacon and also on the Parish Council as treasurer. He was a member of the Armenian Democratic Liberal party and Tekeyan Cultural Association for 20 years until his untimely passing in 1996.

Parsegh Kartalian depicted the life of Anahid Orchanian-Basmadjian as the first female involved in many endeavors. She was the first Armenian woman to attend the prestigious Sacred Heart School in Alexandria and then the first female to graduate from the renowned Alexandria School of Pharmacy. In Los Angeles and later in Montreal, Orchanian-Basmadjian became known as a compassionate community activist in the ranks of the Armenian Democratic Liberal party and Tekeyan Cultural Association. She was loved and respected by everyone. She passed away in 1997, at the young age of 53, after a long and courageous fight with cancer.

Nor Or former editor Minas Kojayan presented former editor Hagop Boghosian's life and personal traits, which made him who he was. Kojayan's prepared text was read by his wife Nazig, as Minas had gone to Jerusalem to continue his calling as an educator and editor for the Patriarchate magazine at the beginning of the current school year.

Hagop Boghosian and Minas Kojayan both attended Beirut's AGBU Hovagimian-Manoogian High School. After graduating from High School, Minas went to Armenia to further his education in Armenian studies, whereas Hagop attended the American University of Beirut. His writing career started in Beirut, when he began to contribute to *Zartok's* Sports Section.

In the United States, he became the editor of *Nor Or* from 1990-96. During his tenure as editor of *Nor Or*, ADL's semi-weekly newspaper rose to unprecedented heights, as it became the most sought-after paper for his bold political commentaries. After Armenia's independence in 1991, Boghosian became an independent TV commentator, known and respected for his political views and analysis of current events in Armenia. He passed away in 2001.

Juliet Bidinian-Chahinian's life was presented

see CELEBRATION, page 5

Arts & Living

Sacred Chants From Aleppo

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – Ancient Armenian chants from the Forty Martyrs Armenian Church (Karsoon Mangants) in Aleppo enveloped the Kavookjian Auditorium of the Armenian Diocese in New York on Friday evening, September 18. The event was sponsored by the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center.

In welcoming the large audience, the executive director of the Zohrab Center, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan who spent a summer six years ago in this ancient city with his students, called the unique experience “life changing.” He was there with his students who had come to learn the Armenian language, and he revealed that Armenians have chanted in the Forty Martyrs church since it was constructed in 1429.

During the Armenian Genocide, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were deported to Syria, with tens of thousands settling in Aleppo which became the country’s economic center. The current four year Syrian war has greatly reduced Aleppo’s Armenian population to half, leaving the future of this vibrant historic city in doubt.

The Friday lecture was presented by Jason Hamacher, who related that he has been exposed to tragedies over the years, and wanted to do something that expressed his faith. A musician who mostly plays drums in two bands, he has always been fascinated by music of different groups, and has visited Syria several times during a six-year span, documenting the ancient prayers of the Armenian, Sufi, Syriac and Assyrian musical traditions of Aleppo. About a year ago, he said he founded Lost Origin Productions, a multi-media company which explores ancient civilizations, “with hopes that these ancient Christian chants will unite our turbulent world.”

During the program which featured an interview of him by Anastasia Tsioulcas, an associate producer for NPR Music, and the former North America editor for Gramophone Magazine, he showed a film of the vibrant city of Aleppo before the war, and the current massive destruction that has taken place during the last few years. Accompanying the film was his audio CD recording, Forty Martyrs, the sacred Armenian chants he recorded on location in 2006 and 2010, sung by the Very Rev. Yeznig Zeghchanian.

While in Aleppo, he made a three-hour “intriguing excursion” of the Forty Martyrs Armenian Church, and asked Fr. Yeznig what Armenian chants sound like. He called the priest’s beautiful baritone a cappella chanting of the Lord’s Prayer (Hayr Mer) and Hor Jam “gut-wrenching”. This was his “first exposure to anything Armenian,” he noted. “Not being Armenian by blood, I was deeply moved and inspired by the Armenian culture,” he related.

While there, he visited the UNESCO World Heritage sites with the numerous Armenian stone crosses (khachkars), and realized that the “world has recognized the profoundness of the Armenian culture.” And during visits to his two favorite restaurants in Aleppo which “of course” were Armenian, he took note of the “gorgeous” wall illuminations, and understood “how entrenched Armenian culture was in Syria.”

He closed his presentation by reading a 1946 poem “Farewell to Aleppo”, written by an Armenian Genocide survivor who had lost all his family members, and had walked 1200 miles without shoes to Aleppo. With visible emotion, he again used the expression, “gut-wrenching”.

In his words of appreciation, Fr. Daniel called the film and CD recording “an effort to combat the apathy and ignorance found today about Syria, a country of great vitality, and multiculturalism”. The Save the Children organization will be the recipient of a portion of the sale of the “Forty Martyrs” CD which can be purchased from the Zohrab Center of the Armenian Diocese.



John Derian in Watertown (New York Times photo)

John Derian Goes Home to Watertown

WATERTOWN (New York Times) – John Derian is standing in front of a 19th-century tomb in the summer rain. We are just outside Boston, in the storied Mount Auburn Cemetery, not far from where he grew up. “Some of my mother’s relatives are in here,” he says. Tall and elegant, Derian seems of a piece with his august

By Sadie Stein

surroundings: remote and a bit intimidating. But when he talks, he is warm and funny. At one point, a 71 bus, bound for Cambridge, passes by. “That bus changed my life,” he says wryly.

Since starting out as a designer and purveyor of objects and curiosities in the early ’90s, Derian’s name has been a byword for a slightly morbid, cosmopolitan luxury: a Pierre Bonnard painting viewed through the eyes of Edward Gorey. His three Aladdin’s Cave stores, a row in Manhattan’s East Village, are packed with hand-printed textiles, marble fruit sculptures and antique glass. The decoupage plates that Derian makes and sells take their inspiration from English botanical prints or yellowed love letters. A velvet sofa might have the classical lines of a Hepplewhite relic, but with proportions long enough to accommodate his tall frame. Derian has a healthy respect for both history and comfort.

In reality, however, Derian’s hometown is a far cry from the sepia-tinged world he has created. His working-class upbringing in Watertown was surprisingly Technicolor – Boy Scouts, a paper route, hide-and-seek – but Derian is ambivalent about going home; his family was bewildered by his artistic interests and, like many sensitive kids, he came to realize how isolated his childhood was. He moved immediately after high school – first to Boston, then to neighboring Cambridge, then to New York, where he has lived and worked ever since. And yet it’s clear that Derian’s early life influenced his idiosyncratic brand of creativity. As a young man, Derian immersed himself in painting and craft, activities that would later find expression in his shops, which feel like private hiding places filled with secret, hoarded objects.

Derian’s mother’s family is Scottish; his paternal grandparents were Armenian. His father’s mother lived with the family until he was 10, “but her past,” he says, “was always kind of a mystery.” Derian’s childhood was full of such secrets and intriguing characters: There was the funeral home on the corner run by redheaded sisters; the black-clad neighbor in perpetual mourning for her son; the boarders who lived upstairs. “There was a Russian guy named Arthur who stayed in our attic for 40 years,” Derian recalls, as we make our meandering way to the home where he was raised. “When my grandmother was alive, they would play cards and do shots. He’d boil feta cheese until all the salt was gone, and walk around in his underwear saying, ‘I am DEE-gusted! They do what they want!’ because there were six little kids, causing trouble. I think he might have been gay.”

Derian has a keen eye for detail, especially macabre quirks; he is also generous and kind. Near the Cambridge border, we stop at Star Market, a food store where his father was a manager for 40 years. Derian was the only one of his siblings not to work there, yet he has happy memories of playing in the empty aisles on Sundays, and credits his time there for having made him an excellent packer of car trunks.

As the rain breaks, we reach Dexter Avenue, a narrow Watertown street. “My house looked very much like the one on the right – they were twins,” he says, pointing to the gingerbread-embellished neighbor of a more modern-looking dwelling. “And then,” he says, gesturing to his childhood home, “my dad did basically everything he could to destroy it.” He describes his father’s 1970s refurbishment of the building – lowering the ceilings, ripping out the molding, adding paneling everywhere – with the tone of someone long resigned. “Even as a 10-year-old, I was sort of upset. It seemed like he was taking really cool things and making them ugly.”

see DERIAN, page 11

Armenian Art Gallery In Providence Threatened With Closure, Demolition

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – After two years at its current location, Studio Z is being forced by its current landlord to vacate its gallery space at the Butcher Block Mill. Gallery/Studio Z owner and director Berge Zobian painstakingly renovated the space over a 17-month period before opening the gallery to the public for its first exhibit in October 2013.

According to the Providence Creative Industrial Space (PCIS) website, the Butcher Block Mill was to be part of a “historic rehabilitation development of the old Eastern Butcher Block Mill into affordable commercial incubator space for creative small businesses.” With this understanding, Studio Z became one of the early tenants on March 2012.

Now, three-and-a-half years later, the owner of the mill has forced all tenants to move out in order to sell the property to a developer whose plans include turning the renovated building into parking spaces. All other businesses in the complex have obliged and left fearing legal wrangling. Studio Z has instead decided to protest the owner’s terms and seeks to recoup its renovation investment and raise funds to pay off its remaining service providers, cost to dissolve pre-existing contracts, loan, and mounting legal fees.

Before moving into the Butcher Block building, Studio Z created architectural plans resulting in extensive renovations to the space. This entailed converting an empty garage into a contemporary art gallery, at a cost of more than \$120,000 to design and build out an entire new space. The space consists of exhibition rooms, office, track lighting and constructing a second floor loft for art storage. All see EVICTION, page 11

Smbatyan to Conduct Korean Chamber Orchestra In Boston Concert

BOSTON – Swiss Gart will present Korean Chamber Orchestra on US tour celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2015 after great success on European tour in February this year.

The concert will be held on October 31 at 8 p.m. at the in New England Conservatory’s Jordan Hall.

New world star mezzo soprano Carly

Paoli, who recently performed at Terme di Caracalla in Rome with Jose Carreras and Andrea Bocelli, participates in this event thanks to EMMA for Peace.

Ino Mirkovic, UNESCO Artist for Peace and violinist, will perform together with Paoli.

South Korean violinist Soyoung Yoon one of the brightest violinists of her generation will all be a focal point of the concert.

The conductor of the concert will be Sergey Smbatyan who was honored with the French Medal of Arts and Letters as Knight.

Tickets are available at the Box Office at 290 Huntington Ave., as well as online at www.necmusic.edu.

The program includes works by Zwilich, Weill, Musumarra, Obradors, Gershwin, Piazzolla, Mendelssohn and Elgar.



Sergey Smbatyan



COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

Papal Visit Was a Hit for All, but Armenians Missed Chance to Display Gratitude

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Morality and politics are usually mutually exclusive; although they both deal with social issues, the latter has a stronger grip on those issues while morality soars in the abstract and impacts the consciences of people in a more subjective way.

Pope Francis' visit to the US brought together both approaches to social issues and came to demonstrate the power of the spoken word and the impact of morality on politics and political issues.

As a spiritual leader, it was not his place to politicize his mission, but since the social issues he touched upon also have a political component, he had to tailor his message accordingly. At the conclusion of his remarks at the joint session of the US Congress, he stated: "A good political leader is one who, with the interest of all minds, seizes the moment in a spirit of openness and pragmatism."

Before landing on the North American continent as the fourth pope visiting the US, Pope Francis' first stop was on the island nation of Cuba, where he received a welcome deserving of a head of state, by the Cuban people and the government. Both segments were grateful for the role the Pontiff had played in restoring relations between the US and Cuba.

President Obama was equally grateful, and he later thanked the Pope for his help in mending frayed ties, adding, "You shake our conscience from slumber, you call us to rejoice at the good news and give us confidence that we can come together, in humility and service, and pursue a world that is more loving, more just and more free."

In Cuba, the Pope brought back God into an atheist society and his message came to restore Christian faith among people, all along treading carefully on political issues. He avoided invoking political prisoners and provoking the regime.

The Pope's visit to the US was more tumultuous and eventful. Throughout his visit, the news media provided ample coverage attracting the attention and the reverence of not only Catholics, but also non-Catholics, as his message transcended the racial, religious and philosophical divide.

He was the first Pope to address a joint session of the Congress, receiving 30 standing ovations, against 29 for Benjamin Netanyahu, who had delivered a more divisive political message.

Although the Pope brought a message of peace, he did not shy away from the day's burning issues. Certainly congressional leaders such as John Boehner (who subsequently announced his resignation as Speaker of the House) and Mitch McConnell did not expect the tenor of the Pope's message when they invited him to speak. The Pope called for the protection of the rights of immigrants and refugees and the abolition of the death penalty as well as the sanctity of life "in all its stages," an oblique reference to abortion. Then he took on the "industry of death," asking, "why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering to individuals and societies?" He then responded to his own question: "Sadly, the answer, as we all know, is simply money. Money that is drenched in blood, often innocent blood." And he called for action to "confront the problem and stop the arms trade."

His audience in the Congress associated the reference with the \$60-billion arms deal the US made recently with Saudi Arabia, whose weapons are wreaking havoc in Syria and Yemen, and also the new military aid of \$45 billion promised to Israel.

All the issues that the Pope touched upon are vigorously being debated during the presidential campaign.

The Pope carried similar messages both to the White House and to the United Nations General Assembly. He reminded his audience of the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matthew 7:12)

The Pope's visit deeply impacted the conscience of his audience. People in the US were moved by his humility and

the simplicity of his message. But how much that message could be translated into action needs to be viewed in due course.

"Governments and their leaders are not easily swayed by moral appeals, even from the Pope, but they do respond to their public opinion," said Louise Frechette, a former deputy secretary general of the UN. She added that the Pope's emphasis on issues such as "climate change and refugees could put pressure on governments to act."

The Pope's visit to the US will have a lasting influence on people's conscience and politicians' calculations. The "Francis effect" was indeed powerful. The only issue which was left unresolved in people's minds was the role of women in the church. Although he has advocated a "deeper theology about the place of women in the church and greater role for women in its decision making," his final word on the issue has been "the church has spoken and the door is closed" to women.

He is blamed for having a "blind spot" regarding women.

Mostly the news media treated the Pope and his visit positively, except a few powerful figures in the media, one of whom is *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd, who takes the Pope to task for his conservative views regarding

women in the church. In her Sunday op-ed piece on September 27, she writes, "His magnetic, magnanimous personality is making the church, so stained by vile sex abuse scandal, more attractive to people, even though the Vatican stubbornly clings to its archaic practice of treating women as a lower caste."

Some other analysts suggest that although the Pope subscribes to a conservative philosophy,

through the issues he has raised, he has given the "religious left a new lease on life."

Indeed, for the past decade, much of the public discourse about the Catholic Church in the media has been negative; the endless stream of victims of clergy sexual abuse, so long stifled, finally were able to find a voice. In the process, the church, until recently, was not able to reassert its moral high ground. Now, with Francis at the helm, the church seems to be willing to confront past misconduct and again focus on bringing back the faithful to its fold.

As Armenians, we have our own agenda regarding the Pope and his mission. What Pope Francis did for the Armenians, no mere statesman could have done. Thanks to his Divine Liturgy in St. Peter's Cathedral in the Vatican on April 12 of this year, he created global resonance on the Genocide issue. We were all appreciative at the time but during his visit to the US, we failed to express our appreciation in an appropriately grand manner. We had long been aware of his visit and his schedule in the US. Had we mobilized our community for a visible welcome, perhaps the Genocide issue could have found its echo in the message he delivered at the US Congress or the White House, or even the UN forum. We cannot tell with certainty what would have been the outcome if we were able to move the masses on this occasion. Sure, there was a sign in Philadelphia thanking the Pope for his courageous stand. There was also a message from the Eastern Diocese in Catholic New York. Perhaps other messages did not hit their goals, but certainly we failed to demonstrate our collective gratitude. That is indicative of our lethargy as a political force in this country.

Perhaps the only saving grace was President Serge Sargisian's meeting with Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, the Vatican's Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, who coincidentally visited Yerevan while the Pope was touring the US. During that meeting, which was also attended by the Patriarch of the Armenian Catholic Church Grigor Petros I Gabroyan, President Sargisian pointed out the Vatican's role not only uniting the Christian world but also defending human rights, tolerance, understanding and peace. He concluded his remarks by stating that "the fact of recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the Vatican is the vivid proof of that."

For people across the US, the Pope's visit meant the revival of faith and celebration of his message of peace, but for the Armenian community, it remains a sorely-missed political opportunity.

"THROUGHOUT HIS VISIT, THE NEWS MEDIA PROVIDED AMPLE COVERAGE ATTRACTING THE ATTENTION AND THE REVERENCE OF NOT ONLY CATHOLICS, BUT ALSO NON-CATHOLICS, AS HIS MESSAGE TRANSCENDED THE RACIAL, RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL DIVIDE."