

ARCHPRIEST KHOREN HABESHIAN
(1933-.....)

Archpriest Khoren Habeshian was born on May 28, 1933 in Mousa Ler with the baptismal name of Hagop. He is the first-born child of his parents. His father was a schoolteacher.

He was able to reside in his beautiful birthplace only for six years. In 1939, international diplomacy ceded Mousa Ler to the Turks and forced all of the Armenians residing in its seven villages to be exiled to Lebanon, to an unattractive plain called Ainjar where confronted fear and bitterness.

In 1947, he graduated from the “Harach School in Ainjar, and in the following year he successfully completed the entrance examinations for the Seminary in Antelias, advancing directly into the second year of study. He left the seminary in 1953, and following his father’s footsteps became a teacher in the Armenian national school system in Lebanon.

In 1959, within the same school, he met another Armenian teacher, Berjouhi Topalian. Their future was miraculously sealed as they were joined together. Together, they have been blessed to have a beautiful home, with their son, Vahe, and their daughter, Maral, and their four grandchildren: Kaiane, Sevan, Garin, and Nareh.

In 1969, having just been selected to become the principal of the “ Harach” school in Ainjar, he acquiesced to the urging of Catholicos Khoren of the Great House of Cilicia and left for the United States to become a priest. In October 1969 he was ordained a priest in the Armenian Church by Archbishop Hrant Khatchadourian and was assigned to parish of Saint Gregory the Illuminator in Granite City, Illinois, where he served as a pastor for 14 years.

In 1984, he became the Chancellor of the Eastern Prelacy, In New York City, and in 1985 he was assigned to Soorp Khatch /Holly Cross parish in Washington, DC, where he served as a pastor for the next 20 years, until his retirement in November 2004.

During the course of his teaching career, he enrolled in classes through the department of Armenian Studies at the French Saint Joseph University in Beirut. Later, when he arrived in the United States, he continued his higher education at Southern Illinois University. In 1980, he successfully completed his Master’s Degree in Theology at Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Saint Louis Missouri. He then began his doctoral program at the same seminary, which was unfortunately interrupted when he assumed his duties at the Prelacy in New York.

He has been honored to deliver presentations and to give lectures in many places on many occasions. At the behest of the Eastern Prelacy, he prepared a series of bilingual sermons (in Armenian and in English) for every Sunday of the Church Year, and it is gratifying to know that successive generation of clergy have continued to rely upon his work as they preach to their congregations.

After his retirement, he wrote a book, titled *Kir Gyanki* (Book of Life) in Armenian; published in 2008, which is both a personal reflection and testament of his life.

For the past nearly three years, it has been a blessing for him, to be the pastor of Saint Gregory the Illuminator parish in San Francisco, California. His life as a priest began in one Saint Gregory parish, and now it ends at another Saint Gregory parish.