

Kick-off Reception to the Banquet in honor of His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia concludes with great success

- Benefactors Mr. & Mrs. John and Asdghig Bedrosian as event sponsors
- More than a thousand faithful committed their participation for the Pontifical Banquet
- Sponsors expressed their support by pledging in excess of one million dollars to the Catholicosate of the House of Cilicia, Antilias Seminary, and Prelacy.

It is with utmost joy that His Eminence Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate of the Western United States, along with members of the Religious and Executive Councils, and the Welcoming, Banquet and Public Relations and affiliated Committees of the Pontifical visit of His Holiness Aram I Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, announce to the faithful that the kick-off party for the upcoming October 9th Pontifical Banquet in honor of His Holiness Aram I, took place with great success on Sunday, August 21st at 6:30 p.m. at the Bistro Garden Restaurant in Studio City.

Hosted by the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the kick-off party welcomed more than 150 guests including clergy, representatives of community organizations, community activists, generous benefactors, and devoted sponsors, to officially announce the Pontifical visit of His Holiness Aram I Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia from October 5 -19. The Pontifical Visit, with its theme of “Towards the Light of Knowledge”, will encompass many public and official celebrations and ceremonies.

The official program of the evening began with Banquet Committee Co-Chairs Mr. Shant Haytayan and Mr. Peklar Pilavjian welcoming the guests and inviting Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian to lead in prayer and deliver his greetings and message.

Archbishop Mardirossian welcomed the guests and thanked them for responding the Prelacy invitation to attend this banquet. He stressed that the Pontifical visit is organized on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of the Seminary of the Catholicosate in Antilias, and the 10th Anniversary of the election and consecration of His Holiness. This visit coincides with the 1600th Anniversary of the invention of the Armenian Alphabet, and the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

His Eminence highlighted several key events during the Pontifical visit including “*Hrashapar*” and official welcome at St. Garabed Mother Church in Hollywood; celebration of the 1600th Anniversary of the Armenian Alphabet in the HMEM “Ararad” Chapter’s Hall; meeting with the students of Armenian Schools, Evening church services on the eve of the Feast of the Holy Translators at Holy Martyrs Church; the Seminary Annual Banquet dedicated to the 75th Anniversary of the Seminary at Avedissian Hall; visit to the Armenian Genocide Monument in Montebello; blessing of the Prelacy New Building and the consecration of St. Dertad and St. Ashkhen Chapel; Pontifical Holy High Mass at St. Mary’s Church in Glendale; Youth Forum in Fresno, visit to Fresno City Council and Fresno Pacific University; visit to World Vision headquarters; visit to the City Hall of Los Angeles; address at the World Affairs Council on “Christianity in the Context of the Present Day Middle East”; a Symposium on “The Christian Response to Violence” at the University of Southern California. Also included are His Holiness’ meeting with the Church Youth Organizations, University and Public Schools’ students, and consecration of St. Sarkis Church in Pasadena.

Throughout the evening, attendees were welcomed with cheerful applause as they committed sponsorship to the October 9th Pontifical Banquet event, which will take place at the Universal Hilton.

Archbishop Mardirossian thanked all the donors for their continuous support to the Catholicosate, the Seminary and our Prelacy, and expressed special appreciation to the event sponsors Mr. & Mrs. John and Asdghig Bedrosian for their generous donation. Other major donors include Mrs. Tina Carolan and her son Richard, Mrs. Ashkhen Pilavjian and family, Mr. & Mrs. Krikor and Kohar Sulahian and their son Mr. & Mrs. Dickran and Peggy Sulahian, Mr. & Mrs. Varant and Houry Melkonian, Mr. & Mrs. Tony & Eileen Keosseyan, Mr. & Mrs. Ralph and Savey Tufenkian, and Mr. & Mrs. Garbis and Maida Bezjian.

By the conclusion of the evening, it was clear that more than a thousand Armenians would attend the event. Also numerous donations were announced summing up a total of over a million dollars.

“The Western Prelacy is dedicated to the community as it works diligently to revitalize the physical, economic, cultural, spiritual, and educational conditions of its churches and schools,” said Archbishop Mardirossian. “The Western Prelacy, in close association with the Catholicosate and the Seminary, has and will continue to make a substantial impact on expanding its reach to the Armenian American community as long as it has supporters and believers as benevolent and dedicated as evidenced at this showcase kick-off celebration.”

The evening concluded with the benediction of Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian and the singing of “Cilicia” and “Ee Veh Partsants”.