



ST. HAGOP ARMENIAN CHURCH
Community of Tampa-St. Pete, Florida
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November 1, 2020

Dear St. Hagop Faithful,

Five years ago we asked that you place your trust in St. Hagop parish council's decision to lead the Eastern Diocese in converting from a dues system to a pledge system. You did, and your support enabled us to both pursue our ministry and to shepherd our sister churches in their conversions . . . despite the challenges the coronavirus continues to pose, war in Artsakh, worldwide social unrest, and many other disturbances life in 2020 has brought. For St. Hagop, these included major disruptions in our communal worship, religious education, and outreach; loss of hall rental income; and, cancelled church fund-raising events.

Beyond the at-large ill effects of the past year, we know many parishioners have suffered personally *vis a vis* health, employment and financial problems, and loss of loved ones. It is with much humility, and in the same faith-based spirit undergirding our decision to convert to a pledge system, that we pray during these difficult times you will make a 2021 pledge proportionate to your means.

In making our request, it seems apropos to invoke the memory of Bishop Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan. His conviction in our Lord led to sentencing in a Vietnamese prison for 13 years, including 9 years in solitary confinement. He then famously wrote in *The Road of Hope*: "Use riches with generosity, appreciate them with discernment, and be strongly detached from them, because they do not belong to you. God has merely entrusted them to you to share with the poor."

Your 2021 pledge card and summary of St. Hagop's ministries are enclosed. Beyond your monetary pledge, we request that you also prayerfully consider your participation in St. Hagop's ministries. During 2020, St. Hagop received pledges of \$157,605 from 107 pledge units.

Pledge Sunday is November 29th, and we invite you to submit your pledge card for a blessing on that day. As an alternative, you can mail your pledge card or make your pledge online at www.stthagopfl.org/stewardship-pledge-online. We request that you submit your pledge by December 18; this will enable our parish council to prepare its 2021 budget in line with projected revenues.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions and/or wish to further discuss stewardship at St. Hagop.

With Everlasting Faith in our Lord,

Michael Shahnasarian, Ph.D.
Stewardship Chairman

Der Hovnan Demerjian
Pastor, St. Hagop Armenian Church

