

The Promise

In one of the Armenian Diasporas, numerous Armenians flocked to the USA. Due to their economic circumstances, when they arrived they could not build churches, and since they are neither Roman Catholic nor Eastern Orthodox, nor Anglican, nor Protestant and considering how the Jerusalem Armenians were treated by other Christians they sought out Episcopal Churches, and generally in the afternoon they Celebrated their Divine Liturgy. Therefore, many of us "old timers" were brought up with Armenian friends who were members of the Armenian Apostolic Church. My Italian wife's Godparents were Armenian. In Jerusalem, of course, within the Old City they have their own Quarter - in part due to the fact that Armenia was the first Christian nation. Their Cathedral is the Cathedral of St. James built over the site of the martyrdom of St. James of Jerusalem. In their Quarter, they have a seminary and a choir school. The expansions in the Muslim Quarter and the Jewish Quarter have a major negative impact on the Armenian Quarter. They are the poorest Quarter; and since they are neither Jewish nor Muslim, they experience mistreatment. Of course, they are one of the Jurisdictions that has "an official place" in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. One of the Stations of the Cross is at an Armenian Catholic (smaller group than Armenian Apostolic) Church - and that Station was destroyed probably about 10 years ago by anti Christians. It has since been rebuilt, but permission must be received from the church in order to unlock the doors to see the church. The Christian population in Jerusalem has shrunk to such an extent that the vast majority of churches are shrines and museums instead of being places of worship for people of various ethnic and jurisdictional backgrounds. Christianity in Jerusalem has been reduced by over 30% over a thirty year period, and now has dropped well below 10%. They are the "in between people." They are Palestinians in many instances - but not Muslims. They are not Jewish - and the non-practicing secular Jews of which there are many, do not distinguish. A Palestinian is a Palestinian. But if one is a Christian Palestinian they know what it is like to be caught in between; the Armenians have even more difficulty - they are not Palestinian, they are not Jewish, and they are not Muslims. They have little standing.

The history of the people of the first Christian nation is a very, very sad one, and their Holocausts are often unknown, forgotten, or ignored.

I have had the privilege of being in the Armenian Quarter fifteen times, and in the USA of working Ecumenically with them. Over forty years ago, as I was praying with Armenian Christians, I wondered if their history could ever become our history, as I pondered potential Christian persecution for other Christians, and as I pondered the rise of terrorism which was becomingly, in terms of a revival, a greater potential. Armenian Christians have rarely become anyone's "cause" and they do not usually appear on the list of those with whom the culture has bidden us to be politically correct.

I would ask that all Christians recall the history of Armenian Christians - in their native land, in the Holy Land, in Russia, in Turkey and in the United States. By the way, my friend, Bart Shakarian, did well. The next time you go to one of his stores, called "GNC" please say a prayer for the repose of his soul. When his Armenian Apostolic Church closed, he kept on going to the building Sunday after Sunday - earlier than he had for Divine Liturgy, and became an Anglican. I can still see my friend's face at my Consecration as a Bishop 23 years ago. A man, whom he had

known since that man was a teenager, who demonstrated his love for the plight of the Armenian people, was becoming a successor to the Apostles. I think that Bart hoped that I would remind people from time to time about his people who paid a price to be a Christian.

They are easy to forget - but also easy to remember:

Christ - ian
Armen - ian
Shakar - ian

May we all learn from their story.

Subject: 'The Promise' Dares to Tell the Truth About the Armenian Genocide – Glenn Beck

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