

Why I Chose Second Avenue and not Madison

Daron Bolat graduated in 2005 from St. Nersess Seminary with a MA in General Theology and is currently interning at Diocesan headquarters in the Department of Youth and Education before assuming a permanent ministry position in the Diocese.

A member of St. Mary Armenian Church in Washington, D.C., Daron was chair of his Senior ACYOA (which “still rocks” in his opinion), served on ACYOA Central Council and has been on staff at St. Vartan Camp.

Every morning, I get on a train from New Rochelle into New York City. As my fellow passengers and I arrive and get off the train, we walk into the huge main concourse at Grand Central and see the beautiful sculptures and architecture, and then all go our separate ways. I’m sure many of the people I share the train ride with are lawyers, business men and women, or doctors. Yet my trip every morning takes me past all of the skyscrapers full of offices, to the diocese where I choose to work in my little cubical doing the work of the Lord.

The Epistle of James says, “Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” (James 2:18). I was doing ministry, and showing my faith through my deeds, before I had a solid faith and before I knew what ministry was, and long before I did it in any formal way. Over the years, as I have grown in my faith, and taken different roles in the church my ministry has changed. But in way or another, I have been doing ministry, serving God and his church, for most of my life.

In the Bible we see many examples of people who answered God’s call to ministry; yet we also see that people responded to God’s call in different ways. When Moses was called to lead his people out of Egypt, he initially asked God to choose someone else, thinking that he couldn’t do it. Jonah actually tried to run away when God called him to minister to the Ninevites. Mary, after initially being scared and confused, completely submitted to God’s call to her to bear His Son.

Ministry in the Church can take many forms. It can mean leading a Bible study, teaching Sunday school or visiting someone in the hospital, or it can mean helping with your church's bazaar. For Mother Theresa, her ministry consisted of feeding, and caring for some of the poorest people in the world. For Mesrop Mashtots it meant inventing the Armenian Alphabet and teaching it to his students. My ministry began in the ACYOA. I would help out with our ACYOA chapter with activities we had like serving at our Palm Sunday or helping with the Toys for Tots drive that we would do. I wasn't doing these things consciously thinking that I was doing God's work, but I think it was, and was certainly ministry. I was serving God. I did it because I was with my friends, and I believed in our ACYOA and wanted it to be successful. When I went off to college, I did not feel the same strong sense of connection with people I met at school as I had with my friends from church. So many things seemed superficial and lacking substance.

Although I made plenty of friends, the relationships were not very deep. As I began to get involved in my church again, I felt very much at home which certainly strengthened my faith. The more I served in the church, the closer I felt to God. Over the years, as I have grown in my faith, I have taken on different roles, and my ministry has changed. In essence, though, part of it is still about serving food on Palm Sunday and loading boxes for needy kids.

I served on the ACYOA Central Council, because I wanted to help the ACYOA grow. After graduating college, I began working in the courthouse near my house. It was nice and all, but I didn't really believe in it. Eventually I came to the conclusion that if I'm doing to spend my life serving something, I would rather serve Christ and His Church. I hope that I can help other people growing in their faith as I have. No matter

what we do, we're going to be serving something; it could be the Church, a law firm, or a big corporation. But none of those could possibly give me what God has given me, regardless of the size of my paycheck. At the end of the day God is the one Person I can serve who will be loyal to me is God. In the corporate world you are only valued to the extent that you win cases or close big deals. God will love and cherish you regardless. For many people, they have their job during the day, and then come home and live their "real life" For me my job is life, is a huge part of who I am. Which makes is so much more satisfying. That's why took a Master's in General Theology from St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and not an MBA from Harvard Business School. And that's why I want to help the Church succeed in changing people's lives as it did for me.

Digging Deeper

Read some examples in the Bible of people who were called to serve, and how they reacted. Moses (Exodus 3:1-4:17), Mary (Luke 1:26-38), Paul (Act 9:1-19). How did these people respond when call by God to serve. Which one of these most resembles how you are responding to God's call to ministry.

- 1) What gifts do you possess that you use to serve God, what kind of "ministry" can you do now?

- 2) Who/what are you serving?