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Fr. Hajjagjan
8-20-92

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DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
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BISHOP KHAJAG BARSAMIAN, PRIMATE

August 12, 1992

His Eminence Bishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
630 Second Avenue,
New York, New York 10016

Your Eminence:

Since March 1991 I have enjoyed periodic visits to the St. Gregory Illuminator Armenian Church of Binghampton, New York. I have celebrated the Divine Liturgy each time, and have on occasion presided at community and family dinners. Upon request I have visited shut-in people and have offered prayers at cemeteries.

My most recent visit to this parish was on July 18-19. As previously agreed I was scheduled to celebrate the Divine Liturgy on the feast of the Assumption on August 16. There was to be a picnic, on the church grounds in the afternoon, and probably the grape blessing was to be performed at the beginning of the picnic.

I made arrangement on July 31 to travel round trip by bus for this forthcoming visit, and notified altar server and service coordinator Mr. Jack Injajikian. On August 7, Mr. Injajikian telephoned me at my home to inform me of the Parish Council's decision to cancel the August 16th Badarak and picnic, giving as the reason the fact that some families on whom the choir depends would be out of town that weekend.

Even though my bus ticket was a No refund discounted fare, the supervisor at the Greyhound terminal was an understanding person, so I obtained a full refund.

Based on my experience with this small parish, I humbly suggest that you direct the leaders of the St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Binghampton to seriously consider the prospect of a resident priest or a deacon in charge. Occasional celebration of Badarak by visiting clergy will not contribute to the spiritual and administrative growth of the church. A dedicated and hard-working "pastor" is necessary on the scene to shake the parishioners out of their lethargy and indifference, to train potential choir members, and altar servers, and Sunday school instructors.

Respectfully,
Your servant in Christ,

Arten Ashjian

Father Arten Ashjian