

January 13, 1971

Mr. Armenak Bulbulian
Chairman, Parish Council
St. Mary Armenian Church
Elberon, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Bulbulian:

We are pleased to grant approval for the convening of your Parish Assembly on January 24, and for the election of a Parish Council and one Diocesan Delegate. Along with this, of course, it is understood that there will be election or appointment of other committees as needed by your Parish and permitted by our By-Laws.

Minutes of the Assembly, as well as the names of the Parish Council members and your Delegate, should be sent to us immediately for approval and confirmation.

We hope and pray that your Assembly will prove fruitful, an appropriate beginning to a year of service to our Church and Lord.

Prayerfully yours,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate



St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church

1184 OCEAN AVENUE
ELBERON, NEW JERSEY

Telephone: 222-0127

January 11, 1971

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Archbishop Yerkom Manoogian, Primate
Armenian Diocese of North America
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Dear Surpazan,

The parish Council, at its December 18, 1970 meeting, decided to hold a General Membership Meeting for the election of 1971 Parish Council members and other offices.

I am enclosing the letter which was sent to all paid members and other individuals in our community. In this letter, the details of the meeting are described in full.

I have also previously sent you a list of paid members of the St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church of Elberon, N. J. At the end of 1970, we had seventy eight (78) paid members. Twelve (12) additional new members have also paid their dues, but these names will be entered in 1971.

I would also like to mention that our church has fully paid its 1970 dues to the Diocese.

The Annual Parish Assembly will take place Sunday, January 24, 1971. Presiding will be Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian of Union City. I hope this meets with your approval.

Respectfully yours,

Armen Bulbulian
ARMEN BULBULIAN
Chairman, Parish Council

AB:jc

c.c.: Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian

ST MARY'S ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH
1184 OCEAN AVENUE
ELBERON, N. J.

January 5, 1971

Dear Parishioners:

On Sunday, January 10, 1971, we will have church service. Father Ver-
tanes Papazian will officiate. Please have this date in mind. Following
the church service, a Turkey Dinner will be served.

After one year of intense activity, the combined efforts of the various
organizations of the church with the Parish council produced what we hope-
fully think a very successful season. The success of this work imposes up-
on us certain obligations, the principal of which is the election of a rep-
resentative parish Council with all the privileges and the responsibilities
of such a body. Based on this concept, the Parish Council selected January
24, 1971, as the day for general elections. All persons who have been bap-
tized in the Armenian Church and accept the doctrine of the church are con-
sidered members of good standing and as such can attend the meeting and par-
ticipate in discussions. However, only those members who have paid their
annual dues can participate in the election of officers or adoption of res-
olutions. January 24, 1971 will be a very important day for the Armenian
community of this area and we expect and urge everyone to attend this meet-
ing.

The program for January 24 is as follows:

- A. Church Service from 10:30 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
- B. Dinner will be served from 1:00 - 2:30 P.M.
- C. Parish Assembly meeting: for elections, organizational re-
ports, adoption of resolutions, and, discussions on important
issues will start at 2:30 P.M.

Those members who for various reasons cannot attend church service or dinner
should make every effort to be present at the meeting.

The Parish Council, on the suggestion of its President, Father Ver-
tanes Kelayjian, has selected a nominating committee composed of : Mr. H.
Alexanian, Chairman, Mr. S. Tutunjian, Mr. G. Kazanjian, Mr. A. Gokberk, and
Mrs. G. Chakamian as members of this committee. They will select the candi-
dates for each office and present it to the Parish Assembly for election.
A sample ballot will be printed in the coming issue of the Gantegh for your
convenience and study.

The offices for election are as follows:

1. Parish Assembly officers-Candidates for the election of a pre-
siding officer and a secretary. The presiding officer will
direct the general elections and other matters.
2. Parish Council members for 1971-9 members will be elected from
the candidates presented to the members.
3. Election of a nominating committee for 1971.
4. Election of an auditing committee for 1971.
5. The election of a diocesan delegate and an alternate for a per-
iod of 4 years. The delegate represents our parish in the Di-
ocesan Assembly which meets annually during the first week of
May.

Also on the agenda are the following topics for general discussion:

- A. Building committee report, and discussion of plans for build-
ing a new church.
- B. Church membership dues.
- C. Summer residents.
- D. Request by St. Nerses Theological School to use the church
building during part of August 1971, for religious studies.

Sincerely,
Armen Bulbulian, Chairman,
Parish Council

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Copy

April 26, 1972

Mr. John Chakamian, Chairman
St. Mary's Armenian Church Parish Council
1184 Ocean Avenue
✓ Elberon, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Chakamian:

I am writing this letter to you on behalf of Archdeacon Levon Hekimian, whom I have known for many years.

A long time ago, when the Armenian Diocese was considering the establishment of a "summer" church at Elberon, the then Archbishop Srpazan Mampre Calfayan asked the newly ordained Archdeacon Levon Hekimian to assume the responsibility of maintaining the building and grounds of the new church on a year-round basis and to participate in the religious services according to the rites and privileges of his rank. Needless to say, you may recall that the building was in need of a tremendous amount of repair and maintenance which Archdeacon Hekimian was only too happy to be able to complete. In return for this service, he was promised that he could live on the said premises for the rest of his life, or, for as long as he chose to remain there. These arrangements were agreed upon in the presence of Parish Council members of various churches at a meeting that was held at the Diocesan office in New York.

Archdeacon Hekimian is in receipt of your recent letter of April 12th and has asked me, as a member of the earlier committee, to bear witness to the promises which were made at that time. Not only do I attest to the fact that such a meeting did take place and that these decisions were fully agreed upon by those present, but also, I, as an Armenian who has dedicated all of my life to serve Armenian causes and more specifically, to the care of aged Armenians, am now appealing to your conscience to permit this elderly gentleman, who has

served the church faithfully for all these years, and live out the rest of his life in the comfort and security of his familiar surroundings.

There is no question that we, at the Emerson Armenian Home, would be happy to make room for him here, as an aged homeless Armenian, even though we are filled to capacity. However, I can fully understand and appreciate Archdeacon Hekimian's plea to recall the earlier negotiations which provided him with an assurance that he would never be evicted from the premises of St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church in Elberon, New Jersey, and his appeal for my assistance to present the facts as I knew them to be.

We are all aware of the growing need for more and better space, particularly since the Armenian community at the seashore, as well as everywhere in general, is rapidly expanding. However, I find it very difficult to believe that there is absolutely no way for the present Parish Council of St. Mary's Church in Elberon to fulfill the earlier obligations to him, and that you have asked him to vacate a home in which he has lived for many years, and for which he has worked so hard. To deprive him of his responsibilities towards the church and his close affiliation with the activities there would be to destroy him as a human being. Surely the members of the Parish Council would not want to be held responsible for such inhumane, irresponsible and unjust treatment towards a man who has dedicated himself to the Armenian people and church without question or hesitation.

We are often asked why our young people have been "turned off" from church affiliation. Turning away an old person from a home he was promised would be his for the rest of his life, would be one more crack in an already weakened chain. The church, too, must meet its responsibilities and live up to its promises. How can we tell young people to do good, to have faith and to serve the church, when all they can see is broken promises and negative sanctions imposed on those who have devoted their lives to the service of their church?

I sincerely hope that you and the other members of the Parish Council will reevaluate your earlier position regarding Archdeacon Hekimian and will be able to find a solution which will permit him to live on the church grounds without hindering your plans for expansion of the buildings.

Very truly yours,

Armenak M. Arakelian

August 14, 1972

Mr. John Chakamian
Chairman of Parish Council
St. Mary Armenian Church
1184 Ocean Avenue
P. O. Box 271
Elberon, New Jersey 07740

Dear Mr. Chakamian:

We deeply regret that we cannot be with you in person on this occasion. We would have much preferred to express our joy directly. It is a profound spiritual fulfillment for us to see a parish grow and develop, with young and vigorous leadership; to see it expand its services to our community, to see it broaden into a true spiritual and social home for our people.

The St. Mary Parish of Elberon has achieved precisely this, and the most striking evidence is the assignment of a full-time pastor to serve as the shepherd and spiritual leader of the parish. This is a circumstance in which we rejoice.

An able young priest, Father Vertanes will bring fulfillment to the aspirations of your community. He will provide the spiritual leadership so important to parish progress. But it would be a serious mistake to believe that the assignment of a pastor in any way changes the character of your responsibilities as parishioners. The priest is not the Church. All of you together are the Church. Before the assignment of Father Vertanes, you as a body of parishioners were the Church.

(continued)

Mr. John Chakamian
August 14, 1972
Page 2

Now you have a spiritual leader and an ally in this sacred task of serving our Lord, our Church, and our people.

This is a new beginning for the St. Mary parish, full of hope for the future. We pray that that hope will be realized in full. We know it will be realized if you continue to work together, for the holy purposes that distinguish our efforts, if you continue to work for each other, for the ultimate good of our Church, and for the welfare of our people.

We pray that the Lord may bless you all.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

ATM/ec



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA, 630 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016 212 686-0710

ARCHBISHOP TORKOM MANOOGIAN, PRIMATE

February 7, 1975

Mrs. Araxy Gokberk
Chairman, Nominating Committee
207 6th Avenue
Asbury Park, N.Y. 07712

Dear Mrs. Gokberk:

A series of questions was posed in your letter of January 24, to which we address ourselves as follows:

1. The parish priest is president of all committees, including the Nominating Committee, and can sit and participate in that capacity. The council chairman should not participate.
2. The Nominating Committee cannot be told by anyone what names to put on the slate. The parish priest, as president, can participate in the deliberations and suggest and discuss along with the other members. The committee as a whole will decide what names should be on the slate.
3. a. Yes, a person must be a member for one year before he is eligible to hold office.
b. If he joins in the middle of the year, it cannot be interpreted that he is a member for that entire calendar year. The year of his personal membership begins from the date he paid his dues and officially became a member.
4. It has been customary to ask outgoing members whether they wish to serve again, but there is no rule or law in our Diocese that makes this obligatory. If the Nominating Committee so decides, it need not ask them.
5. The practice of almost all of our parishes has been that members may duly participate and stand for office in the

(cont'd)

1975 assembly (since it pertains to the 1974 year), if they have paid their 1974 dues prior to the convening of that assembly. It will be difficult to change the practice overnight, though it would be our wish for 1975 dues to have been paid promptly and early in the year.

6. The Nominating Committee must prepare and present a slate containing two names for every office to be filled, no more and no less.
7. The Nominating Committee may not list the names of the candidates haphazardly or whimsically. This must be done either in alphabetical order, or in an order determined by drawing lots.
8. If a person wishes to withdraw his name, he will have to make his wishes known to the Assembly, if the ballot has already been printed when he informs the Nominating Committee of this change of mind. If the ballot has not yet been printed, his name must be removed from the ballot. If there is no time to find another name before the ballot is printed, that additional name may be given to the Assembly by the Nominating Committee with the explanation of why it could not be listed on the ballot.

Finally, if Diocesan representation is requested at your Parish Assembly, the request can only be made by the Parish Priest and the Parish Council.

Prayerfully,



Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

cc. Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian

January 24, 1975

Archbishop Torkon Manougian
Primate and members of the Diocesan Council
630 Second Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10016

Dear Surpasan Hayr:

We, the Nominating Committee, of St. Mary's Armenian Church of Elberon, N. J., who were duly elected at the last Parish Assembly, are having some problems and would appreciate your guidance.

- QUESTION 1. Should the Parish Priest and Parish Chairman sit in on the Nominating Committee meetings?
- QUESTION 2. Should the Nominating Committee be told by the Parish Priest and Parish Chairman what names to put on the ballot?
- QUESTION 3. (a) Does the person have to be a member for one year before he may be eligible for office?
(b) If a person first becomes a dues-paying member in August 1974, does that automatically mean that he is a dues-paying member for the 12 months of 1974?
- QUESTION 4. Is the Nominating Committee obligated "AS A MATTER OF COURTESY" to an outgoing Parish Council Member, to place his name on the new ballot?

Regarding Article 6 "Dues are payable in advance on January 1 of each year....."

- QUESTION 5. Does the above mean that in order to be eligible to hold elective office or to vote at our February 16, 1975 Parish Assembly meeting, a past dues-paying member must have paid his or her 1974 dues before January 1, 1975?

By-Laws state: "The Nominating Committee shall prepare lists of candidates, double the number of vacancies for the election of Parish Council....."

- QUESTION 6. Does the Nominating Committee have the authority to more than double the number of candidates if they so wish?
- QUESTION 7. Does the Nominating Committee have the authority, after preparing its list of candidates, to put these names in any order it wishes on the ballot, whether it be
(a) alphabetical order
(b) in order determined by drawing lots, or
(c) or just place ~~at random~~ on the ballot as the committee chooses?

The ballot is prepared and signed as final by the 3 Nominating Committee members and given to the Parish Priest for publication. A person whose name appears on the ballot decides to withdraw his name.

QUESTION 8. Is it not proper, that at this stage, the person wishing resignation make his resignation from the floor on the day of the Parish Assembly meeting?

The above are some questions we would like to have answered in writing. It is important that we have this information as soon as possible to avoid more problems.

Since we have been getting discrepant answers and various interpretations of the By-Laws from authoritative members of our Parish, we feel we need your utmost guidance and consideration at this time on the above.

We further request a member of the Diocesan Council or other duly authorized representative thereof, attend the Annual Parish Assembly meeting to be held at the Church Hall, 1184 Ocean Avenue, Elberon, N. J., on Sunday, February 16, 1975.

Please reply directly to us. Thanking you kindly.

Respectfully submitted,

Arax Gokberk
Chairman, Nominating Committee

207 6th Avenue
Asbury Park, N. J. 07712

Telephone: (201) 775-0049

Sarkis Dadourian

Virginia H. Dedeian

February 13, 1975

Mr. Richard Thomas Sahagian
102 12th Avenue
Belmar, New Jersey 07709

Dear Mr. Sahagian:

Your letter of February 8 and the sentiments you expressed concerning a life in the ministry made us very happy.

It would please us very much if you would continue your consideration in talks with Fr. Vertanes and arrange, through him, to see Fr. Karekin Kasparian who, as our director of recruitments, can discuss with you all the various aspects of such a commitment.

Fr. Karekin will be in touch with us for a subsequent meeting together.

We pray that God may bless you and guide you always.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

cc: Fr. Vertanes Kalaydjian
Fr. Karekin Kasparian
vb

February 8, 1975

Archbishop Terkom Manoogian
Primate
Armenian Church of America
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Your Eminence:

Greetings in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ,
Our Lord.

As a parishioner of St. Mary's Armenian Church,
in Elberon, N. J., I have begun to seriously consider
a life in the ministry of the Word of God, and I
would deeply appreciate your prayers and advice in
this matter.

Der Hayr Kalayjian and Deacon L. Hekimian have
encouraged me to write to you, and Choirmaster
Christophorian has helped me, by enriching my
appreciation of the Church service.

In closing, may I pray that the Love and Wisdom
of Our Lord always dwell with you, Amen.

Sincerely,


Richard Thomas Sahagian

102 12th Ave.
Belmar, NJ 07719

March 21, 1975

Rev. Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian
St. Mary Armenian Church
1184 Ocean Avenue
Post Office Box 63
Elberon, N.J. 07740

Dear Fr. Vertanes:

We have received the minutes of the parish assembly held on February 16, and under separate cover have confirmed the elections of your parish council members.

In reading the minutes, however, we noted a number of procedural matters and decisions that were in contravention of our by-laws. We have some other general impressions as well, which we would like to bring to your and your parish's attention during a personal visit and discussion.

As to the by-laws matters, we urge that all your parish council members, assembly officers, all parishioners in fact, familiarize themselves with the sections of the by-laws that relate specifically to parish assemblies.

Some notes for your immediate attention:

Annual parish assembly (article #13) means once a year. Any other assemblies fall into the category of Special Parish Assemblies for which there is provision in the by-laws (#15). All assemblies are convened with the approval of the parish council (#13). The council chairman presides at Special Assemblies (#18). Special assemblies may also be called upon written request of at least one-third of the total membership, or fifty members of the parish, whichever is the lesser (#15).

Assembly officers are to be elected by secret ballot (#21); Assembly officers are to be elected, so that the customary (?) appointment of a vice chairman is out of order (#14a). The agenda of the assembly is to be prepared

Rev. Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian
Elberon, N.J.

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by the priest and council and can be changed or added
to only by vote of the Assembly (#16).

There are still other matters, but this may suffice until
we meet. Meanwhile decision #2 on page 7 of your minutes must
be considered void, since the special assembly may be called
only through the procedures and for the purposes outlined in
the by-laws.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

July 21, 1975

Mr. Barkev Elfan
Parish Council Chairman
St. Mary Armenian Church
1187 Ocean Avenue
Sea Bright, New Jersey 07760

Dear Mr. Elfan:

A great deal was laid bare at our meeting the other night, and we are grateful that we had an opportunity to discuss with your council and pastor at least some of the matters that have caused some estrangement in your community. It was, of course, impossible to cover everything, nor necessary perhaps, since an improvement in the situation will depend first and foremost on the attitudes of those involved.

We pray that this will happen, because we feel that it is always best if such problems are resolved by the parish leadership, with some guidance from our office, rather than through a resolution by the Primate and Diocesan Council.

It is our hope that the steps we discussed in our meeting will contribute to such a resolution. We wish to get them down here and urge your immediate attention to them.

1. The agendas of all parish council meetings will be prepared by the President, Chairman and Secretary, coming together in person at a convenient time prior to the council meetings.
2. Open parish council meetings will be discontinued immediately, and the parish will be so informed. Any member wishing to be heard by the council on a particular subject is free to communicate with the chairman or president to make such an arrangement, if in their judgment it should be allowed.

July 21, 1975

3. All mail sent to the parish will be opened by the pastor who will as expeditiously as possible see to it that appropriate persons receive what mail is intended for them and their committees. The chairman is to be apprised promptly of all correspondence of Council interest or requiring Council attention or action.
4. The Council is to invite the Armanian School committee to a joint meeting at the earliest convenient moment.
5. With regard to new members, they are not to be treated in any way differently from any other members. If in the Council's judgment certain information is required, it must be required of all members. The fifth paragraph of your membership chairman's letter to new parishioners cannot be regarded as operative. Nor can the fourth question of the questionnaire.

Mr. Antreassian will continue to be our liaison with your parish; it is our hope that he will be able to help to ease existing misunderstandings. Please see that he is invited to all meetings; he will try to attend as many as possible. We have also asked him to meet with the treasurer and pastor to examine all the record-keeping methods. As noted at the meeting, he will prepare a membership form that will embrace all the material you feel it is necessary to have, but will be in a form that can be sent to all members, with an appropriately covering letter. He will be in touch with you in the next few days.

If any serious matters arise, please communicate either with Mr. Antreassian or with ourselves directly.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

cc: Reverend Vertanes Kalayjian

October 29, 1975

The Reverend Vertanes Kalayjian
Pastor and President of Parish Council
St. Mary Armenian Church
1184 Ocean Avenue
Elberon, New Jersey 07740

Dear Father Vertanes:

At its meeting of October 14, 1975, the Diocesan Council gave due consideration to the difficulties existing in the Elberon Parish of the St. Mary Armenian Church, having before it information and knowledge derived from:

1. Conferences of the Primate and Diocesan Council Chairman with the Pastor and Parish Council Chairman.
2. Various reports submitted by representatives of the Diocesan Council.
3. Other reports, letters and petitions directed to the Diocesan Council.
4. A meeting, held on October 14, 1975, of the Primate, Diocesan Council, Pastor and Parish Council.

The decision of the Primate and the Diocesan Council, with regard to the St. Mary Armenian Church of Elberon, New Jersey, to be in force until further notification in writing by the Primate and the Diocesan Council, is as follows:

1. The convening of the Parish Assembly is hereby suspended until further notification.
2. The Pastor of the Church shall continue to carry out his customary duties, and shall receive his salary and other monetary benefits as under present policy in effect until such time as he may be reassigned by the Primate, which is under advisement at the present time.

3. The present Parish Council members are hereby removed from office. The present Chairman, Recording Secretary and Treasurer of the Parish Council, together with the Pastor as President, are directed to carry on the affairs of the Parish and function as a temporary committee under appointment of the Primate and the Diocesan Council; all decisions taken by this temporary committee shall be subject to the approval and ratification of the Primate and the Diocesan Council. The minutes of the temporary committee's meetings must be submitted promptly to the Primate.
4. All committees previously appointed by the Parish Council shall cease to function.
5. The Pastor and the temporary committee shall be charged with running the affairs of the Parish in an orderly fashion and on an interim basis.
6. The Diocesan Delegate shall continue in office.

It is the intent of the Primate and the Diocesan Council that the Elberon Parish shall continue to be functional and that its affairs be conducted without interruption for the best interests of its parishioners and the Armenian Church of America. The Primate and the Diocesan Council are cognizant of the difficult task ahead for all concerned, but feel that with proper communication and cooperation the needs of the Parish will be met until such time as the Parish is again able to direct its own affairs.

Any person acting contrary to the intent of this decision will be dismissed by the Primate and the Diocesan Council, our expectation being that all efforts shall be in the best interests of the Church and the Diocese.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

cc. Chairman, Parish Council
Mr. Barkev Eljan

November 18, 1975

Mr. John Chakamian
5 Ned Court
Middletown, New Jersey 07748

Dear Mr. Chakamian:

For some time the Diocesan Council has been concerned with the difficulties that have unfortunately beset the St. Mary Parish of Elberon, New Jersey. We have looked into the matter from a variety of vantage points, seeking a way to restore the parish to the harmony it once enjoyed.

After long and patient consideration, the Diocesan Council determined that the only practical solution lay in the prompt change of parish leadership, and its meeting of November 11 decided to suspend the parish council and make arrangements for the reassignment of the pastor, and follow this with the appointment of a new parish council to conduct the affairs of the parish for an indefinite period, responsible to the Primate and the Diocesan Council. The appointed parish council will continue in office until the Diocesan Council feels assured that the parish can again manage its own affairs, at which time a parish assembly will be convened and parish administration will be restored to customary procedures.

It is our most earnest hope that you will accept appointment as a member of this interim parish council of the St. Mary Church in Elberon.

We need not stress how important we regard this appointment. A great deal will depend on the wisdom, devotion and cooperative spirit this new leadership can bring to bear on the conduct of parish affairs.

We urge you to accept this important assignment. Please give it your most thoughtful consideration, and write to us at your earliest convenience. We will look forward to receiving written notice from you before November 30.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

This document has been prepared by a few individuals present today.

To bring you up to date, from 1963 to 1967, St. Mary's did not have a Parish Council. The people of Asbury Park had left the Church after a violent disagreement with Hekimian, who then had taken charge of the Church and ran it without the assistance of a Parish Council.

In 1967, the people got together again, took charge of the church, and for seven years worked very hard, and here is what they accomplished.

1. They increased the church membership from 26 to 142 members.
2. They installed a central heating system at a cost of \$3500 which made it possible to hold religious services every Sunday all year around, instead of two months in the Summer.
3. They organized a very active and efficient Women's Guild, which helped the progress of the church both financially and culturally.
4. Despite some opposition, they successfully started a Sunday School which at one time had as many as 35 students.
5. They published a church paper, ten times each year, and distributed it to every Armenian in the Monmouth and Ocean Counties.
6. They were able to obtain the services of a resident Priest, who for three years now has been with our church, and the community never had a moment of financial difficulty for the added expense.
7. They established an Armenian Language School with an enrollment of 38 students, which was an instant success, and nearly everyone agreed that it was the most successful project ever undertaken by this community.

All these have been accomplished with the active participation of the Pastor and large number of members and friends of the Church.

But beginning in July, 1974, things changed radically. This is the date when Mr. Elian became interested in the church. He had been a

summer resident of this area for many years, perhaps ten or more years, but not until 1973 did he show any interest in the Church. At this time he said he wanted to join because "there was so much congeniality, and it was like a family full of Christian Spirit". But a year or so after he had joined, his attitude changed completely. The following are some of the things he was responsible for in a very short period of time:

A. In less than one year, he circulated two petitions, thus creating a deep division, and causing a turmoil with the church members. The first was against a unanimous decision of the Parish Council for a fund raising project. The second was for the dismissal of the Pastor. Mr. Vincent Karakashian called the Pastor and told him that "after talking to leaders of this community, I give you 24 hours to resign, and if you do, we will give you 3 months' severance pay." Who instructed Mr. Karakashian to make this call? The Parish Council knew nothing about it. Mr. Karakashian did not have the official capacity to offer severance pay to anyone. There is, therefore, no doubt in anyone's mind that the call was made with the knowledge and instigation of Mr. Elian. If this was not done with the approval and knowledge of Mr. Elian, why then was there no disciplinary action taken against Mr. Karakashian? Instead, he was bestowed with additional and sensitive responsibilities.

B. Mr. Elian threatened to take legal action against a member of the Parish Council, who had disagreed with him on a very trivial matter at one of the Parish Council meetings. This "legal action gimmick" comes up quite often. It is, of course, intended to frighten people who disagree with him.

C. He was elected a member of the Parish Council on the battle cry of "The Tashnags are coming". Everything he has done so far is reminiscent of the infamous McCarthy days. If one objects to his Quixotic way of dealing with problems, he is immediately labeled a "Card carrying Tashnag". On his 'black list', he has numerous names, such as Der Hyre and Yeretzgin Kalayjian, Tutunjians, Serabians, Pooiskians, Chakamians, etc. Many of them are so innocent that they still think that Tashnag is nothing but a musical instrument.

D. Mr. Elian assumed his membership dues were paid through his annual contributions to the church, but refused to render the same courtesy to other members by excluding them from the Annual Assembly, namely, Mr. & Mrs. Jean Avedikian, Mrs. R. Sabonjian, Mr. & Mrs. Zohrab Ghazarian, etc. Double Standards!

E. The Parish Council has deliberately excluded experienced members of the Parish from committee assignments, as a result, two people hold more than 8 responsibilities and chairmanships. Why? Because he knows very well that they will not be sub-servient to his wishes. But there is one easy solution. Mr. V. Karakashian, for his own personal reasons, has accepted the following committee assignments:

- Chairman of Membership Committee
- " " Auditing Committee
- " " Sunday School
- " " Armenian School
- " " Finance Committee (he has since been replaced,

due to a conflict of interests.), and very likely chairman of the Youth Group. He was appointed to these committees despite the fact that his knowledge of this community is very limited. He knows nothing about the Armenian Church nor language. On the other hand, he has been very successful in offending and antagonizing old and new members, the parents of the Armenian School.

Membership questionnaires were sent out with a dual set of cover letters. One for members of "supposedly" questionable backgrounds, ('undesirable' for membership), and the other to the remainder of the members, against the explicit directive from the Primate, and without prior consultation with the Pastor.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Elian's outright refusal to accept and attend a meeting requested for by the Armenian Cultural Association, for the express purpose of ironing out any differences and misunderstandings. He used as his excuse the fact that such a meeting was 'illegal'.

Members have been instructed not to donate monies to the church, in order to create insufficient funds, so as not to be able to afford Der Hyre's stipend.

In their campaign against the Church and Der Hyre, they have repeatedly intimidated members with the statement "Der Hyre is here today, gone tomorrow, so why side with Der Hyre".

We have members who had signed the petition against Der Hyre, and after learning the true facts, they have been making every effort to amend their mistake.

The situation has gotten so that members of the church are asking for special time at the Parish Council meetings to express their outrage and grievances, directed against the behavior of the Parish Council.

As Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. Elian has encouraged the irresponsible behavior of Mr. Karakashian, who

- has threatened Der Hyre
- has insulted dues paying members
- has consistently shown disrespect during Badarak

Mr. Elian has disseminated dissention by his inflamatory statements during A.G.B.U. meetings, and other places.

He has broken all communications and normal relationship that existed between Parish Council and Pastor, and former members of the Parish Council.

He has repeatedly made references to 'saving' the Church, which supposed-ly was going down the drain, thus insulting the intelligence and the good record of previous administrations.

The Armenian School

The immediate success of the Armenian School apparently made some people very unhappy, and with the approval of Mr. Elian, a vicious campaign was started against the school. Here are some of the false accusations spread in the community:

- a. The school is a foot hold for the Tashnags to take over the Church.
- b. The school is not under the jurisdiction of the church (if this is so, now that the school is out of the church, why are they so anxious to take possession of the school funds?)
- c. The church is supporting the school by providing heat and itilities. Therefore, 60% of the school funds must go to the church. (In which communities does the school support the Church?)
- d. The school committee is not using books recommended by the Diocese. (The school has purchased \$150.00 worth of books recommended by the Diocese.)

There were also several cases where little children were threatened with bodily harm by ardent supporters of Mr. Elian, because they had accidentally dropped pieces of paper on the floor in connection with their school work.

Because of the constant harrassment to which the children and the teachers were subjected, the parents were forced to organize into a Parent Teachers group, and reluctantly and painfully move out of the church into a more hospitable and congenial surrounding.

In conclusion, we must add that Mr. Elian neither intellectually nor temperamentally is capable of taking a leading role in our community. He lacks the ability for health and constructive compromise. Democracy is not just the rule of numbers. There is a good deal of give and take in all community work. We have now lost the school. The next defection will be a large number of church members. We know this to be true. Several members have already defected from the church. Another year of Mr. Elian's rule, and there will be nothing left of the St. Mary's Church for the Tashnags to take over.

In addition to leadership deficiencies, we also have community wide contributing factors to this problem.

1. The Parish is left with a permanent handicap in Deacon L. Hekimian. His presence on the property causes many of our parishioners not to have private consultation in the church with our pastor because of his constant interference. He has never allowed, even though the pastor has requested, younger servers on the Altar in the capacity of deacon, assistant deacon, etc., and this community is blessed with a number of very capable young people, one of whom has left our church. Mr. ^{Hek}Kehimian, under a false facade, has led many of our members to believe that he is a clergyman, and not a server in the church. This particular issue has been brought to the attention of the Diocesan Council and the Primate several years ago, and the parish was forced to accept a compromise, moving him from one building to the apartment he now has above the church.

2. We have several qualified people to lead and participate in St. Mary's Choir, but because of our lay leadership, we have been strapped with a non-resident of our community to lead our choir. He has flagrantly shown total disrespect and disregard for our pastor, not only outside the church, but during Diving Liturgy, by doing his own thing at his own convenience, which has made our services less than desirable. In addition, we have been forced to live with his having his residence on the property along with Mr. Hekimian.

3. The A.G.B.U. of Asbury Park has been used as a vehicle by the Chairlady. Mrs. V. Zadigian has a disrupting influence on the progress of our church. The A.B.G.U. has been very instrumental in polarizing issues which do not fall within the areas of responsibility of the organization.

4. The Knights of Vartan have also been competing with the church in areas which border politically and morally against what our pastor has strived to attain. Mr. & Mrs. H. Alexanian have been very instrumental in using the Knights of Vartan as a vehicle.

5. The monthly Publication, known as the HYE GANTEGH has been used as the personal football of Mrs. Virginia Dedeian and Mrs. Araxy Gokberk as a tool to make removal of Fr. V. Kalayjian easier. We find the publication now being made less than desirable, based on the previous standards set by Mr. Armen Bulbulian.

6. During the course of the year, over the objections of many of the church members, the Parish Council meetings were open to the parish members which subsequently was stopped by the Primate's Directive. A number of the members were totally appalled at the complete disrespect shown to the Primate's representative, Fr. Kalayjian, during these meetings.

omit Specific mention of Mrs. Ann Harootunian, Mrs. Araxy Gokberk, Mr. Sarkis Dadurian, Mr. Alex Mamourian, who refer to our clergy as 'ministers'. This permeates their lack of knowledge of the Armenian Church structure. Many of the members found the total disrespect by these Parish Council members as intolerable.

More serious perhaps, is the overall atmosphere prevailing in our Parish. By the total polarization and segments of our community, our members not only have to defend their "Armenianism", but have to show what sector of the political spectrum they do or don't represent.

December 29, 1975

Mr. John Chakamian
Chairman, Parish Council
St. Mary Armenian Church
1184 Ocean Avenue
Elberon, New Jersey 07740

Dear Mr. Chakamian:

We hereby confirm your appointment, made by the Primate and the Diocesan Council, as chairman of the interim parish council of the St. Mary Armenian Church of Elberon, New Jersey, and the appointments as well of the following members of the council:

Barkev Elian
Mary Hachigian
John Kaiderian
Zareh Manigian
John Pehlivanian
Mary Ann Tutunjian

The Diocesan Council will in due course make further appointments to bring the membership of the parish council to a total of nine or eleven.

Your council will assume full responsibility for the administration of the parish as of January 1, 1976. The three-person committee of Barkev Elian, Araxy Gokberk and Sarkis Dadourian have been notified of the appointment of the new council, and have been instructed to turn over all records and funds immediately after the first of the year.

As previously announced, the terms of all existing committees in the parish have been terminated. It will be one of your council's first duties to organize new committees for all the functions of the parish. Members who have served on various committees can of course be reappointed.

Another immediate duty will be the preparation of a program and budget for 1976 which will serve as the basis of your activity, following approval of the Diocesan Council.

We have already been in touch with Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian, who is aware of the decision of the Diocesan Council that he will be assigned to another parish at the earliest opportunity.

We pray that God will guide your efforts in the administration of the St. Mary Parish, and the parishioners will join together in a harmonious church community life.

As soon as circumstances allow, permission will be granted to convene a parish assembly. In the interim, there will be no voting membership as such, only worshipping members who should feel the obligation to support the church, through their services and their donations.

You may publish and circulate this letter as formal notification to all parishioners.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

cc. Mr. Barkev Elia
Ms. Mary Hachigian
Mr. John Kaiserian
Mr. Zareh Manigian
Mr. John Pehlivanian
Ms. Mary Ann Tutunjian

201 Nov 842 - 5616
253-4000

5 Ned Court
Middletown, N. J. 07748
August 22, 1975

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate
Armenian Diocese
630 Second Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10016

Dear Surpazan Hyre,

Enclosed you will find a petition which is self-explanatory, and signed by more than 150 members who live in the Monmouth and Ocean County area served by the St. Mary's Armenian Church, located at 1184 Ocean Avenue, Elberon, N. J.

The asterisks shown explain signatures by Armenians living in this area, committed to the work of this church and its pastor. However, due to personal reasons, they have not yet become dues-paying members, but are deeply concerned about the deleterious situation of this Parish.

Approximately ninety two (92) signatures depict members who are dues-paying and active in support of all arms of our community center, St. Mary's.

The total of 153 signatures is interpreted as an endorsement of the leadership shown by Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian in his thirty (30) month stay in this Parish, with the sincere hopes of his continuation.

This community for the last six (6) years has shown a tremendous amount of unselfishness to express a very homogenous posture, and reflects to itself a united Christian Armenian feeling. However, events that have happened in the past six to nine months, that you are totally aware of, have caused undue pressure and dissention in this community, and have created the necessity for the enclosed petition and signatures.

Respectfully yours,


JOHN CHAKAMIAN

jc
c.c. Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian

p.s. Also enclosed is a copy of the Membership Committee's letter and questionnaire which you had personally requested from me.

WHEREAS the Armenian Community in Monmouth and Ocean Counties has recently experienced dynamic growth.

WHEREAS the area forms the core and nucleus of St. Mary's Armenian Church.

WHEREAS St. Mary's is the only Armenian Apostolic Church in Monmouth and Ocean Counties.

WHEREAS it is reasonable to expect the continued growth of the Armenian Community:

Membership grew from 30 members in 1968 to 120 in 1974;
The budget of \$4,000 in 1968 increased to \$20,000 in 1974, and supported energetically by the members in this community in both cases, and more members are still being solicited by the Parish Priest.

WHEREAS said Armenian Community is aware of the necessity of a vigorous Parish Priest to provide Spiritual Guidance, and supervision in the instruction of our Armenian Heritage.

WHEREAS the community has reflected a very homogenous posture in the Armenian Cultural Education; , and its customs and traditions.

WHEREAS said Armenian Community has supported a fully active and vital Pastor for the preceding three (3) years.

WHEREAS under the guidance and direction of said full-time Pastor, our Parish has accomplished and maintained the following organizations with positive purposes:

- Armenian School
- Choir
- Church School
- Women's Guild
- Youth Group.

WHEREAS the rapid growing influx of Armenians into the area has brought in an increased number of youth, ranging in age from new-born, to young adult, thus necessitating and making imperative the continued presence of a resident Pastor for the Spiritual, Cultural, and Educational guidance of the youth.

WHEREAS, we the undersigned, are mindful of the necessity for the retention of a full-time Parish Priest, pledge our continued support for that end.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the undersigned commit to support spiritually, financially, emotionally, and with Christian spirit, the endeavors of the resident Pastor for the continued success of the St. Mary's Armenian Church Community.

December 13, 1975

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate of the Armenian Church of America
630 - 2nd Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Your Eminence:

I am responding to your letter of Oct. 29, 1975, addressed to our Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian, copies of which were sent to all parishioners.

I am writing this letter to you as a PLEA for your reconsideration that our Der Hayr remain here in Elberon, N.J. I represent more than 150 Armenians in this community who a few months ago signed a petition FOR our Der Hayr to remain here and that we are behind him one hundred percent. A great injustice is being done here not only to a human being but of a person, who like yourself, believes in God and the Armenian Church and its people.

Although we have remained a SILENT MAJORITY, we are not violent; but it's obvious that can no longer hold. We want you to hear us out. This OTHER GROUP which I will refer to from here on as the HATE GROUP have seemed to over power the Diocesan Council with false statements about our Der Hayr. This HATE GROUP do not appear as Christians, nor are they true Armenians because when they come to church it is not for a religious purpose but as a place where they take out all their frustrations; they are ignorant, biased and very very jealous of our Der Hayr and his wife. They are not concerned at all with Church, only in themselves and how much noise they can make.

The truth is that there are 4 or 5 families here that are extremely jealous of our Der Hayr and his wife because they are nice to everybody. The majority of us looked up to Der Hayr and his wife because they did so much to bring about a unified Armenian community. We were one big family. All of us looked forward to going to church. It was a beautiful Armenian Community and I, for one, was very proud to be a part of it. I am married to a non-Armenian and my children would first go to my husband's church and Sunday School, and right after that we would go to the Armenian church and my children would go to Armenian Sunday School. Many of us did that. But this HATE GROUP were so violent in their workings that many of these families are afraid to come to our church. I am not afraid and no one can chase me out because I am for our Der Hayr.

Tell me - doesn't every Armenian born on this earth have a right to enter and go to an Armenian church. What priest would throw them out. That's what this HATE GROUP wants. They only want their handful of bigots. They want our church for their own special haven in a selfish way. I ask you? does every Armenian have the right to go to his own Armenian Church? This HATE GROUP will, of course, deny this until their dying breath, but that's what it is.

As you can see from my enclosure, I and another woman attending a meeting last Sunday which was presided by Mr. Barkave Elian. But, what I want you to know is that one part listed in the letter is not true. The initial meeting was to have been between Mr. Elian and our Der Hayr and each was to have 2 or 3 representatives. Mr. Elian objected to our Der Hayr's presence vehemently. But in our letter we put it nicely that Der Hayr Kalayjian was not invited to attend. The rest of this letter is quite obvious. We, who were invited, said nothing; we only listened to all the false

accusations. One thing I did ask Mr. Elian was that how ~~he~~ feels about the majority of the people wanting our Der Hayr; his reply was that whatever the majority wants he will go along with. Then one other person said that the majority must be paid dues members. Now, these people are making up their own laws. I beg you, your Eminence, please help us to straighten these people out. They make up their own rules and laws; they are beyond reach. I cannot rest my soul knowing that an innocent person is being nanged by his own kind.

As an example, of how violent this HATE GROUP is - also last Sunday in church Mr. Vincent Karakashian approached me and ask to me read a petition which he put up on the bulletin board, and sign it...just like that. He said it is to retain the present Parish Council. I answered him and said that I could not see a need for that (it didn't make sense). But in his mind it was the past Parish Council. I read the petition addressed to you and I couldn't believe that anyone could say the things that were stated in that petition. I said I would not sign it. Five minutes later, an elderly man was crying because Vincent Karakashian forced him to sign the petition telling him it was nothing and when this man asked another person what it ~~it~~^{was}, the poor ~~was~~^{was} was crying because he loves our Der Hayr - but the truth was that Mr. Karakashian would not take his name off the list of signatures.

I again implore you, your Eminence, please help us. Our church is not a place of peace. In many of our Der Hayr's sermons, he has literally begged everyone in church to please forget all these differences and realize why we are coming to Church. It is a pathetic tning to hear a priest begging his own people to please have Jesus Christ in your hearts and not HATE. And while our Der Hayr is giving his sermon a member of this HATE GROUP is mocking ~~him~~. This is not the Armenian way of religion. I don't know who else to turn to. I beg you to help us out. All of us are praying so hard for some kind of reconciliation. I think what might be done is to have a very high authority come to our church and personally tell these attackers that our priest should be respected, our church should be respected and our Armenian people should be respected no matter what their political views may be.

God Bless you and help you. I'm sure you will not remember me, but many years ago, I was in Cleveland and you had helped me and my friends form a choir. We had no church at that time, which was unfortunate for us. But you helped us so much to be together. I will never forget you for that. Ner will my friends in Cleveland. Now most of us are in our late 40's and we still remember how helpful you were to us. It is something which can never be erased. I now live here and have been an active Armenian in this community. Our Der Hayr and his wife have been wonderful to all of us. I pray that you will in some way show us the light and help all of us.

God Bless You,

Mrs. Mary (Vartanian) Isorra

December 8, 1975

We, the undersigned, attended a meeting at the Church School Hall at St. Mary's, Elberon, New Jersey, on Sunday, December 7, 1975, to hear clarifications of various accusations that have been made by a few official members of the Church Community.

In attendance were 10 church members, 3 of whom were former Parish Council members. Mr. Barkave Elian presided over the meeting and presented the various accusations. Our meeting commenced at 1:30 p.m. and lasted until 3:30 p.m.

Since Der Hayr Kalayjian was not invited to attend this meeting, we, the undersigned, decided to act as a Fact Finding Committee and with 14 church members as witnesses, we visited Der Hayr Kalayjian the same night and afforded Der Hayr Kalayjian an opportunity to answer these various accusations. Der Hayr Kalayjian presented us with written proof and detailed explanations. We, therefore, found that these various accusations were unfounded and without substance.

It is the expressed opinion of all those who attended this meeting that Der Hayr Kalayjian has been victimized by malicious gossip and there is no basis for these various accusations.

We also feel that an apology is in order to Der Hayr Kalayjian and we implore all members of our church to become aware of the disharmony these rumors have caused throughout our Community.

/s/ Mary Gorra

/s/ Gladys Semon

March 8, 1976

Mr. Michael L. Gorra
904 Clairidge Drive
Spring Lake Heights,
New Jersey 07762

Dear Mr. Gorra:

I have received your letter of March 3, signed by you on behalf of yourself and five others who seek the reinstatement of Father Vertanes as pastor of St. Mary's of Elberon, New Jersey. The letter also indicates that these six were the representatives of 60 others who share this view.

The letter will be presented to the Diocesan Council and the Primate for whatever consideration they deem appropriate.

I wanted to respond to your letter personally, however, particularly since I have received phone calls also with regard to action contemplated as a result of the meeting you refer to.

I have been named administrator of the St. Mary Parish, and consider my first responsibility the re-establishment of the church in Elberon as a meaningful place of worship for all Armenians in the community. I thought that that was what all our people in the area wanted, but I have perhaps been a bit naive. Most of the comments addressed to me derive from support for or opposition to the priest or other individuals, with very little indeed said about the church itself.

I am told that if the priest is removed, there will be peace; I am also told that if the priest is reinstated, there will be peace. I am further told the same with respect to other

individuals. In short, everything has been grossly personalized, and individuals have become overridingly important, in all of which we seem to be neglecting God, in whose name the Church exists.

I am still waiting for someone to come to me, or phone me, or write to me and say that there has been a lot of trouble, and ask what can be done to strengthen the church itself, to bring it love and derive from it the deep spiritual experience that will make us better persons.

We are working desperately toward this end, and we need all the help we can get. Anyone who loves the Church must help this effort.

In situations like the present one, it is easy to confuse our own personal predilections with the best interests of the church. Many people have been hurt over the past months, and the resentments these cause often tend to dominate judgment. It has to be decided by everyone whether we hold the Church first in our hearts, or whether we will subordinate it to hurt we have felt, for which we will seek redress at any cost.

I offer these thoughts to you in all earnestness in the firm belief that our main task is to see that our Church returns to its place as the center of our spiritual and community lives, and not to set conditions or demand retribution.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Antreassian

vb

ASBURY PARK PRESS

WJLK RADIO

774-7000
PRESS PLAZA
ASBURY PARK, N. J.
07712

MARCIA LEAHY
STAFF WRITER

F. Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian

April 7, 1976

Diocese of the Armenian Church In America
New York, N.Y.

Surpazan Hayr,

I understand that Father Vertanes Kalayjian has been asked to appear before the Diocesan Council to explain why he was quoted in a story written by me which appeared in the Asbury Park Press on March 12. Because of the complex nature of the story, the time I put into it, and the sensitive issues involved, I have chosen to write to you so that you may know exactly how the story came into being.

Michael Gorra first called me on Monday, March 8, to tell me about a protest which some Armenian church members were planning for the following Sunday. I asked Mr. Gorra for a written press release and explanation of the situation, which he furnished the following day. Late that afternoon (Tuesday), I began working on the story.

I contacted Father Kalayjian for the first time that afternoon. He clarified some misconceptions I had and supplemented Mr. Gorra's information where he felt it was necessary. At the end of our conversation, he asked that he not be quoted, explaining that he did not wish to become involved in the dispute publicly.

At no time during this or subsequent conversations did Father Kalayjian express bitterness or make accusations against anyone. He remained impartial and fair and patiently answered my innumerable questions about the Armenian church.

Also on Tuesday I contacted John Chakamian, who asked not to be quoted until I had spoken to Jack Antreassian, whom all parties considered to be a neutral and impartial source. I tried as far as possible to confine my story to the information he supplied, and relied on other sources only where absolutely necessary.

I spoke to Mr. Antreassian Tuesday night, Wednesday afternoon and night, and Thursday afternoon. His information formed the backbone of my story. I also spoke to Barkave Elian, who asked not to be quoted as well.

I found all parties to be patient, helpful, and cooperative.

I finished the story late Thursday evening and submitted it to another copy editor for his comments and suggestions. I felt I needed someone with a fresh outlook to read the story before it went into print. He made several changes, which we discussed, and I left at midnight confident that the story was accurate.

Please understand that I spent the better part of three days - nearly 20 hours - researching this story in an effort to understand it thoroughly and write it accurately. It was my intention to present a clear and balanced account of the situation at St. Mary's.

I did not purposely betray Father Kalayjian's request not to be quoted. The Press has a policy of identifying sources, and for that reason, I quoted Mr. Antreassian heavily.

In only four places were comments attributed to Father Kalayjian. One instance was clearly non-controversial, concerning the number of members of the church. He was obviously the most reliable source for that information.

In three paragraphs, Father Kalayjian was quoted because I had to depend on him to clarify some minor problems, since I could not contact Mr. Antreassian that night and I was fast approaching my deadline. The comments could just as easily have been attributed to Mr. Antreassian, since Father Kalayjian merely made certain that I understood what Mr. Antreassian had already told me.

I am sure that the editor who helped me felt he was simply adhering to Press policy and that he was doing the job he was asked to do.

I have purposely not written to you on letterhead stationery because I consider this to be a personal as well as professional matter. I am a committed Christian and I loved the Lord Jesus Christ and depend on Him to enable me to do my job as well as I can. I prayed about this story more than any other one that I can remember, since I knew that any inaccuracies would result in the very thing I was attempting to avoid.

I have the utmost respect for each person I talked with while working on this story, and I have prayed for them and the problem at St. Mary's. I pray now that the situation will be cleared up quickly and fairly so that the church may become reunited in its worship and service of the Lord.

I am sorry if I have caused any additional problems. I trust that this letter will set the record straight on Father Kalayjian's involvement in the story.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

In Christ's Service,
Mrs. Marcia E. Leahy
Press Religion Editor

April 2, 1976

The Reverend Vertanes Kalayjian
315 8th Avenue
Belmar, New Jersey 07719

Dear Father Vertanes:

The article about the Elberon parish difficulties which appeared in the March 12 issue of the Asbury Park Press caused the Diocesan Council considerable concern at the last session. Some of the comments attributed to you were distressing in the reflection they cast on our leadership and the misleading impression they appeared to leave.

The Council understands, of course, that quotes are not always accurate, and that confusing impressions are sometimes conveyed even with the best of intentions on all sides.

The Council would like to know if the statements attributed to you were indeed made by you as attributed, particularly the statement:

"Members of the Diocese are in general members of the Ram-gavar party, which has reluctantly accepted the fact that Etchmiadzin is in Russia and thus retained it as their Holy See, Father Kalayjian explained."

The Council will meet next on April 9.

We would like very much to have your response before that date.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

Motion: That a letter be sent to The Reverend Vertanes Kalayjian indicating that the Diocesan Council is aware of a particular article in the Asbury Park Press on the date of Friday, March 12, 1976 in which article certain statements have been attributed to him regarding the Armenian Diocese and with which the Diocesan Council does not agree. A request should be made to Father Vertanes that he indicate in writing to the Diocesan Council any and all statements attributed to him were not in fact his statements or his thoughts and particularly the statement "that members of the Diocese are in general members of the Ramgavar Party, which has reluctantly accepted the fact that Etchmiadzin is Russia and thus retained it as their Holy See, Father Kalayjian explained." The letter should be submitted prior to April 2, 1976.

DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA, 630 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016 212 686-0710

ARCHBISHOP TORKOM MANOOGIAN, PRIMATE

January 19, 1976

Mrs. Araxy Gokberk
207 Sixth Avenue
Asbury Park, New Jersey 07712

Dear Mrs. Gokberk:

Re: Elberon Parish
St. Mary Armenian Church of Elberon

This letter is being directed to Mr. Barkev Elian, Mrs. Araxy Gokberk, and Mr. Sarkis Dadourian, as appointed interim committee Chairman, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively, under letter dated October 29, 1975.

In the context of this letter, reference will be made to the elected Parish Council consisting of:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Barkev Elian | 6. Armen Bulbulian |
| 2. Anna Haroutunian | 7. Haroot Karakashian |
| 3. Araxy Gokberk | 8. John Kaiserian |
| 4. George Kazanjian | 9. Sarkis Dadourian |
| 5. Hagop Zadigian | |

and further reference will be made to the "interim appointed committee" consisting of:

1. Barkev Elian
2. Araxy Gokberk
3. Sarkis Dadourian

and further reference will be made to the "interim appointed Parish Council" consisting of:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. John Chakamian | 5. Zareh Manigian |
| 2. Barkev Elian | 6. John Pehlivanian |
| 3. Mary Hachigian | 7. Mary Ann Tutunjian |
| 4. John Kaiserian | |

This letter will refer to and incorporate by reference the following:

1. Conferences of the Primate and the Diocesan Council Chairman with the Pastor and Parish Council Chairman.
2. Various reports submitted by representatives of the Diocesan Council.
3. Various reports, letters, and petitions directed to the Diocesan Council.
4. Meeting of October 14, 1975 of the Primate, Diocesan Council, Pastor, and Parish Council at which various parishioners of the Elberon parish were permitted to attend.
5. Letter of October 29, 1975, directed to Reverend Vertanes Kalayjian, Pastor and President of the Parish Council, St. Mary Armenian Church, by Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Armenian Church of America.
6. Letter of December 29, 1975, directed to Mr. John Chakamian by Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Armenian Church of America.
7. Letter of December 23, 1975, directed to Mr. Barkev Elian, Mrs. Araxy Gokberk and Mr. Sarkis Dadourian.
8. Meeting at St. Mary Armenian Church, Elberon, New Jersey, on January 8, 1976, attended by John K. Najarian, Chairman of the Diocesan Council, Reverend Dajad Davidian, Vice Chairman of the Diocesan Council, and Crosby Goshgarian, member of the Diocesan Council, and the elected Parish Council and the interim appointed Parish Council.
9. By-laws of the Armenian Church of America, precedents, intent and tenor thereof.

Considering the Primate and Diocesan Council have suspended the elected Parish Council and appointed the above-mentioned interim committee; and considering an interim appointed Parish Council was appointed by the Primate and the Diocesan Council and considering that, at the joint meeting of January 8, 1976, each of you was polled by the Diocesan Council Chairman, and you:

1. Refused to acknowledge the interim appointed Parish Council.
2. Refused to honor the directions of the Primate and the Diocesan Council.
3. Refused to surrender all keys, books, records, bank accounts and funds of the St. Mary Armenian Church to the interim appointed Parish Council.

4. Refused to recognize the authority of the Primate and the Diocesan Council in all matters affecting the St. Mary Armenian Church which is an integral part of the Armenian Diocese of America headed by the Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and the duly elected Diocesan Council of the Armenian Diocese of America.
5. Insisted that the elected officers of the St. Mary Armenian Church do not have to recognize the Primate and the Diocesan Council except in ecclesiastical and religious matters.

Each of you is hereby advised to surrender in an orderly fashion all keys, books, records, bank accounts, cash and any and all personal property and real estate of St. Mary Armenian Church to the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America on or before January 30, 1976. All property referred to herein will be surrendered to us as the Primate, at the Diocesan Office, 630 Second Avenue, New York, New York 10016.

Each of you in failing to comply with this direction will be personally held liable for your non-compliance.

This letter warrants your immediate attention.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

BARKAVE G. ELIAN
COUNSELLOR AT LAW
5810 BERGENLINE AVE.
WEST NEW YORK, N. J. 07093

865-2255
AREA CODE 201

April 23, 1976

His Eminence
Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate
and Members of the Diocesan Council
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Your Eminence and Gentlemen:

In a Circular dated March 25, 1976 [copy of which is attached hereto for your convenience], addressed to all Parishioners of St. Mary Armenian Church, Elberon, New Jersey, the Interim Governing Committee over the signature of Jack Antreassian, Administrator, advised that a special Parish assembly will be convened on June 13, 1976 for the purpose, inter alia, of electing a Parish Council to administer the Parish until January or February, 1977 and prescribed the conditions and procedures for such election. Said Circular indicated that anyone who qualified under the conditions of the accompanying membership form [copy of which is also attached] will be eligible to vote at said Meeting by completing and signing the form and submitting it to the Interim Governing Committee no later than May 17, 1976 with a minimum remittance of \$15.00 dues for 1976.

In a follow up Circular dated April 15, 1976 [copy of which is also attached], Mr. Antreassian gave certain explanations and enlarged upon the prior Circular and stated that "Any Member has the right to make formal objection to any procedure he or she judges to be contrary to the By-Laws" and "Any who feel they have valid objection may make their case by writing to the Primate and asking that their appeal be presented to the (Diocesan) assembly for consideration and decision." As one of those affected persons who feel they have valid objection to the proposed election and procedures and conditions outlined, I hereby register my formal objection and request that this objection be presented to the Diocesan Assembly for consideration and decision upon the following grounds:

1. I was one of five members elected on 2/16/75 to serve for a term of two years as a member of the Parish Council of St. Mary Armenian Church, Elberon, New Jersey.

Said election was ratified by the Primate and the Diocesan Council in accordance with Article 25 of the By-Laws, and therefore, have the right to continue to serve until January, 1977 and until their successors are duly elected and confirmed by the Primate and assume Office [Art. 28]. Subsequently, I was elected Chairman of the Parish Council and as such became ex-officio delegate to the Diocesan Assembly with the same privileges and rights as elected delegates [Art. 54]. The Primate and the Diocesan Council are responsible to the Diocesan Assembly which is the representative body of the Parishes [Art. 49]. The Primate and the Diocesan Council have no power to remove a delegate. Therefore, the removal of the Chairman of the Parish Council, thereby depriving this Parish of being represented by its duly elected officer at the fourth coming general assembly is unconstitutional. It is my firm belief that the assertion of such power, if carried to its logical conclusion, may lead the Diocesan Assembly, before long, to become subservient to and controlled by its Primate and Diocesan Council and result in the stifling of Democratic processes and the creation of a Dictatorship within our Church.

By letter dated October 29, 1975 addressed to Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian with a copy to me, the Parish Council members were removed from Office. When the power of removal by the Primate and the Diocesan Council was challenged, we were informed that the Parish Council was only suspended and subsequently an Interim Governing Committee was appointed by the Primate and the Diocesan Council to administer the Parish in place of its regularly elected Parish Council. A thorough reading of the By-Laws of the Armenian Church of America convinces me that no power to either "remove or suspend or appoint members of the Parish Council is vested in the Primate and/or the Diocesan Council and the removal or suspension of the Parish Council of St. Mary Armenian Church, Elberon, New Jersey and the appointment of any committee in its place is unconstitutional and violates the spirit and the letter of said By-Laws."

I, therefore, respectfully ask that this issue be brought before the forthcoming Diocesan assembly for action and decision.

2. I am also opposed to the planned Parish Assembly Meeting on June 13, 1976 for the following reasons:

1. The procedures and conditions outlined in the attached letters indicate that an applicant will be allowed to vote at said Meeting if his application is submitted on or before May 17, 1976 although he has not been a member for 6 months as required by Article 7.

2. Such Meeting is not being called in accordance with Article 13 by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

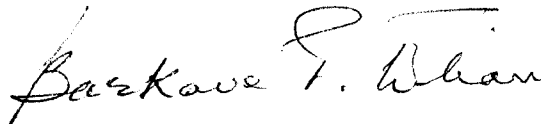
3. The panel of nominees for Parish Council membership is being prepared by the Interim Governing Committee instead of the nominating committee rightfully elected by the Parish Assembly at its last annual meeting.

4. The five members of the Parish Council whose term has not expired is being forced to submit to another election, at this time, instead of being allowed to continue to serve until their term expires and their successors are elected and assume office. [Article 25 and 28]

5. The planned Parish Assembly Meeting on June 13, 1976 is untimely and uncalled for, at this time, under existing conditions, as such a meeting is bound to accentuate the existing division and polarize the community still further. It is more prudent to defer such election to the Annual Parish Assembly in January, 1977 by which time old wounds would have a better chance to heal and the progress already made by the Interim Governing Committee in restoring the community to normal viability will not be completely lost.

I trust, therefore, that the Issue of this planned Meeting on June 13, 1976 will also be brought before the Diocesan Assembly for careful consideration and decision.

Respectfully yours,



BARKAVE G. ELIAN

BGE/rs

Enclosures

March 25, 1976

TO ALL PARISHIONERS OF THE ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH OF ELBERON, NEW JERSEY

The Primate and the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America have authorized the Interim Governing Committee to convene a Special Parish Assembly for the purpose of electing a Parish Council to administer the Parish until January or February 1977. Nominating and Auditing Committees will also be elected to serve the same period of time.

Anyone in the community who qualifies under the conditions of the accompanying Membership Form will be eligible to vote at the Special Parish Assembly by completing and signing the form, and submitting it with a minimum remittance of \$15.00 dues for 1976.

Such membership forms are mandatory and must be submitted to the Interim Governing Committee no later than May 17, 1976, for eligibility to vote at the Special Parish Assembly which will be convened on June 13, 1976.

The slates for the elections will be prepared by the Administrator and the Interim Governing Committee.


For eligibility to be a candidate for office, one must be a member in good standing for a minimum of one year. Any member who has neglected payment of dues for any year since having been enrolled, may reinstate his membership by remitting dues for at least the last two years that have been omitted, and in this way qualify to be a candidate.

The Interim Governing Committee will remain in charge of parish affairs until the council is elected in June and confirmed by the Diocesan Council. The Parish Council will submit minutes of its meetings to the Primate regularly.

The elected Parish Council will serve approximately seven months until an Annual Parish Assembly is convened next January or early February, at which new elections are to be held and all regular business of the parish considered, according to the Diocesan By-Laws. Eligibility to vote or stand for election at the Annual Parish Assembly will be determined by the provisions of the Diocesan By-Laws.

We repeat that only those who sign Membership Forms and remit a minimum of \$15.00 for 1976 dues no later than May 17, 1976, will be eligible to vote at the June 13 Assembly.

For the Interim Governing Committee


Jack Antreassian, Administrator

ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH OF ELBERON, NEW JERSEY

M E M B E R S H I P F O R M

I would like to be enrolled as a voting member of the St. Mary Armenian Church of Elberon, New Jersey, a parish under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

I am not a dues-paying or voting member of any other church.

I was baptized in and/or I am a communicant member of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

I am more than 18 years of age.

I have enclosed (or have previously paid) my dues for 1976 (minimum \$15.00).

Name _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

I wish to reinstate my membership for the years _____
by remitting past dues, which are enclosed.

Date

Signature

April 15, 1976

TO PARISHIONERS OF ST. MARY ARMENIAN CHURCH OF ELBERON, NEW JERSEY

We last wrote to you on March 25 outlining conditions and procedures of a Special Parish Assembly to be held in the parish on June 13. It may be useful to add some further thoughts on the subject.

Each membership enrollment must be on an individual basis, one to a person. However many individuals in a family may wish to become members, and meet the conditions of membership, each must fill out a separate form, which can be secured from the Church.

Explanation of "Communicant Member" referred to in Membership Form: Every member of the Armenian Church must be baptized. Baptism in some other churches is also recognized, in which case an Armenian priest may grant confirmation, and in the process admit him or her as a communicant member of the Armenian Church. Therefore communicant in this instance means baptism in another Church which has been formalized through confirmation in and acceptance by the Armenian Church.

The election and procedures outlined in our communication of March 25 were adopted and authorized by the Primate and the Diocesan Council. They are intended to serve the best interests of the Elberon parish with which they have been concerned for many months. The Special Parish Assembly is being convened in special circumstances to restore the parish to local leadership after months of virtual dissolution as a duly constituted parish. Any member has the right to make formal objection to any procedure he or she judges to be contrary to the by-laws. While this is logically done after the fact, we want to bring this right to everyone's attention now because the 74th Annual Diocesan Assembly is to be held on April 30-May 1, 1976. If a protest is deferred until after the election in June, it cannot be considered until 1977. And since the procedures have already been announced formally, any who feel they have valid objection may make their case by writing to the Primate and asking that their appeal be presented to the Assembly for consideration and decision.

We stress this because it is in the best interests of the parish to have all objections posed and acted upon as promptly as possible. It does no good to have the same questions and doubts expressed over and over again. Those who have objections should pose them through prescribed channels, and once acted upon, should allow them to be put to rest. The June 13 Parish Assembly must be an affirmative beginning for the Elberon parish, uncluttered by questions that should be and could be resolved before then.

The Armenian Church is for all our people. St. Mary's of Elberon is no exception. No one has the right, moral or legal, to tell anyone else that he is not wanted in the Church, that he is not welcome. There are prescribed ways to take action in the event anyone acts in a manner that is detrimental to the spirit and welfare of our Church and parish. We cannot allow the alienation of anyone seeking to pray and commune at the altar of our Holy Church. Anyone who comports himself in this manner offends the Holy Spirit of our Church, and will disqualify himself from the right to membership in our parish.


Jack Antreassian, Administrator

Action Committee For The Protection
of Rights of Members of The
Armenian Church, Inc.

July 27, 1976

55 Columbia Avenue
Long Branch, New Jersey 07740

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate,
and Members of the Diocesan Council
Armenian Diocese of North America
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10015

Dear Archbishop Manoogian and Council Members:

You will find enclosed a copy of the latest post card petition currently being circulated in the Elberon, N.J. church community.

We trust there is little doubt in your minds as to who the moving force is again behind this campaign.

Fr. Kalayjian continues to fuel the emotional fires in this community in his determination to again become priest of St. Mary's parish.

We would like to emphasize that as long as his physical presence looms as a dark cloud over this area, the much sought peace and harmony will never occur to this ravaged community.

While we know you are having difficulty in placing him, he continues to boast of his imminent return, in spite of your reassurances that the Diocesan Council will never gain allow his presence here.

Under our past experiences with the Diocese, we are sorry to say that we have little confidence in their decisions and therefore consider this matter with grave concern as long as this man pursues a course of active belligerence in defiance of your decision. Why does the Diocesan Council have so much difficulty in controlling this man?

Little more than a month has past since the June elections. We have evidence that Fr. Kalayjian actively campaigned for all the current Parish Council members in anticipation of this current ploy. It is further known that some of the Parish Council members openly picketed the Diocese recently on behalf of Fr. Kalayjian. Therefore we suggest that these efforts are being maneuvered under a joint conspiracy regardless of who is openly fronting this drive.

It is also a known fact that in order to inflate the petition

July 27, 1976

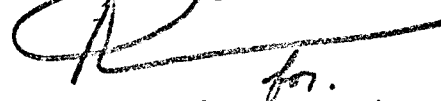
numbers in an attempt to distort and misrepresent the situation for your benefit, the petitions are being solicited from many individuals with absolutely no connection or interest in our Church, some of whom are known to be admitted Catholics and Seventh Day Adventists.

Needless to say, we are determined to see that Fr. Kalayjian never returns to this Church again. We hope that you will take the decisive actions both to reprimand Fr. Kalayjian as well as instruct the Parish Council as to their basic responsibilities for conducting the administrative affairs of our Parish without the politics, so that this game will end once and for all.

We see your firm actions as the only hope to avoid another flaring of the specific conflict which brought us to our current dilemma.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully yours,



The Executive Council for the
Action Committee for The Protection
of Rights of Members of the Armenian
Church, Inc.

CC: Judge John Najarian, Chairman.
Fr. Dajad Davidian, Vice Chairman.
Fr. Zaven Arzoumanian, Secretary.
Mr. Edward Korkoian, Treasurer.
Fr. Paren Avedikian, Asst. Secretary.
Fr. Mampre Kouzouian, Asst. Treasurer.
Mr. Crosby Goshgarian, Advisor.
Mr. George Juskalian, Advisor.
Mr. George Mekenian, Advisor.

DEAR PARISHIONER:

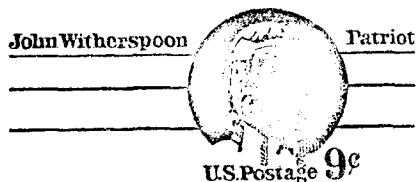
Please SIGN below and Mail this postcard as soon as possible.

DEAR CHAIRMAN, PARISH COUNCIL OF ST MARYS ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH, ELBERON, NJ:

I Want FatherVertanes Kalayjian reinstated as Pastor of St Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church, Elberon, N. J.

SIGN _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____



Parish Council of
St. aMary's Armenian Church
1184 Ocean Ave.
Elberon, N. J. 07740

55 Columbia Avenue
Long Branch, New Jersey 07740

April 7, 1976

Judge John Najarian
Chairman, Diocesan Council
630 Industrial Bank Building
Providence, R.I. 02903

Dear Judge Najarian:

It is not my intention to concern you with a petty gripe concerning the affairs of St. Mary's Church, Elberon, N.J., but I do feel there is a situation developing here that requires the attention of the Diocesan Council.

As you know, Mr. Jack Antreassian was sent here to moderate the conflicts existing in the Church organization without prejudice to any groups of individuals. The problem is that he appears to be purposely favoring a selected group of individuals in the Ladies Guild Executive Committee, while purposely trying to freeze out myself and Mrs. Beatrice Lambie.

On several occasions the Ladies Guild Executive Committee purposely attempted to schedule meetings at the homes of specific individuals under the direction of Mrs. A. Tashjian, who is known to be hostile to both myself and Mrs. Beatrice Lambie. It is general knowledge to Mr. Antreassian that Mrs. Lambie as well as myself would never attend a meeting held at this individual's house. Since Mrs. Tashjian attempted to use this strategy on several occasions in the past, Mr. Antreassian was forced to freeze the meetings until after the impending church elections, with the further directive that these meetings should not be held.

It now suddenly is determined without explanation that the Ladies Guild Exec. Committee will again convene for the purpose of holding special elections for Chairmanship and other offices of this committee at Mrs. A. Tashjian's home. Mr. Antreassian again knew all too well that Mrs. Lambie and myself would never enter the home of this woman. When Mr. Antreassian was confronted for an explanation, he chose to ignore me and Mrs. Lambie without any further discussion.

Now I ask you the same question that I asked him. Do you think that it is in the best interest of this church, at this time, to hold special meetings and elections in the home of selected

individuals? Further, do you feel that the much required harmony in this Church could ever hope to be achieved by holding such an important meeting in the home of a controversial individual instead of the Church Hall, where we could all feel comfortable and truly welcome. When I asked Mr. Antreassian why the meeting was being held in her home, he said that they wanted it that way. (I assumed that this meant Mrs. Tashjian and her little group.) Why is Mr. Antreassian trying to appease certain members of the Ladies Guild Exec. committee, while knowingly freezing others out?????

I question Mr. Antreassian's better judgement in this matter and perhaps his potential motives, which incidentally is a common attitude shared by many of the other ladies in our organization.

Thanking you for the consideration and attention which we hope you will give to this matter, I remain

Sincerely yours,



Mrs. Hermina Karakashian
Member Ladies Guild Executive
Committee.

CC: Mrs. Beatrice Lambie
CC: St. Mary's Church Interim Committee

313 8th Avenue
Asbury Park, New Jersey 07712
April 26, 1976

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
President, Diocesan Assembly
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Your Eminence:

During the past year many incidents have occurred concerning St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church, Elberon, New Jersey, that raise questions in my mind as to whether they are legal and within the by-laws.

On June 13, 1976, there will be a special Parish Assembly convened at St. Mary's for the purpose of electing a Parish Council. Anyone registering as a member by May 17, 1976, and meeting all the qualifications in the by-laws except Article 7, Line 4, "provided that at least six months have elapsed since the date of their registration as members of the Parish," may vote at this election. Do the Primate and the Diocesan Council have the right to act contrary to the by-laws, or authorize others to?

According to Article 13, "The Annual Parish Assembly shall be held regularly once a year during the months of January or February". The Primate and the Diocesan Council instructed (letter of October 29, 1975) "the convening of the Parish Assembly is hereby suspended until further notification."

In the same letter (October 29, 1975) the Primate and the Diocesan Council issued the following decision: "The present Parish Council members are hereby removed from office." Shouldn't a Parish Council member have charges presented against him, or just causes explained to him, and the opportunity to answer such charges or causes?

After removing the Parish Council, the Primate and Diocesan Council appointed a Parish Council, which later became "The Interim Governing Committee." Is this the proper action according to the by-laws, or should Article 27 be followed?

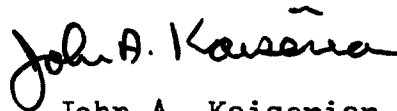
According to Article 39, "A Parish Priest...to serve in the Parish shall be elected by the Parish Assembly." It has been the policy for the Primate and the Diocesan Council to appoint a Priest to a Parish. Should a Parish Priest be elected? Does a

Parish have a say in who their Priest shall be?

I am not bringing these items to your attention to create difficulties or cause trouble. They are not meant to be complaints against the Primate or the Diocesan Council. However, I would appreciate it if you would interpret the by-laws and decide if they were observed properly in these decisions.(Article 61B). If the Primate and the Diocesan Council are to have these powers, than I suggest that the by-laws be re-written, giving it to them, and making allowances for situations such as the one that occurred at St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Elberon, New Jersey.

I will continue to abide by the decisions of the Primate, the Diocesan Assembly and the Diocesan Council, and serve my Church to the best of my abilities.

Sincerely,



John A. Kaiserian

cc: Chairman, Diocesan Council-Judge Najarian
Chairman, Diocesan Assembly
Delegate, Diocesan Assembly-Alex Mamourian

May 18, 1976

Barkave G. Elian, Esquire
5810 Bergenline Avenue
West New York, New Jersey 07093

Re: Your letter dated April 23, 1976
Various letters, communications,
requests and decisions referred
to therein, etc.

Dear Mr. Elian:

Thank you for your letter referred to above which was received timely for reference to the 74th Annual Diocesan Assembly.

Be advised that the matters and issues raised in said letters were presented to the Assembly in open session. An explanation of the past history and actions taken by the Primate and Diocesan Council were also presented to the Assembly in open session.

Upon deliberation by the Assembly in open session and more specifically on Friday, April 30, 1976, and upon motion duly made, seconded and passed, the Diocesan Assembly voted that regarding the Elberon Parish and any and all problems, issues, decisions, protests and complaints relating thereto, all prior decisions by the Primate and the Diocesan Council are hereby ratified and affirmed and the Diocesan Assembly does hereby set forth its mandate to the Primate and the Diocesan Council that the Primate and Diocesan Council are authorized and empowered to take any action deemed necessary in their judgment in the total administration of the Elberon Parish.

I trust that issues raised in your letter have been resolved by decisions previously made by the Primate and the Diocesan Council.

Barkave G. Elian, Esquire

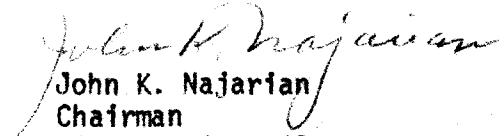
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May 18, 1976

Any suggestions which you feel may be beneficial in the future will be appreciated and, as in the past, will be given the utmost consideration.

I remain,

Sincerely yours,


John K. Najarian
Chairman
Diocesan Council

June 3, 1976

The Very Reverend Paren Avedkian
Pastor, St. John Armenian Church
22001 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, Michigan 48075

Dear Father Paren:

We confirm receipt of your two letters of May 28.

We are pleased that arrangements have been confirmed for your visit to the Elberon parish on June 13, and appreciate the concurrence of your parish council. We feel sure that your presence will prove valuable. Mr. Mekenian was planning to communicate with you concerning arrangements of your stay as well as your means of transportation to Elberon.

We are happy also that Father Michael will be available for the Mission program in Greenfield, and feel sure that the expenses involved will be assumed by the Program Committee. We will communicate with Father Karekin.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

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St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



Very Rev. Fr. Baret Yeretzian
Clergyman In Residence

Very Rev. Fr. Paren Avedikian
Pastor

Rev. Fr. Michael Buttero
Assistant Pastor

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY



PHONE (313) 569-3405



SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

May 28, 1976

His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Your Eminence,

Just a brief note to confirm our conversation regarding
my visit to St. Mary's Parish in Elberon, New Jersey, on
June 13, 1976.

I have already officially informed the Parish Council of
St. John's Armenian Church of Your Eminence's wishes and they
have given their consent.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Fr. Paren Avedikian". The signature is written in a cursive style with some flourishes.

Father Paren Avedikian
Pastor

PA/rb

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St. John's Armenian Church
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Assistant Pastor

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY



PHONE (313) 569-3405



SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

May 28, 1976

His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Your Eminence,

Just a brief note to confirm our conversation regarding
my visit to St. Mary's Parish in Elberon, New Jersey, on
June 13, 1976.

I have already officially informed the Parish Council of
St. John's Armenian Church of Your Eminence's wishes and they
have given their consent.

Respectfully yours,

Fr. Paren Avedikian

Father Paren Avedikian
Pastor

PA/rb

May 10, 1976

Mrs. Aroosiag Tashjian
220 Fifth Avenue
Asbury Park, New Jersey 07712

Dear Mrs. Tashjian:

We appreciate the sentiments you expressed in your letter of April 28, and can sympathize with the difficulties that have plagued the St. Mary Parish of Elberon for more than a year, difficulties that have complicated the work of the Women's Guild as well.

It is our hope that with the elections on June 13, a measure of order will be restored to the community. Till then at least, it remains to continue our work with as much patience as we can muster.

You can be content that you have served your Church and parish well for which we commend you, and pray that you may be graced with God's blessings always.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

April 28, 1976

His Eminence
Archbishop T. Manogian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
New York, N.Y. 10016

Serpazan Hayr,

As the 1975 chairlady of the Ladies Guild of St. Mary I would like to bring to your attention the following:

1. Since Jan 6, 1976 we attempted to follow the Diocesan instructions to continue the Ladies Guild's activities but our efforts were constantly aborted by a few members.
2. On Jan. 6, we attempted to have our executive election on the church premises but Mrs. Hermina Karakashian and Mrs. Yeranig Lambie displayed such an unladylike behavior that Mr. J. Chakamian had to adjourn the meeting without finishing what we had started. Their violent argument was mainly against Mr. J. Chakamian's being the chairman of the interim Governing Body and as such against his presence.
3. After that incident, as you are well aware, we attempted to have Executive Committee meetings having in mind to adjourn the meeting if these two ladies started their tantrums again.
4. Our scheduled Executive Committee meetings for Jan. 13 and Jan. 27 had to be called off for one reason or another and on both occasions the members were duly notified by telephone or in person. Yet, Mrs. H. Karakashian had the nerve (she and her cohorts always did) to tell a lie that she wasn't called. The fact is that she was called by Miss MaryAnn Tutanjian and the call was received by her mother-in-law.
5. I personally cannot see how members of the executive committee can act irresponsibly like the above mentioned ladies do and continue to remain in office.

6. The St. Mary's Church had one element left in semi-active state and that was the Ladies Guild, but now even that is being destroyed by these ladies and their supporters.

Serpazan Hayr, unless you personally put yourself in charge of putting St. Mary back on it's feet I see all efforts being just waisted.

7. Finally, on April 6, 1976 we had our executive committee meeting and election in my home with the knowledge and the permission of Mr. J. Antreasian. Such practice was not uncommon for our group yet Mrs. H. Karakeshian and Mrs. Y. Lambie refused to be present.
8. On April 20, 1976 at the general membership meeting of the Ladies Guild these same ladies disrupted the whole meeting with violent outbursts and foul language that can not be tolerated.

I submit these to your attention.

Respectfully,

Arossiag Tashjian

Mrs. A. Tashjian

C.C. Mr. J. Najarian
Mr. J. Antreasian

June 23, 1976

Mr. Jack Antreassian
2B Aspen Mall
Old Bridge, New Jersey 08857

Dear Mr. Antreassian:

We were pleased to receive the minutes of the Special Assembly of the Elberon Parish, held June 13, 1976, convened to elect a parish council, a nominating committee and an auditing committee, all to serve until the next regular parish assembly scheduled to meet in January or February of 1977.

We hereby officially confirm the elections and direct that the new parish council begin its assumption of the administrative leadership of the parish.

We realize that its job is particularly difficult in view of the comparatively disorganized state of the parish in recent months. This makes it even more essential that the council address itself to its work with extra dedication.

We would like the minutes of all council meetings sent to our office promptly. We should also be informed if any particular problems arise that might require our immediate attention.

We pray that God may guide St. Mary's new council with His love and wisdom.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

st

ST. MARY'S ARMENIAN CHURCH
of Elberon

1

June 13, 1976

On June 13, 1976 after Church services a meeting was held to elect a new Parish Council, Nominating Committee and Auditing Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. with a prayer by The Very Rev. Paren Avedikian. Mr. George Mekenian and Mr. Crosby Goshgarian, members of the Diocean Council were present also Mr. Jack Antreasian, Chairman of the Interim Parish Council.

Mr. Goshgarian asked for a roll call of members. 104 were present at the time of the call.

The chair, Mr. Mekenian asked for nominations from the floor for additional candidates to be added to the existing nominees for Parish Council.

Motion on the floor called the nominations be closed as no nominations were made and same was seconded.

Mrs. Jenev Chakamian suggested that there being no additional nominations, the existing candidates be unanimously accepted.

After a brief discussion among the Diocean Council, Mr. Mekenian advised that there being only 10 candidates on the list there must be a vote as only 9 nominees can be accepted.

The chair called for nominations from the floor for additional names for the Nominating Committee. The names nominated were:

Mrs. Anna Hovnanian
Mrs. Seta Ghazarian
Mrs. Angel Varian

The chair called for nominations from the floor for additional names for the Auditing Committee. No nominations were made therefore nominations were closed.

At 1:00 p.m. balloting commenced.

Miss Maryann Tutunjian, Mr. John Pehlevanian, Mr. Harout Karakashian and Mr. John Chakamian accepted the ballots and checked off the names. 109 ballots were cast. Balloting was officially closed at 1:30 p.m.

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Elected Parish Council members are as follows:

Mr. Berj Buchakjian	100
Mr. Armen Bulbulian	101
Mr. Harootune Karakashian	92
Mr. George Poosikian	91
Mr. Andrew Rivas	79
Mr. Haig Serabian	91
Mrs. Mary Gorra	99
Mrs. Aroosiag Tashjian	88
Mr. Setrak Tutunjian	85
Mr. Steve Checkosky- Alternate	77

Elected Nominating Committee:

Mrs. Jenev Chakamian	90
Mr. John Pehlivanian	76
Mrs. Annette Serabian	73
Mrs. Ann Hovnanian	79
Mrs. Seta Ghazarian	71
Mrs. Rose Sabonjian- Alternate	46

Elected Auditing Committee:

Miss Nora Bitchakdjian	75
Mrs. Marion Manigian	78
Mrs. Rose Lee Sabonjian	72
Mr. John Solakian- Alternate	44

Meeting was officially closed at 3:00 p.m. with a prayer
by The Very Rev. Avedikian.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Lee Sabonjian

Mrs. Rose Lee Sabonjian, Sec.

Jack Antreasian, Chairman
Interim Parish Council

SPECIAL ASSEMBLY -- ST. MARY PARISH, ELBERON, N.J. -- JUNE 13, 1976

BALLOT

Parish Council (Vote for no more than 9)

Berj Buchakjian	<u>100</u>	Aroosiag Tashjian	<u>88</u>
Armen Bulbulian	<u>101</u>	Setrak Tutunjian	<u>85</u>
Steve Checkosky	<u>77</u>	_____	_____
Mary Gorra	<u>79</u>	_____	_____
Anna Hornanian Karl Kalfaian	<u>49</u>	_____	_____
Harootune Karakashian	<u>98</u>	_____	_____
George Poosikian	<u>91</u>	_____	_____
Andrew Rivas	<u>79</u>	_____	_____
Haig Serabian	<u>91</u>	_____	_____

Nominating Committee (Vote for no more than 5)

Jenev Chakamian	✓ <u>90</u>	✓ Annette Serabian	<u>48</u>
Ann Hagopian	<u>19</u>	✓ Anna Hornanian	<u>79</u>
John Pehlivanian	✓ <u>76</u>	✓ Seta Kazarian	<u>51</u>
Mary Poosikian	<u>45</u>	Angel Varian	<u>44</u>
Rose Sabonjian	<u>46</u>	_____	_____

Auditing Committee (Vote for no more than 3)

Nora Bitchakdjian	_____	Rose Lee Sabcnjian	_____
John Kaiserian	_____	John Solakian	_____
Marion Manigian	_____	_____	_____

(The Interim Governing Committee endeavored to form complete slates consisting of candidates the Committee could generally agree on. Such slates were formed. But it must be said that many of the candidates so selected refused to run. All names of candidates on this ballot have accepted nomination, with the exception of Karl Kalfaian who, after many attempts, could not be reached for confirmation. His name was left on the ballot in deference to him. His specific wishes will be made known to the Assembly prior to the election, at which time further nominations may be made from the floor.)

SPECIAL ASSEMBLY -- ST. MARY PARISH, ELBERON, N.J. -- JUNE 13, 1976

BALLOT

Parish Council (Vote for no more than 9)

Berj Buchakjian	_____	Aroosiag Tashjian	_____
Armen Bulbulian	_____	Setrak Tutunjian	_____
Steve Checkosky	_____	_____	_____
Mary Gorra	_____	_____	_____
Karl Kalfaian	_____	_____	_____
Harootune Karakashian	_____	_____	_____
George Poosikian	_____	_____	_____
Andrew Rivas	_____	_____	_____
Haig Serabian	_____	_____	_____

Nominating Committee (Vote for no more than 5)

Jenev Chakamian	_____	Annette Serabian	_____
Ann Hagopian	_____	_____	_____
John Pehlivanian	_____	_____	_____
Mary Poosikian	_____	_____	_____
Rose Sabonjian	_____	_____	_____

Auditing Committee (Vote for no more than 3)

Nora Bitchakdjian	_____	Rose Lee Sabonjian	_____
John Kaiserian	_____	John Solakian	_____
Marion Manigian	_____	_____	_____

(The Interim Governing Committee endeavored to form complete slates consisting of candidates the Committee could generally agree on. Such slates were formed. But it must be said that many of the candidates so selected refused to run. All names of candidates on this ballot have accepted nomination, with the exception of Karl Kalfaian who, after many attempts, could not be reached for confirmation. His name was left on the ballot in deference to him. His specific wishes will be made known to the Assembly prior to the election, at which time further nominations may be made from the floor.)

SPECIAL ASSEMBLY -- ST. MARY PARISH, ELBERON, N.J. -- JUNE 13, 1976

BALLOT

Parish Council (Vote for no more than 9)

Berj Buchakjian	_____	Aroosiag Tashjian	_____
Armen Bulbulian	_____	Setrak Tutunjian	_____
Steve Checkosky	_____	_____	_____
Mary Gorra	_____	_____	_____
Karl Kalfatan	_____	_____	_____
Harootune Karakashian	_____	_____	_____
George Poosikian	_____	_____	_____
Andrew Rivas	_____	_____	_____
Haig Serabian	_____	_____	_____

Nominating Committee (Vote for no more than 5)

Jenev Chakamian	_____	Annette Serabian	_____
Ann Hagopian	_____	_____	_____
John Pehlivanian	_____	_____	_____
Mary Poosikian	_____	_____	_____
Rose Sabonjian	_____	_____	_____

Auditing Committee (Vote for no more than 3)

Nora Bitchakdjian	_____	Rose Lee Sabonjian	_____
John Kaiserian	_____	John Solakian	_____
Marion Manigian	_____	_____	_____

(The Interim Governing Committee endeavored to form complete slates consisting of candidates the Committee could generally agree on. Such slates were formed. But it must be said that many of the candidates so selected refused to run. All names of candidates on this ballot have accepted nomination, with the exception of Karl Kalfaian who, after many attempts, could not be reached for confirmation. His name was left on the ballot in deference to him. His specific wishes will be made known to the Assembly prior to the election, at which time further nominations may be made from the floor.)

July 2, 1976

Mr. Harootune Karakashian
87 Swartrel Drive
Middletown, New Jersey 07748

Dear Mr. Karakashian:

We are pleased to inform you that His Grace Bishop Papken Varjabe-
dian will until further notice be assigned to pastoral duties at the St.
Mary Armenian Church of Elberon, New Jersey.

The service will be on a part-time basis, according to the following
schedule:

1. He will arrive in Elberon on Saturday, July 17, and remain there
until July 25, celebrating the Liturgy on the two Sundays during
that period. He will be free to leave after the Badarak on the
25th, to return again the following Saturday.
2. In this way he will be serving the parish half the time, plus Sun-
days, when he will be able to celebrate the Liturgy regularly for
the parish.
3. The stipend we have already settled on will be \$400.00 a month,
plus expenses of \$85.00 a month. Sleeping quarters will be provided
in the space above the Church. Meals and other matters must be
arranged by him.

We have already confirmed the elections of your interim parish council.
We wish to add here and emphasize that it will operate in the character and
conditions outlined in the letter of May 27, 1976, an information sheet,
copies of which were sent to all St. Mary parishioners, and a copy of which
is attached. We wish especially to draw attention to paragraphs three and
four of said letter.

We are confident that with the assignment of Bishop Papken to serve your spiritual needs on a regular basis, a continuity of leadership will be created that will help re-establish harmony in the parish. We know that you are aware that nothing is possible without the full cooperation and warm devotion of members of your council.

We pray that God may guide you all with His love and wisdom.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

Enclosure

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