

St. John's Armenian Church
Of Greater Detroit

The working relationship between the Pastor of St. John's Armenian Church and the Parish Council, and the differences of position taken by each regarding the status and needs of our parish has resulted into a state where the parish is deteriorating.

The Parish Council has individually and collectively received and reviewed numerous complaints from Church Auxiliary Officers, Staff personnel and also from a very sizable segment of parishioners and have come to the following conclusions:

1. The Pastor's visitation program has been totally unsatisfactory and many parishioners have not received the benefit of a visit even in time of need or sickness. Regular home visits are virtually non-existent. The Pastor defends his inability to make the required visits to the people of his parish on the basis he is too busy with other Church matters such as publishing the Torchbearer. The Torchbearer, on the other hand, has been published on a very infrequent basis and should not have had any detrimental effect on the visitation program.
2. The Pastor has used the Torchbearer and Church Bulletin as a means to gain personal advantage over the Parish Council by inserting commentary which is out of order and not conducive to harmonious relationships.
3. The Pastor has maintained that time does not permit him to cover his responsibilities, however, he always seems to have time to participate in affairs which have no direct benefit to St. John's Armenian Church (i.e. outside Community, Church, Business and Social Affairs).

4. The Pastor uses dubious ways to obtain his personal objectives or wishes. For example he has been insisting that he requires a personal secretary. The Parish Council has maintained that the two full-time and one part-time secretaries now on the office staff are sufficient to cover the administrative requirements of the Church. To press his point, however, for a personal secretary the Pastor recently announced that the Torchbearer publication was being discontinued using the argument that more secretarial help was required.
5. The Pastor has caused serious dissension in the Church Organizations (i.e. The Womens Auxiliary) by instituting unconstitutional practices in the election of their officers.
6. The Pastor has been responsible for the disenchantment, disinterest, and complete alienation of many parishioners because during the time that he attended to their problems, he did not characterize the true role and spirit of a priest as they were expecting, but rather carried out his duties in a mechanical and detached manner.
7. The Pastor's handling of the Office Staff has caused much frustration to the personnel and forced the Parish Council to have these people report to the Building Committee Chairman instead of to the Pastor.

This is an undesirable arrangement but has been set up to cope with the Pastor/Office Staff work relationship problems.
8. The Pastor's Chairmanship or participation at Parish General Meetings, Special Meetings, Organization Committee Meetings, etc. invariably

results in an ineffective meeting leaving the majority of parishioners in a perplexed and disgruntled frame of mind. This is usually the result of the Pastor making an unwarranted or irresponsible remark, being redundant and lengthy in his comments and having little substance in his message. The net result is that members become discouraged in coming to subsequent meetings and Church work undoubtedly suffers.

The Pastor insists on being the dominating authority of the Church Operation. The Parish Council has no quarrel with that principle, however, by the same token a leader in any walk of life must also accept the responsibility for the success or failure of the task that has been assigned to him. One of the primary tasks or duties of a Pastor, as defined in Section 42B of the By Laws of our Diocese, is that he perform the deeds that will advance the spiritual life and give a good order in the parish.

Our parish is not in good order as evidenced by the declining membership in Church, the Church School, and the Church Auxiliary Organizations. Our parish is not in good order as evidenced by the complaints and attitudes of many parishioners. Our parish is not in good order, however, our Pastor who constantly reminds us that he is the president and head of the Church accepts no responsibility for its failings and has given no indication of taking measures to change the tide of deterioration.

The dissension that exists between the parishioners and their Church has become more pronounced in the past two years since the present pastor took office and obligates the Parish Council to request the Primate and Diocese Council to take positive action to prevent worsening of an already unfortunate situation. Specifically, a new Pastor for St. John's Armenian Church is the only acceptable solution.