

## REPORT ON PROPERTY PURCHASED BY ST. LEON'S CHURCH IN FAIR LAWN

The following are pertinent facts necessitating our move of St. Leon's Church from Paterson to our new location in Fair Lawn.

X St. Leon's was officially organized and recognized as such by the Diocese in February - 1934, and from that time continuously until now we have owned and are holding our services at our church at 135 Bloomfield Avenue, Paterson.

In 1933, the bulk of the Armenian population in this general area was overwhelmingly concentrated in the city of Paterson, and to a great extent, in the vicinity of St. Leon's church in the South Paterson area of Paterson. This concentration remained so until the end of World War 2,

Soon after the end of World War 2, in the late '40's, a migration to the suburbs-mainly in Bergen County- was begun, primarily by the younger members (sons and daughters of our parish). This trend was soon followed by many of the older original members. The number of Armenian families now living in Paterson is less than 25% of the number who originally lived here when the church was organized in 1933. X

Recently another push was given to some of the few remaining families to move from Paterson to the suburbs. This was due to the increasing deterioration of the area surrounding the church.

Our intention in 1950 was to improve our Paterson location by remodeling the existing church and building a community center on the church grounds because we realized the necessity of a community center to help hold together our existing members and interest the youth in our church. We believe the future of the church is vested in the youth. After considerable study and advice from professional real estate experts, we came to the conclusion that it would be a waste to invest any money at this location, or any other nearby location. Some of the reasons we took into consideration were:

1. The present church building which was built in 1895 requires repairs and extensive modernization to make it more appealing to our growing American born community. This would entail costs that would be comparable to building a new church.
2. When investigating getting permission for constructing a church hall at the same location, we found that the amount of available land didn't meet the requirements of the city zoning ordinance and we would be unable to build a community center at this location.
3. The present capacity of our church building with hall underneath is inadequate for our present and future needs.
4. It was noted at this time that many of our church members were moving to the suburbs, in particular Western Bergen County.

Upon careful study of the aforementioned facts, it became apparent by the Board of Trustees that if no action was taken, the very existence of the church was in doubt.

These facts in 1952 led us to the obvious conclusion that the action required was a relocation of the church to follow its members and potential members in order to better serve the needs of its people. It was determined after considerable thought and study that Fair Lawn would be the logical choice. Our choice was confirmed by the population trends:

All of Passaic County had only 108 Armenian Families in 1958 Fair Lawn which had 3 Armenian Families in 1946, now has 46. Of these, 26 originated from Paterson.

In the towns of Glen Rock, East Paterson, Ridgewood, Paramus, and Saddle Brook, which immediately surround Fair Lawn, there are an additional 63 families, of which 41 originally lived in Paterson. Of these 63 families, only 5 families had lived in these towns in 1946. In the remaining area of Bergen County, from those towns bordering Route 17 westward, as of our survey in 1958, there were 127 Armenian families.

After an intensive search, we were fortunate to locate a choice tract of approximately 3 acres on Saddle River Road in Fair Lawn. If need be, the other lands joining this tract may be available for purchase.

Appraisal was made by two competent real estate men and it was found that this is a most worthwhile investment. In addition, all indications are that the property will increase in value and desirability. It is bordered on the rear by a 355 acre Bergen County Park which is available to us by our own private roadway.

Our new location is easily accessible as noted on the enclosed map. It is also served by two bus lines- one running from Glen Rock to Paterson, the other from New York City to Ridgewood.

Observing good faith, the Board of Trustees presented this property to the congregation of St. Leon's Armenian Apostolic Church who unanimously approved the purchase for our relocation. This was done with the expressed and implied permission and good will of our Diocesan officers who were contacted at that time.

