

St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church

678 Richmond Road | Richmond Heights, Ohio 44143 | 216-381-6590

February 25, 1995

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

Srpazan Hayr:

Asdvadz Oknagan.

In response to your letter of September 15, 1994 concerning the joint celebration of April 24, a planning meeting was called together on Wednesday, February 22 with representatives of both communities. Unfortunately the convening of this meeting was delayed and by the time of the meeting both churches had already made arrangements to have a visiting priest for Sunday, April 23.

Because the churches are located in opposite ends of the city, the general feeling was that few would travel to the other church after Divine Liturgy and thus to maximize attendance for this very important occasion it would be best to gather for Divine Liturgy, followed by a Requiem Service at the Genocide Monument and a commemorative program in the hall. The Holy Cross representatives were willing to cancel their Divine Liturgy if they could participate at St. Gregory. I felt that it would be possible since the September 15 letter does not specifically prohibit this. I explained, however, that the Diocesan priest would have to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and that the Prelacy priest could preach the sermon from the chancel.

They were in agreement with this, but asked if the name of Catholicos Karekin II could be mentioned during the Liturgy after the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin. I did not believe that this would be a problem, since this would be a joint celebration and that on certain occasions we mention the names of the Patriarchs. The representatives of Holy Cross also asked that the names of both communities be included on the announcement notices, since in the past this had been an issue.

I apologize for adding to your many burdens, but the Cleveland community is small and is really dependent on harmony within the community. Since Holy Cross was willing to cancel their Divine Liturgy, I feel that a few concessions on our part would demonstrate a sincere desire for unity in our commemoration of the Armenian martyrs.

I assure you that members of our community are in full agreement with this plan. However, before going further we felt that it would be best to ask your blessing. I also should tell you that all present understood that the arrangements would be an exception to the formal policy and that such an exception does not imply a willingness or intent to celebrate together for any other occasion or purpose.

I know that you will be leaving for Armenia tomorrow. Thus I will try to telephone you this evening to discuss the above. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Deacon Norman Odabashian

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