

RECEIVED JUL 26 1990

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July 23, 1990

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
630 Second Avenue
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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing the enclosed letter in response to an urgent bulletin that has appeared in my Church's latest edition of its Loosaper. It concerns the questionable fate of the venerable St. Sarkis Armenian Church of Niagara Falls and the decision by prominent officials of that City to erect a shopping center in its place if the city should procure by means legal or otherwise the land it is currently situated upon. Naturally when I first read this article I was filled with outrage, but not only because of the impending loss of such a valuable institution and bastion of local and regional community. The Fate, also, of the Armenian people in these bewildering and often dark days remains ever heavy upon my mind; it is not as if an entire congregation can simply be merged or relocated to another church until such accommodation can be made for them. Armenian Churches are built not only with hammers and chisels and the sweat of the brow, but with blood and tears and joyous singing, and each brick settled into place is a tiny piece of Hope reborn, of dreams solidified, of triumph over death and hate and Indifference, that Thing which is worse than hate, and often stronger in its perverse way than the seemingly blind forces of love. More than anything, our continued existence as a people in this Century is a searing victory over Indifference. Each Armenian Church in this country and around the world for me is a shining star in an empty sea of darkness and a cloudless night. And every time a Church is destroyed in any way,

physically or otherwise, but especially physically (for so many of our others have been, already, Over There, and of course they are irreplaceable) a tiny bright star in that ebony sea flickers out. While it lives, it may appear frail and pelucid, giving to the naked eye little light, but how great the glory of its prescence if viewed through a lens, or how omnipotent its light to a weary traveller on an otherwise ill-illuminated Night! Each one, however outwardly unrepossessing, has its Mission, great in the eyes of He Who watches over them, and although He chooses no favorites He showers upon them all His loving-kindness. Each Church is a fountain of strength and Light, if little else.

I say these things here, of course, because you would understand them better than anyone else, and because they are my deepest thoughts on this particuar matter, which cannot be included in the following letter. Shopping malls have been and are proliferating everywhere, spreuding like fungus whnever there is a community of two or more people, it seems, and although the phenomenon has been steadily gaining strength and momentum over the past generation and decade, for some reason this year it has been accelarating with an alarming vengeance. and I cannot think that it is mere coincidence. I have always thought that Shopping malls do not free a community but place its people in greater blindness and bondage, just as "Five-Year-Plan" propoganda numbed the minds of workers in the erstwhile Communist nations; and now that the Cold War appears to be over, in literature at least and in theory, and that Americans must now look beyond delusions and see Life in the face, that there are forces in this country who are alarmed at the thought of any such impending disaster, and must needs keep the populace satiated and lazy and under cöntrol...

But enough of this. I am aware that I must present the following letter to a Niagara City Official in care of St. Sarkis Church. However, the article did not give any information as to the names or addresses of any of these officials, and I am at a loss. I recieved my Loesaper last night, and I am leaving for a trip tomorrow morning. I will not be able to get this information. If someone could please fill in the name of an appropriate official in the following letter, I would graetly appreciate it.

Tank you for your time and consiseration, and God bless you.

Sincerely,

M. J. P. McKane