

FAX 212 779-3558

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate

Diocese of the Armenian Church
New York

We, the Armenian Families of
the Greater Metropolitan Detroit
Area, are very concerned about the
leaving of the Pastor of the St.
John's Armenian Church in
Southfield. The very Rev. Father
Paren Avedikian.

We love him, we are
thinking about him. We want
him back. We will try our best
to bring him back. We need
him, the Church needs him!
Please, please we need
your help.

With Prayers,

Mr & Mrs. Hagop Bedrossian

Mr & Mrs. Hagop Chamourian

Mr & Mrs. Samuel Dallakian

Mr & Mrs. Vahé Fermanian

Mr & Mrs. Vahé Manavdjian

Mr & Mrs. Nozaj Bedrian

Mr & Mrs. Beji Chelanson

Mr & Mrs. Antwanig Kazarian

Mr. Mrs. Zaven Kazarian
Mr. Silva Kazarian
Mr & Mrs Hagop Sagherian
Mr & Mrs. Hovig Sagherian
Mr & Mrs. Rostom Sagherian
Mr & Mrs Daniel Sagherian
Mr & Mrs. Krikor Sagherian
Mr & Mrs. Ounig Boghigian
Mr Vartkes Haroutiounian
Mr & Mrs. Manoug DerKovaghimian
Mr & Mrs. D. Khan Darakjian
Mr & Mrs. Vartan Vartanian
Mr & Mrs. Harouth Vartanian
Mr & Mrs Sarkis Vartanian
Mr & Mrs. Chuck Bedirian
Mr & Mrs. Yegrem Kendigjian
Mr & Mrs. Vahé Kendigjian
Mr & Mrs. Razmig Kendigjian
Mr & Mrs. Avedis Abrakian
Mr & Mrs. Levon Darakjian
Mr & Mrs. Jack Zouran!
Mrs. Sarah Darakjian
Mr & Mrs. D. Khan Darakjian
Mr & Mrs. Arsen Terjimanian
Mr & Mrs. Antranig Shirinian

fax 919 779-3558

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
New York

We, the Armenian families of the Greater Metropolitan
Detroit Area, are very concerned about the leaving
of the pastor of St. John's Armenian Church in
Southfield. The Very Rev. Father Peter Avedikian.

We love him. We are thinking about him.
We want him back. We will try our best to
bring him back. We need him. The church needs
him.

Please, please we need your help.

With Prayers.

Mr. & Mrs. George Kudanian
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Zamanigian
Mr. & Mrs. Bedros Kudanian
Mr. & Mrs. Antranig Kurdian
Mr. & Mrs. Harout Kurdian
Mr. & Mrs. Hagop Eurdakian
Mr. & Mrs. Harout Eurdakian
Mr. & Mrs. Boghos Makhouljian
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Basmajian
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Basmajian
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Yazajian
Mrs. Vicky Basmajian

Mrs. Mary Ryan
Mrs. Anaxi Andonian
Mr. & Mrs. Sarkis Karadolian
Mrs. Sifoug Kaladjian
Mr. & Mrs. Sarkis Kaladjian
Mr. & Mrs. Seroup Gharourian
Mr. & Mrs. Zaleh Shanaljian
Mr. & Mrs. Azadour Mardirosian
Mr. & Mrs. John Darakjian
Mr. & Mrs. Hago Topakbashian
Mr. & Mrs. Toumas Topakbashian

March 19, 1993

His Eminence Khajag Barsamian

Realizing that Father Paren's health and well-being are at stake, please consider giving him a leave of absence before any decisions regarding his future are made.

We in the Detroit community are devastated to say the least at the possible loss of the most loving dedicated spiritual leader that Father Paren is.

Sincerely,



Mary Egigian
St. John's Church Member

March 19, 1993

His Eminence Khajag Barsamian

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne Najarian".

Suzanne Najarian
St. John's Church Member

Post-It™ brand fax transmittal memo 7671		# of pages 4
To HIS EMINENCE	From	
Co. KH AJAG BARSAMIAN	Co.	
Dept.	Phone #	
Fax #	Fax #	

March 19, 1993

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Sincerely,



Estelle Barsamian
St. John's Church Member

March 19, 1993

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Sincerely,



Florence Jevahirian
St. John's Church Member

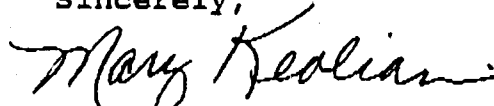
March 19, 1993

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Keolian".

Mary Keolian
St. John's Church Member

Post-It™ brand fax transmittal memo 7671		# of pages 3
To HIS EMINENCE	From	
Co. KH AJAG BARSAMIAN	SP	
Dept.	Phone #	
Fax #	Fax #	

March 19, 1993

His Eminence Khajag Barsamian

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Sincerely,



Alice Derderian
St. John's Church Member

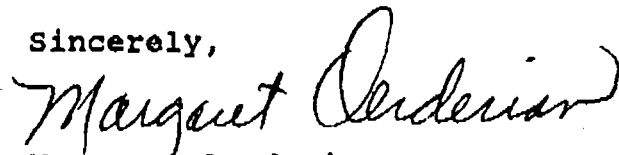
March 19, 1993

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We in the Detroit community are devastated to say the least at the possible loss of the most loving dedicated spiritual leader that Father Paren is.

Sincerely,



Margaret Derderian
St. John's Church Member

GEORGE MUGERIAN
ATTORNEY AT LAW
1112 TOP OF TROY
755 WEST BIG BEAVER ROAD
TROY, MICHIGAN 48064

(313) 362-0608

FAX
(313) 362-0609

FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO: YOUR EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP KHAJAG BARSAMIAN
FROM: GEORGE MUGERIAN, ESQ.
DATE: MARCH 19, 1993
FAX NO: 1-212-779-3558

Your Eminence:

I and my wife, Mary, have been members of St. John's Armenian Church of Detroit since its inception and have seen many priests over the past 60 years at the head of our church.

Father Paren Avedikian has made the biggest contribution of any priest we have ever had, both spiritually and culturally. He has had a tremendous influence on the children of our parish. It would be a tragedy to see this well organized, well run parish diminish to what we had before his arrival.

I have volunteered my legal services on many occasions to St. John's Armenian Church and have worked closely with Father Paren Avedikian; and in my opinion, Father Avedikian always had the best interest of St. John's Armenian Church and the Armenian community in all of his actions and decisions.

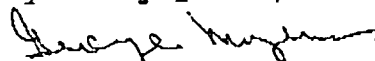
I hope you will not accept his resignation and that you will help resolve the dissension that has erupted from a small group of the membership.

I write to you on behalf of:

Mr. and Mrs. George Mugerian
Mr. Bruce Mugerian
Mr. Charles Mugurian
Mr. Sandy Mugurian
Mrs. Armeny Mugurian Telfer
Mrs. Sharon Mugurian Greck
Mr. and Mrs. G. Demirjian

I again respectfully request that you do not accept the resignation of Father Paren Avedikian as it would be a great loss to St. John's Armenian Church and the Armenian community of the Greater Detroit area.

Very truly yours,



GEORGE MUGERIAN

GM/al

TO: PRIMATE ARCHBISHOP KHAJAG BARSAMIAN

FROM: Armen Shekerjian, M.D.

WE, REPRESENTING THE MAJORITY OF THE ST. JOHN'S COMMUNITY,
WISH TO CONVEY OUR DEEP CONCERN AND DISMAY OF THE DECISION
OF FATHER PAREN AVEDIKIAN IN TENDERING HIS RESIGNATION FROM
ST JOHN'S ARMENIAN CHURCH.

HE HAS BEEN A STALWART LEADER AND SPIRITUAL ADVISOR TO AT
LEAST 3 GENERATIONS OF ARMENIANS IN THIS CITY FOR THE LAST 20
YEARS.

WITH HIS TREMENDOUS KNOWLEDGE AND ENTHUSIASM FOR ALL THINGS
ARMENIAN, HE HAS IMBUED US WITH A VISION OF WHAT WE WERE AND
WHAT WE CAN BE AS ARMENIANS.

WE NEED HIM HERE IN DETROIT AND FEEL THAT NO ONE CAN DO
JUSTICE TO ALL HE HELPED CREATE HERE.

WE LOVE HIM AND WANT THE BEST FOR HIM.

DR. AND MRS. ARMEN SHEKERJIAN
MR. AND MRS. JOHN SHEKERJIAN
DENISE SHEKERJIAN
LAURA SHEKERJIAN
TERYL AND ARMEN ASHER
MR. AND MRS. MICHAEL MINASIAN
PAUL AND MILLIE JINGOZIAN
MICHELLE JINGOZIAN
MARY ZARTATIAN
MR. AND MRS. GARD YEGHISSIAN
DR. JOYCE YEGHISSIAN
MR. AND MRS. RANDY HAWES
MR. AND MRS. SARK SAYIKIAN
MARGARET AND ART VARTABEDIAN
MR. AND MRS. CROSS MOORADIAN
SERENA AND ANNEMARIE EGIGIAN
AGNES AND ART BARSAMIAN
JACK AND VERA KAZANJIAN
MARY AND DICK SIMONIAN
NISHAN AND DEBRA OHANIAN
ART AND ROSE MARDIGIAN
A. ANDONIAN

LUCY MERZIAN
LUCY ARDASH
MARY HORIGIAN
SUSIE JINGOZIAN
CAROL YAVRUIAN
RICK YAVRUIAN
DOROTHY SIMON
PHIL MOORADIAN
PETER EGIGIAN
FREDA VARTOOGIAN
ANGEL MUGERDICHIAN
ARA KAZANJIAN
GARY KAZANJIAN
LEONARD OHANIAN
SIRARPIE OHANIAN
LUSASDZIN KAZANJIAN
VAHAN ARDASH
NYREE ARDASH
DR. JOHN GIRAGOZIAN
MR. JOHN GIRAGOZIAN
MARY RYAN

LAURA AND LISA MARDIGIAN
MR AND MRS PETER EGIGIAN
ALICE AND BAIZAR BERDERIAN
MR. AND MRS. ALEX JEMAL
BLANCE AND GERRY SUIDERSKE
EDWIN NEFFIAN
JOHN AND LAURIE REIZIAN
ARMEN AND SUE HOVNANIAN
HARRY AND ELAINE KALAJIAN
SIRANDUSH KEOLEIAN
HNAZANT BOHIGIAN
KAZAR TERTERIAN
ROSE BAUEKIAN
HARRY AND SUE NAJARIAN
NICOLAI ATANASSOV
HARRY AND MARY KEOLEIAN
MARYA KAZAZZIAN
MR. AND MRS. HARRY TERZIAN
KIM TERZIAN
ALEX TERZIAN
LOUIS KOUSHIGIAN
ELIZABETH APRAHAMIAN
DR. ROSSI APRAHAMIAN
MR. AND MRS. SOUREN APRAHAMIAN
MR. AND MRS. ART APRAHAMIAN
JACQUELINE OKNAIAN
MR. AND MRS. HERMAN MISIRLYAN

LUCILLE SHERMAN
MARGY SIMONIAN
ELMAS BERDERIAN
HARRY KARIBIAN
ANI KASFARIAN
Karl & Emma Sagoian
Mary Kamber
Araxie Kavcan

March 19, 1993

His Eminence Khajag Barsamian

P L E A S E as a member of St. John's Armenian Church Parish Council,
do not accept Father Paren Avedikian's resignation.

Respectfully,

Peter S. Egligian

March 19, 1993

His Eminence Khajag Barsamian

P L E A S E do not accept Father Paren Ayedkian's resignation!

This parish needs his very strong leadership!

Respectfully,

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Egigian

Ann Marie Egigian
Serena Egigian
Greg Keoleian
Souren & Virginia Keoleian

GEORGE KADIAN, M.D. & HERBERT W. ROSSIN, M.D., P.C.

31350 TELEGRAPH ROAD
BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN 48025
PHONE: 647-5850

March 19, 1993

ENDOCRINOLOGY
AND
METABOLISM

His Eminence Khajag Barsamian

As a member of the Armenian community and a very strong supporter of the leadership that has been offered by Father Paren Avedikian over twenty years, I was very saddened to hear of his decision to leave our community. His departure will be a great loss and will certainly deny this community the strong leadership that he has offered.

I strongly defend the principals by which he led his congregation whether we agreed with him or not because he was always honest and straightforward, and always very caring.

P L E A S E convince Father Paren to continue his leadership in this community! We will always be forever grateful to you!

Respectfully,


George Kadian, M.D.

Alice Kadian
Nancy Kadian
Leslie & Kirk Banerian

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To HIS EMINENCE	From	
Co. KH AJAG BARSAMIAN	Co.	
Dept.	Phone #	
Fax #	Fax #	

March 19, 1993

His Eminence Khajag Barsamian

Realizing that Father Paren's health and well-being are at stake, please consider giving him a leave of absence before any decisions regarding his future are made.

We in the Detroit community are devastated to say the least at the possible loss of the most loving dedicated spiritual leader that Father Paren is.

Sincerely,



Margie D. Simonian
St. John's Church Member
30 years



**Windows
EXCHANGE™**

**FAX
313-348-8816**

FAX COVER SHEET

To: His Eminence Archbishop Hajag Baramian

Company: _____

FAX #: 212-779-3558

From: Lora Kazanjian

Date: 3.19.93

Time: _____

Number of pages (including cover sheet): 2

Comments: _____

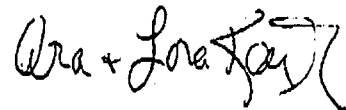
March 19, 1993

His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian,

It has come to our attention that Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian has submitted his resignation to you for immediate approval. We would like to appeal to you to consider the gravity of this situation from a parishioners perspective. Both my husband and myself are active members of St. John's Armenian Church of Detroit. For the past two year's I have served side by side with Father Paren as Women's Guild Chairman of St. John's Armenian Church and have experienced his humble, undying devotion to our church, sacrificing first of himself to help better not only the church in its religious aspects but also the entire community for the preservation of our heritage.

Father Paren has been an innovative, hardworking, ethical leader for our community accomplishing goals that have given strength and pride to our community. Our church has prospered while maintaining its traditions and our people have enjoyed a nurturing home filled with the support of friends and family within the church, under his guidance. Our community is large and diverse, however he has always been able to satisfy the needs of the majority. He has given his soul and his heart to our community. His loss would be devastating and sorrowful. We sincerely hope that you will consider the impact of his resignation on his friends, parishioners and the future of St. John's Armenian Church.

With Respect,



Mr. and Mrs. Ara Kazanjian

AGBU
←ACU

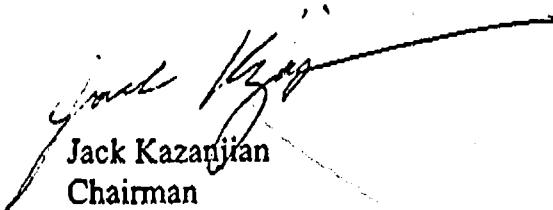
ARMENIAN GENERAL BENEVOLENT UNION OF AMERICA, INC.
DETROIT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
22001 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, Michigan 48075

March 19, 1993

His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian,

Recent news of Father Paren Avedikians resignation from St. John's Armenian Church has been devastating on our Detroit area community. For the last 25 years I have worked with and supported his work here. As a member of St. John's community for the last 48 years I have worked starting with the ACYOA, Parish Council and many other areas of church work. With this perspective I have found that Father Paren has been the most effective force in our community's life. We hope that his resignation will not be accepted at this time.

With Respect,


Jack Kazanjian
Chairman
Eastern Region AGBU
Detroit Coordinating Committee

To:

The Eminence Hajar Barsamian

Please do not accept Hajar's resignation. Our wonderful Hajar has given so unselfishly of himself to this community.

Please help.

Sincerely

Mrs. Mary Keolian

Fax 212-779-3558

25460 Ridgewood Drive
Farmington Hills, MI 48336

March 21, 1993

The Most Rev Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate
St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016-4885

Your Eminence:

We wish to inform you that many of us, in St. John's Armenian Parish,
Southfield, Michigan, are distressed at the thought of Father Paren
leaving us.

We are not surprised that he wants to leave. He has been abused and
treated with disrespect by so-called "good Christians" who have had their
own personal interests in mind as opposed to the interests of the Church
and our community.

In my 40 years as a member of this church, it is my opinion that we have
never had a parish priest who has been as dedicated, industrious and gifted
as Father Paren. He has unselfishly given of himself to the community, while
those with personal grudges or perhaps because of the lack of special attention
from Father Paren, have insidiously undermined him.

It has always been our belief that we should love and respect our clergy,
while the clergy, in turn, would provide us our spiritual nourishment.
Father Paren has done that and more.

As the Primate of our Diocese, we respectfully request that you look into this
matter from all perspectives, and make a decision that will give honor and credit
to Father Paren, and distinction to you as the leader of our Diocese. With the
shortage of clergy that the Armenian Church is facing today, surely you cannot
tolerate the selfish and boorish behavior of a few.

We await and will abide by your decision.

Respectfully,

Rose Gargarian
Estelle Barsamian
Lorena Ejjan
Marquet Derderian
Mary Ejjian
Mark Barsamian

Andine Ejjan
Harry Barsamian
Peter L. Ejjan
Peter Ejjian
Paul Barsamian

2671 Roxie
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
March 22, 1993

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

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

Dear Archbishop Barsamian:

I apologize for taking up your time, but the recent actions which have occurred in St. John's parish have concerned and puzzled me.

My understanding of the situation (and please correct me if I am wrong) is that Fr. Paren has been given a leave of absence for approximately a week in order to rethink his resignation as pastor of St. John's. This will place the time frame for his decision at or after our annual parish assembly which is scheduled for Friday, March 26, 1993. What I find very disturbing is that, for the second year in a row, Fr. Paren will not be at the parish assembly. I cannot understand how we can conduct a parish assembly without answers from Fr. Paren or how we can accept him back into our parish if he does not attend the meeting. What I am most concerned about is that in the future if there is a situation he does not want to confront or address, will he again simply disappear? This manner of conducting church business is unacceptable to me and I cannot believe that you would condone such behavior.

I have been struggling with the decision of whether or not to leave the church for the past year. I love my church and I could never cavalierly discard my faith and beliefs. I had recently come to the conclusion that I was willing to pay my dues and attend church services without any community involvement. But if you allow Fr. Paren to return as pastor of St. John's under the current situation and have the parish return to "status quo", I will not be able to continue being a parishioner at St. John's.

I know that the concerns of one individual are outweighed by the masses but I hope that you will take the time to reflect upon my letter. If you would like to discuss this with me, I am available during the day at work, 313-964-0050, or in the evenings at home, 313-338-6579.

Respectfully,

Sara Andonian
Sara Andonian

Post-It™ brand fax transmittal memo 7671		# of pages ▶	1
To	Archbishop		
Co.	Diocese of the Armenian Church		
Dept.			
Fax #	313-779-3558		
From	Sara Andonian		
Co.			
Phone #	313-964-0050		
Fax #	313-964-4005		



MARTIN H. CHOLAKIAN

2105 Austin Street • Troy, Michigan 48063 • Telephone (313) 524-9290
All Correspondence To P.O. Box 1129 • Troy, Michigan 48099-1129

March 23, 1993

Abp. K. Barsamian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

Your Eminence:

Once again St. John's Armenian Church will conduct a Parish Assembly under duress.

Once again St. John's Armenian Church has had the gun of resignation put to its head.

Once again the Episcopal authority of the Diocesan Ordinary is challenged.

Once again the hierarchical structure of the Armenian Church is threatened.

Once again chaos and confusion reigns in the largest Diocesan Parish.

I thought last years resignation was the most destructive act the Parish ever lived through. In fact it was and during the ensuing year the Parish suffered greatly. It may not be visible from the outside but the decay from within has destroyed the spirit of this once vibrant Parish. The Parish has paid a huge price for the inaction of 1992.

We now face the same situation and this time swift, decisive action on your part is in order. If that action is not forthcoming, the Parish will suffer permanent damage from which there will be no recovery. There are many families awaiting the outcome of this situation to decide once and for all, if they will remain in the Armenian Church or look elsewhere for their spiritual satisfaction.

As a Diocesan Delegate representing St. John's Armenian Church I wanted you to know how I view this latest resignation.

The resignation by the Pastor to the Parish Council and the abandonment of the Parish without prior consent from the Primate is a serious threat to the good order and discipline of the clergymen in the Armenian Church. The Parish is being held hostage at the whim of a clergymen. If this resignation and abandonment is accepted or rejected by your Eminence without disciplinary action it sends a clear signal to all clergymen in the Diocese there is no discipline.

That is the crux of the issue at hand and we all await your decision.



MARTIN H. CHOLAKIAN

2105 Austin Street • Troy, Michigan 48083 • Telephone (313) 524-9290
All Correspondence To P.O. Box 1129 • Troy, Michigan 48099-1129

On a more personal note, I wanted you to know throughout this nightmare we have lived through my family and I have had only one concern for the Pastor. We pray for him every night for his physical, mental and spiritual well being. No one in this Parish will ever admit it but I am his only real friend.

I pray that God reveals his light to Fr. Paren and that he seeks the professional help he so desperately needs.

I pray that the Holy Spirit bless Your Eminence in this most difficult time.

With great respect and admiration

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. H. Cholakian', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martin H. Cholakian, Diocesan Delegate
St. John's Armenian Church

MARTEL Business Forms
& Systems, Inc.

The Martel Building • 2105 Austin Street • Troy, Michigan 48063

(313) 544-0290

FAX 313-689-6860

SENT BY: MARTY CHOLAKIANSENT TO: DIOCESE OF THE ARGENTINAS CHURCHATTN: ABP. KHATAG PRIMATEFAX NO.: (212) 779-3558 TIME: 3:55 PMDATE: 3-13-93WE ARE TRANSMITTING 3 PAGES (INCLUDING THIS COVER PAGE). IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL THE PAGES, PLEASE CONTACT THE ABOVE PERSON IMMEDIATELY.

IMMEDIATE REPLY REQUESTED.

YES NO NOTES: FOR EYES ONLYYOUR EMINENCE:

I APOLOGIZE FOR MY ABRUPTNESS YESTERDAY
BUT I WAS CONFUSED & PERSONALLY HURT. IF YOU CARE
TO DISCUSS THE CONTENT OF MY LETTER PLEASE CALL ME AT
THE OFFICE (800) 543-3978 OR AT HOME (313) 362-0856

PURCHASE ORDER ATTACHED

YES NO

IF MARKED YES - UPON RECEIPT, PLEASE CONFIRM IMMEDIATELY VIA PHONE.

**MARTIN H. CHOLAKIAN**

2105 Austin Street • Troy Michigan 48063 • Telephone (313) 524-9290
All Correspondence To P.O. Box 1129 • Troy Michigan 48099 1129

March 23, 1993

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Diocese of the Armenian Church
530 Second Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

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**MARTIN H. CHOLAKIAN**

2105 Austin Street • Troy, Michigan 48063 • Telephone (313) 524-9290
All Correspondence To PO Box 1129 • Troy, Michigan 48099-1129

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I pray that the Holy Spirit bless Your Eminence in this most difficult time.

With great respect and admiration

Martin H. Cholakian, Diocesan Delegate
St. John's Armenian Church

March 23, 1993

Gayle Sarkisian
29645 Highmeadow
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Archbishop Khujag Barsamian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Dear Archbishop Barsamian,

I am writing in regard to our priest the Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian. I am an American married to an Armenian and have been faithfully attending church every Sunday at St. John's Armenian Church for 30 years. It has been my observation through 24 years of Fr. Paren's leadership that he is a true and wholesome man of God, with the best interest of the Armenian church always being foremost in his priorities.

I was extremely distressed to find that he was not conducting our services this past Sunday. Then I learned that he had either resigned or taken a leave of absence.

Fr. Paren has done many things for people over the years, which the majority of parishioners are unaware. As an example, there was a girl new to this country who needed medical attention and had no insurance. At the hospital, when asked who would be the responsible party, Fr. Paren volunteered himself.

Recently, my sons began looking for a church where they felt more at home. One of them is soon to be married. When I explained to Fr. Paren my concern, not only about my sons, but the youth of our church (many of whom are Armenian-American) he volunteered to take time to meet with my sons individually. He has been conducting pre-marital counseling with my engaged son and his fiance on a weekly basis. When I asked him if he had time, his reply was, "There is nothing more important than these young people."

Our concern is and should be for the future of the Armenian church as it progresses into the next century. Our youth is the conduit of the future. It is my opinion that Fr. Paren has exhibited all the qualities of the leadership needed to conduct the affairs of St. John's. He is conscientious, kind, strong, knowledgeable, and always has exhibited the highest level of integrity.

Our church has been in good hands and progressed significantly during his tenure. I know that he loves what he is doing, but it seems as though there are some parishioners who wish to control both Fr. Paren and the affairs of St. John's. Of course, Fr. Paren does make mistakes, as we all do. I don't think that he is beyond criticism, but it seems as though he is being treated unjustly by some people.

Fr. Paren has demonstrated over the years that he is good for our church and for our people. It is my request to you to keep him in the position that he deeply loves.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gayle Sarkisian". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gayle Sarkisian



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

March 25, 1993

Mr. Vahram Fantazian,
Parish Council Chairman
St. John's Armenian Church
22001 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, MI 48075

Dear Mr. Fantazian:

I have received a letter dated March 15, 1993 from the Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian, wherein he has submitted his resignation as the pastor of St. John's Armenian Church and requests to be re-assigned to another parish in our Diocese.

As I have not rendered a final decision yet regarding the aforementioned resignation, I have assigned the Very Reverend Father Vazken Karayan to preside over the Parish Assembly which will take place on Friday, March 26, 1993.

May the Holy Spirit grace us with the proper wisdom and understanding at this time.

With prayers,

Abp. K. Barsamian

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate

FAX MEMO

PAGES

Pamela D. Jensen
22770 Fireside Court, #102
Novi, MI 48375-4662

March 25, 1993

Arch Bishop Khujag Barsamian
Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 2nd Avenue
New York, NY 10016

TO: Arch Bishop Khujag
Barsamian

Fax #: (212) 779-3558

From: Pam Jensen

Phone: (313) 452-0036

Dear Arch Bishop Khujag Barsamian:

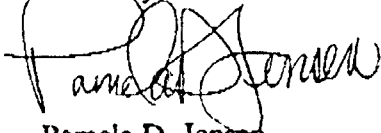
I am a member of St. John's Armenian Church in Southfield, MI. I am writing this letter to advise to my feelings for Father Paren.

I find the situation at our church very heartbreaking. I am not Armenian, however I am dating and plan to marry a gentleman who is half Armenian. I have been attending St. John's Armenian Church since last fall with his family. Recently, I began meeting with Father Paren as I had many questions regarding both the Armenian culture and the beliefs and practices of the church.

Father Paren was always available to spend time with me and make me feel like a part of the church. I sincerely believe that he is a great role model and an asset to our church. I regret that there are some politics within our church that do not allow everyone to have a consensus regarding the role that Father Paren plays in our church. He definitely has helped me to begin to understand my role in the church, as a Christian and as a part of the Armenian culture. Father Paren takes the time to listen, care and explain. He has a vision and I believe that with support and assistance St. John's will become what he dreams--a church full of love and one that welcomes the young, the old and all in between. I am young, however God is important in my life and Father Paren is someone who helps to guide and answer the many questions that I have learning the Armenian culture and living in today's society. I truly believe that his heart is in the right place and that he wants to implement programs within the church for greater involvement of the people. He is a representative of God, the Armenian Church and a Leader. Father Paren takes the time for the people. I respect him and look forward to continuing to meet with him in the future.

I hope that this letter will help you understand the important role that Father Paren plays in our church. If you have any questions, I would be happy to speak with you. You can either write to me or call me at (313) 380-0017.

Sincerely,



Pamela D. Jensen

March 26, 1993

His Eminence,
Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church
New York, New York

FAX 212-779-3558

Your Eminence:

We the Armenian residents of the Magnolia Subdivision, in the area surrounding St. John's Armenian Church are requesting that the Very Rev. Fr. Paren Avedikian remain as the Pastor of St. John's. We are depending on your wise decision in this regard.

Through the vision and foresight of Fr. Paren, this subdivision has been populated with Armenians in order to create a safe and stable environment in the area surrounding our church.

Because of our proximity to the church, we have been able to observe first hand the long and arduous hours Fr. Paren has devoted to the well being of the parishioners and the church. He has remained steadfast in upholding the traditions of the Armenian Church even in the face of adversity. We feel that you will agree that this large parish needs a strong leader in the person of Fr. Paren Avedikian.

Respectfully,

Sarkis & Hrip Vartanian
Toros & Knar Topakbashian
Mary Derbabian
Thomas and Anahid Castle
Hovsep & Garine Koundakjian
Armen & Taline Mutafian
Dr. Roy & Nayiri Misirliyan
Karnig & Manya Kazazian
Mary Demirjian
Armen Ovhanesian
George & Rosa Teberian
Harry & Anna Kurjian
Minas & Azat Arslanian
Sarkis & Houry Tcholakian

Sarkis & Silva Karadolian
Hairabed Kazazian
Harry & Arpy Ounjian
Antranig & Vartoug Karadolian
Mike & Jacqueline Oknayan
Antranig & Siran Chalabian
Sarkis & Neyart Daghlian
Ara Baljian
Raffi & Siran Cholakian
Vartan & Silva Vartanian
Byron & Virginia Melkonian
Vasken & Ann Tcholakian
Mugerditch & Zepur Godalazian

Rosalind A. Astourian
7300 Wilderness Pk. #201
Westland, MI 48185

3/27/93

Archbsp. Khajag Barsamian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Dear Srpazan Hayr:

I hope this letter finds you well and that the Diocese is running smoothly. I look forward to seeing you, however briefly, at the Diocesan Assembly next month. I'm pleased that the AACCA will be well-represented at this Assembly.

The real reason I am writing you this day is to address the situation in St. John's parish community. As you know, this month Hayr Paren Avedikian once again resigned from our parish. Our parish has again voted to ask him to return. It is my understanding that you have placed him on a leave of absence. It is my opinion that Hayr Paren should be counselled **NOT** to return to this parish as pastor.

Allow me to explain.

I have felt for many years that our Diocese--indeed our Mother Church-- has overlooked Hayr Paren's capabilities. I say this because the man tries to plan for the future not just the present year or two. He has vision. What I'm trying to say is, if his talents had been truly valued by our Diocese, he would have been given an opportunity to share his gifts and devotion with many more Armenians.

Since 1969, Hayr Paren has worked to make St. John's fulfill its potential as a church community. He has sacrificed himself totally for this community. St. John's has become his life. I sincerely doubt that he does more than two things each year strictly for himself and his own enjoyment. Sporting events, concerts, films, cultural events of all types are attended only when they (or a portion of the audience) are Armenian in nature. The same is true of recreational activities such as picnics, receptions, etc. He has gone without a real vacation many times because of the needs of the parish. Other times he has taken a "vacation" but only because he was able to combine parish business with his travel needs. He has seldom taken time out just for himself. In one form or another Hayr Paren has without fail returned between one quarter and one third of his yearly salary to the Church. That doesn't include the activities or individuals he has sponsored out of his own pocket over the years. He has always given the money he receives for performing the sacraments to the Church. Our parish has for more than a decade been content to abdicate its responsibilities for activities, committees, fundraising, etc. Hayr Paren has personally taken on every task shirked, regardless of the cost to himself physically and emotionally.

Finally, St. John's parish has been allowed to very nearly commit the "perfect crime." The parish has emotionally raped and left for dead the most dedicated clergyman it has had. In the past two years, many of us have noticed cracks in Hayr Paren's armor. He is so overburdened and overstressed that he cannot continue to be clergyman, spiritual advisor, administrator, business manager, teacher, editor, curator, librarian, uncle, and more without a great deal of help from the community. Unfortunately, our parish has

in the past few years become grossly divided. I honestly cannot explain to you all of the complexities surrounding the division. Some of the detractors want our church to imitate the Baptist or Episcopalian models. Some want us to experience an "Armenian Vatican II."

We also have a small group of individuals who have done their best to malign anything and everything Hayr Paren has tried to do or accomplish in the past several years. I suspect I know part of the reason for the fall-out, but it would be wrong of me to voice something I cannot substantiate. In short, these few people have been twisting words and deeds for their own purpose(s) in an all-out effort to destroy and humiliate Hayr Paren.

Last year, we gave Hayr Paren a 3 minute standing ovation when your rejection of his resignation was told to the Parish Assembly. This year, though the majority of us still love him dearly and want him to continue as our pastor, we realize that the final decision should be made with HIS best interest at heart. To this end I beg you Srpazan Hayr to accept Hayr Paren's resignation.

This parish will not rest until it has either healed or destroyed itself. Either one will ultimately cost Hayr Paren his life. Please give our beloved shepherd a new flock and a clean slate.

I will keep you in my prayers. As always I remain,

Your servant in Christ Jesus,


Rosalind A. Astourian

March 23, 1993

Shawn Sarkisian
14321 Princeton Dr.
Plymouth, MI 48170

Archbishop Khujag Barsamian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Dear Archbishop Barsamian,

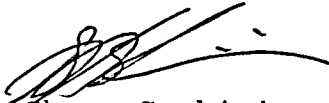
I am writing this letter in regards to the Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian. My family belongs to St. John's Armenian Church and we attend services very regularly. My fiance and I have become very close to Fr. Paren over the past 5 months. We have been meeting with him every week to discuss the Armenian church so that we can have a better understanding of the church we will be married in and worship in.

Before these meetings began, I was not very interested in the Armenian Church and rarely attended. My fiance was raised Roman Catholic, and had not been very interested in attending church either. Since, our meetings with Fr. Paren we have both come to have a better understanding of not only the Armenian church, but of God. Our spiritual lives have become very fulfilling. We owe a great deal of this to Fr. Paren, for had he not taken the time and patience to answer our questions - we may have gone away in frustration of not understanding the Armenian church and culture.

In talking with Fr. Paren, we have found him to be a very caring, compassionate, knowledgeable person whose heart and soul are devoted to God and the Armenian Church. I cannot begin to tell you the honor it has been spending this time with Fr. Paren. He has taught us more than I ever would have imagined. My fiance and I cherish the friendship we have created with him, look up to him for his leadership, and respect him for his love of God.

My fiance and I were very upset when we heard Fr. Paren had resigned. We have been looking very forward to our continued weekly meetings and to our marriage which Fr. Paren is to perform. We are not quite sure of what or who has put Fr. Paren in the position of wanting to resign, but we do know that it would be a shame to have a priest who is so dedicated to a parish leave due to problems unrelated to faith - when his is so strong. It is our desire that you keep him in the position that he so strongly adores.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shawn Sarkisian', with a long, sweeping underline.

Shawn Sarkisian

19380 Hilton
Southfield, MI 48075

March 30, 1993

CONFIDENTIAL

The Most Reverend Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate of the Eastern Diocese
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Your Eminence:

I was born, raised, and baptized in the Armenian Church and have been an active member of St. John's all of my life. I graduated from Sunday School, attended the St. Nersess Summer Study Program, was active in the ACYOA (and went to Armenia in 1970 sponsored by the Diocese), was on the Board of the Sunday School, and I am currently a Sunday School teacher.

I have been nominated and elected on numerous occasions as Secretary of the Day at our Annual Parish Assemblies. Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian recently appealed to me to accept the church secretarial position vacated by the individual who retired, indicating that my church needed me; however, I declined due to other work commitments.

Since Fr. Paren came to our parish, I have been a friend and supporter of his. I have admired him and respected him. To this day, my feelings have not changed. There is no question or doubt that he has done many wonderful things for our parish.

Your Eminence, as I am sure you are well aware, some of Fr. Paren's closest friends and supporters are the Harry Terzian family, Harry Keoleian family, and the Armen Hovnanian family. I am a member of this family. These individuals are not only my closest relatives, but they are also my only relatives on my father's side in the Armenian Church. I felt it was necessary to give you this lengthy background based on what I now feel an obligation to reveal to you.

One of my lifelong pet peeves has been someone who stands by, watches an injustice occur, and walks away from it. Outside of my church, I have never let that happen. I am confessing, for the first time, that I am guilty of allowing this to occur in order to remain in the good graces of my family and Fr. Paren. I had no alternative, because there was no choice. You either agree with Fr. Paren, or you are an outcast. In my case, I would have lost my entire family if I so much as questioned Fr. Paren's motives on any issue.

While this situation has existed for a number of years, it became more intolerable after last year's Annual Parish Assembly. However, I can't begin to tell you how much more divided our church has become after this year's Assembly. I can no longer stand by and condone the iniquitous and prejudiced actions that have progressed for the last two years and which are increasing at a rate that can only destroy this parish within a very short period of time.

We were advised at the beginning of this year's Assembly that Fr. Paren is on a leave of absence at the present time, and that you will be making a decision shortly as to whether you will accept his resignation.

In all good conscience, I must relate to you the kinds of actions that have occurred and continue to occur and hope that you will take them into consideration when making your decision.

As you know, Fr. Paren resigned last year prior to the Annual Parish Assembly. According to Fr. Paren's supporters, he resigned because he felt people were against him. His staunch supporters accused certain families of trying to oust him from his position and have continued to make these allegations. While I was impartial to any "side," I was considered to be a supporter of Fr. Paren because of my family affiliation; and just before the Assembly began, I was secretly handed a paper listing the names of the candidates for whom I should vote. I immediately turned it over to Very Rev. Fr. Samuel Aghoyan, who was delegated to preside over the meeting.

Throughout the course of that meeting, I was horrified to see and hear families and friends who had suddenly not only severed lifelong relationships with each other but also were now bitter enemies. These observations were based on their differing opinions expressed on various issues at the meeting. How can a clergyman have so much power to do so much damage to others, and then get away with using the "ploy" of resigning as a way of getting people to feel sorry for him?

Regarding this year's Annual Parish Assembly, which was held on Friday, March 26, 1993, I would like to question the legality of this meeting and/or whether certain actions were acceptable based on my observations and limited knowledge of the bylaws.

Richard Norsigian was the Chairman of the Day. Very Reverend Father Vasken Karayan was the visiting presiding clergyman. Our Parish Council Chairman, Vahram Fantazian, and Vice-Chairman, Harry Terzian, answered most of the questions asked by the Assembly.

My first concern is whether the Parish Assembly could be considered legal since it was not held within the timeframe indicated in the bylaws which dictate that it should be held no later than the end of February. (The Assembly did not vote on changing the date.) Secondly, the meeting was rescheduled three times during March and was finally held on Friday, March 26. It is my belief and understanding that this was deliberately done to assure that certain individuals would not be able to attend the Assembly due to prior

commitments. As an example, the Assembly was notified during the meeting that one of the candidates for Chairman of the Day, Deborah Ohanian, was out of town. No prior notification was received by the parish.

A parishioner questioned the Pledge Report on page 13 of our Annual Report, which indicates that our membership was 908. This total is the combination of 738 individuals who paid the minimum dues of \$125.00 and 170 individuals who paid over the minimum. No figures were reflected for the 239 senior citizens and students who pay under the minimum and have voting rights. The parishioner then asked the Parish Council for the total number of members that would be reported to the Diocese for assessment purposes. Harry Terzian reported that the figure would be 908 as reported in the Annual Report.

A motion was then made that the 1992 Annual Report to the Diocese reflect the true membership of 1,147 dues-paying individuals as of December 31, 1992. This motion was seconded and defeated. The question of legality for these 239 individuals to vote at this Assembly was then raised since they are not being reported to the Diocese. If the Parish Council does not pay an assessment on these individuals, how can their votes be considered legal?

A parishioner noted that a motion was made and passed last year that the Minutes of the Assembly be made available to the Parish immediately after approval by the Diocese. He advised that he pursued this matter with the Church Office on numerous occasions and was finally provided with a copy in November. He asked if there was a certain procedure that he should follow and was advised that copies are provided by the "Church Office."

A parishioner then questioned five motions that were passed at last year's Assembly which were to have been completed and reported to this year's Assembly. None of the five motions had been effectuated.

The response given by the Chairman of the Parish Council to all five of the motions was that the Parish Council did not have time to deal with them because of other pressing issues (i.e., renovation of the hall, car raffle, etc.), or they had not yet been completed.

A motion was also made and passed last year to display the Armenian flag in our cultural hall. The flag was displayed for the first time at the Parish Assembly on March 26, 1993. When the delay in displaying the flag was questioned by a parishioner, Harry Terzian accepted responsibility saying he was late in purchasing the flag. When asked whether the flag would continue to be displayed after this meeting, Harry Terzian responded that "it will be displayed whenever necessary." The parishioner maintained that it should be displayed per the wishes of the Parish Assembly and that the Parish Council's discretion was not above the decisions approved by the Parish Assembly.

Your Eminence, there were a total of eight motions made at last year's Assembly. Only two of these motions were accomplished --

- (1) A line item of \$400 was added for Church School graduates' dues, and
- (2) The Parish Council presented a balanced budget for 1993 to the Parish Assembly.

How can a Parish Council, presided over by a Parish Priest, totally neglect the responsibilities delegated to them by a parish? I have heard from Parish Council members that Fr. Paren dominates the meetings. One Parish Council member suggested that they do not need to attend meetings -- "Fr. Paren should just send them the Minutes of 'his' decisions."

In light of the fact that this Parish Council has not fulfilled its obligations to the Parish for the last couple of years and appears to be controlled, intimidated, and dominated in their decision-making process, I would urge that the entire Council be dissolved and an entirely new slate be presented for election along with a new priest.

When New Business was presented at this year's Assembly, an elderly gentlemen asked if he could add an item. He asked for approval "to talk about the history of our church and Father Paren." The Assembly gave its approval accordingly. However, after providing the history, he made a motion that the Assembly go on record to give Fr. Paren our vote of confidence and, if possible, to bring him back. Much discussion commenced on this issue, since it was not voted on to allow a motion to be made when New Business was requested. The Chair and Parish Council ignored the pleas of the Assembly that this motion was out of order.

At that point, at least five parishioners approached the microphones requesting that if such a motion is allowed, the vote should be by secret ballot due to the sensitivity of the issue. This was defeated despite discussion from the floor that a show of hands would only cause further dissention in the parish. Needless to say, only those who were in favor of the motion were willing to vote. Very few were willing to take the risk of opposing this motion publicly; while many parishioners, including myself, refused to subject themselves and did not vote at all. I believe this motion was totally out of order, and the Parish Council should have prevented it from being introduced.

Fr. Paren resigned from his position of his own free will (for the second time in two years), walking away from his parish without notice or concern for his community and with absolutely no reason given. Faced only with that information, how could anyone vote in favor of a vote of confidence or consider bringing him back? The question of why he resigned was asked repeatedly during the Assembly. No answers were given. What was the vote of confidence for? For walking away from his duties and responsibilities without

provocation? Are we to reward clergy for their unaccountability, irresponsibility, or maybe for sulking because they don't get their way? I, for one, don't know the answer; but I do know that this kind of behavior would never be tolerated in any other profession, occupation or work setting.

As you know, news of Fr. Paren's resignation has spread throughout the Diocese; and it is understandable that all parishes are anxiously awaiting your decision and, in particular, the wisdom with which you choose to respond to Fr. Paren's inappropriate behavior considering the manner in which he has submitted his resignation, now for the second time.

I do not want to cast blame on anyone, but in all honesty and with sincere shame, I have seen and I believe that Fr. Paren's cult-like dynasty has been built, controlled, and dominated by members of my family. Your Eminence, I have been as close to this situation as anyone can be based on my family affiliation. My family worships Fr. Paren as I did; unfortunately, they have taken this admiration for him far beyond the realms of reality.

Your Eminence, members of my own family have questioned my allegiance to Fr. Paren, simply because they have seen me talking to parishioners whom they consider to be non-supporters of his. No one should be subjected to that kind of intimidation, particularly in a Christian community.

As long as this situation continues to exist, St. John's Church will be divided; and that division will continue to grow until its total devastation. It is obviously impossible to relocate the Terzian, Keoleian, and Hovnanian families. However, In the best interest of the St. John's family as well as Fr. Paren's professional future, I am appealing to you to accept Fr. Paren's resignation and assign our parish with a new pastor.

I hope you understand, Your Eminence, that I have everything to lose by writing this letter to you; and I hope and pray that you will keep it strictly confidential. I am not out to get anybody; and I am being totally objective in my statements, observations, and accounting. My sole purpose and goal are to create and/or maintain a unified, harmonious and compatible relationship among our parishioners where all individuals can work together and express their opinions without fear of reprisal or being ostracized.

As our Archnort, I appeal to you as our spiritual leader and Holy Father to guide us through this difficult and turbulent situation and resolve this distressing ordeal so our community can once again resume worship in the peaceful, harmonious environment that we have experienced in the past.

Respectfully,



Judy K. Hovnan



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

March 30, 1993

Mr. Vahram Fantazian,
Parish Council Chairman
St. John's Armenian Church
22001 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, MI 48075

Dear Mr. Fantazian:

We have received a letter of resignation from your pastor, the Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian as the parish priest of St. John's Armenian Church of Greater Detroit. After discussing this matter with Hayr Soorp by telephone on several occasions, we have reached a decision with regard to his request.

We hereby inform you that we have accepted his resignation effective as of March 17, 1993. In accordance with his request, he will be re-assigned to serve in another parish within our Diocese.

The ending of his pastorate at St. John's parish is one of mixed emotions for us all; those of joy and those of sorrow. Indeed Hayr Paren has provided your community with commendable leadership over these past twenty-four years. The fruits of his labors among us have indeed been visibly abundant. His leadership has provided not only your parish but also the Armenian Church of America dedicated servants who have emulated the spirit and zeal of their pastor in the varied fields of ministry to our people. These are the joyful accomplishments by which Hayr Paren will be remembered. His departure after such an outstanding term of service will be likewise painful, we know; for he has become a member of your family and has established close ties with many of you. However, God's service calls him to share his many good gifts with others and thus his ministry will move to another field in our vineyard of ministry.

As I have informed you by telephone, I will be in Detroit this Thursday evening April 1, 1993 at which time I would like to meet with the members of your parish council and diocesan delegates to discuss the future course of St. John's parish and the pastoral care to your faithful. Please inform your council members and make the necessary arrangements for our meeting.

We continue to pray to the Lord for guidance and particularly at this time for perseverance and courage for your community in this period of transition.

With prayers,

Abp. K. Barsamian

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

March 31, 1993

Dear Faithful Parishioners
of St. John's Armenian Church
of Southfield, Michigan

On March 17, 1993, we received a letter from the Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian indicating his desire to us to resign from the pastorate of the St. John's Armenian Church of Greater Detroit and to be re-assigned to serve in another parish of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church in America.

Upon learning of this request, we entered into conversation with Hayr Paren to confirm his intention and be assured that his decision was one that he was certain of. We were assured by him that his decision was one that he made after much thought and, as he shared with us, will be beneficial to his own ministry as he continues to serve the faithful of the Armenian Church.

Having taken into account Fr. Paren's explanation, we accept his resignation from the pastorate of St. John's and re-assign him to continue his work as a shepherd to another flock.

The ending of his pastorate brings with it a commendable term of service to one of the most active and model parishes in our Diocese. It is our conviction that Hayr Soorp's contributions during his almost twenty-four years as the Pastor of St. John's has affected the spiritual integrity and material growth of your community. No doubt he has touched countless numbers of lives in your parish. And, because he has grown so closely to many of you, his departure we know will be a painful one. However, God's service to the faithful Armenian flock now calls him to other fields in our vineyard of ministry.

During the months ahead, we realize the difficulties that face you as you move through this period of transition in seeking a new pastor. Be assured we shall expend every effort in assisting you. Meanwhile, we shall make all the necessary arrangements for continued pastoral care.

We continue to pray to Our Saviour for His guidance, particularly at this time for perseverance and courage for your community.

With prayers,

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate



20900 Oakwood Boulevard
PO Box 1970
Dearborn, MI 48121-1970
USA
313/271-1620
TDD 313/271-2455

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based on authentic objects,
stories, and lives from
America's traditions of
ingenuity, resourcefulness,
and innovation. Our
purpose is to inspire
people to learn from these
traditions to help shape
a better future.

April 6, 1993

Bishop Khujag Barsamian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Dear Bishop Barsamian:

As a member of St. John's Armenian Church of Southfield, Michigan, I feel that it is my duty to write you this letter to let you know my feelings in regard to the departure of our Dear Father Paren Avedikian.

I am displeased with his decision to be assigned to another parish. Please consider the fact that Father Paren needs a long-deserved rest and sunshine, before you take this matter at hand. Perhaps, when he has had time to reflect, he may have different feelings about being reassigned. Perhaps these are most selfish thoughts, but he has been a remarkable Holy Soop for approximately 25 years. He can do a Badarak like no one I have seen in the past 40 years. I sincerely believe that the majority of our congregation feels as I do.

I will pray for you and Father Paren in hopes that the proper decision will be made in the end.

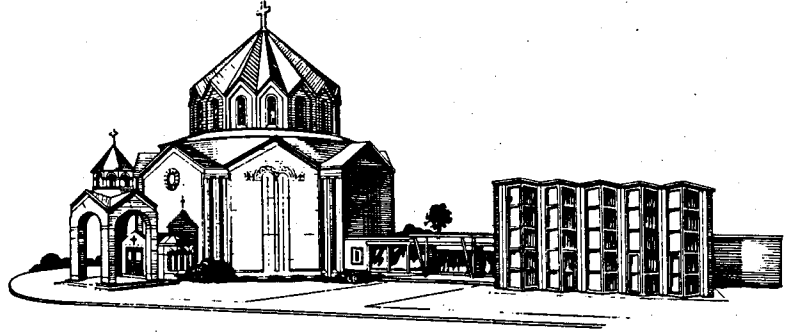
We miss him so much and with all my heart would like him back to tend to his flock.

Sincerely,


(Ms.) Marge Dakessian
A devoted Parishioner of
St. John's Armenian Church

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St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



VERY REV. FR. PAREN AVEDIKIAN
PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY



PHONE: 569-3405



SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

April 15, 1993

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

Your Excellency:

On Sunday, April 11, 1993, the Parish Council of St. John's Armenian Church received a petition signed by at least 50 dues paying members of St. John's.

The petition states: We the undersigned parishioners of St. John's Armenian Church request that a "Special Parish Assembly" be held before the Parish Council makes any final decision on suitable candidates for the position of Pastor. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss with and give direction to the Parish Council the areas of expertise and qualities the new Pastor will need to bring our church community together and to provide the necessary spiritual fulfillment for young and old alike.

Please advise us on this petition.

Sincerely yours,

Vahram Fantazian, Chairman
Parish Council

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ՄԵՍԱԳՈՏԼ ՏԻՐՈՑՅԻ

St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



VERY REV FR PAREN AVEDIKIAN
PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

PHONE 569-3405

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

April 15, 1993

His Eminence, Khajag Barsamian
Patriarch,
Patriarchate of the Armenian Church
610 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Your Excellency:

On Sunday, April 11, 1993, the Parish Council of St. John's
Armenian Church received a petition signed by at least 50
congregational members of St. John's.

The petition states: We the undersigned parishioners of St. John's
Armenian Church request that a "Special Parish Assembly" be held
before the Parish Council makes any final decision on suitable
candidate for the position of Pastor. The purpose of this meeting
will be to discuss with and give direction to the Parish Council the
areas of expertise and qualities the new Pastor will need to bring
our diverse community together and to provide the necessary
spiritual fulfillment for young and old alike.

Please advise us on this petition.

Sincerely yours,

Vahram Fantazian
Vahram Fantazian, Chairman
Parish Council

*received letter re: Spec Assembly
as we have discussed by we will be
in Del. May 8-9 & will participate
to preside of this special Assembly May 10th
of judge.*

ARMEN HOVNANIAN
31001 applewood lane · farmington hills, michigan 48331
(313) 661-4620

April 17, 1993

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate
DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
630 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10016-4885

Your Eminence,

My family and I, and many of our friends are saddened by the calamity that has befallen us, the Armenian community and the congregation of ST. JOHN'S ARMENIAN CHURCH OF GREATER DETROIT.

We have been singularly blessed to have had a most gifted cleric and outstanding leader as pastor of ST. JOHN'S ARMENIAN CHURCH. Hayr Soorp Paren Avedikian is, and was, a unique individual with tremendous intellectual capacity, knowledge, abilities, and energies. He channeled and directed all of these talents in faithful, dedicated, and devoted service to improve our church and community life. No one could have served us more unselfishly and unreservedly as the pastor of ST. JOHN'S ARMENIAN CHURCH OF GREATER DETROIT and as the president of it's Parish Council than he has for the past, almost, 25 years.

We respectfully request that you express our gratitude and appreciation to him for the many gifts he gave us, and that you convey our apologies for the pain and anguish he has had to suffer and endure for our sake.

We have, unfortunately, allowed a misinformed or misguided minority to bring about the disaster that we are experiencing and the misfortune we have permitted to be visited on a righteous man. May God forgive us our sins of omission and our sins of commission and for our failure to properly protect him from the misrepresentations, harassments, and indignities he has been subjected to.

Hayr Soorp has always lovingly shared our joys and our sorrows with us. He met our needs for the Badarak and the Sacraments of marriage, baptism, and communion always with beauty and humility. He brought us compassion, kindness, understanding, and consolation at the times of illness, death, and all the other types of family crises that human beings are heir to and experience.

Hayr Soorp has been a valiant and uncompromising protector of our Church and its doctrines and canons. He has always performed this responsibility with unselfish devotion and with no limit, or consideration, of the self-sacrifices demanded of him nor any concern for personal approval or success.

When we failed or neglected to meet our obligations as individuals, he was invariably forced to assume the burdens himself. These burdens were such things as diverse as the mundane tasks of building maintenance or an important as fund raising drives to renovate our youth center, enlisting the help of talented and qualified people to renovate our cultural hall, erecting a khatch kar, or inspiring people to set up endowments for the Church.

In addition to unceasingly meeting our spiritual needs he has provide our community with exceptional leadership in the areas of awareness and protection of our Armenian Cultural Heritage and our responsibilities for its preservation for our posterity.

Thru his leadership, support, and drive, often times under very adverse conditions, the Manoogian Museum, and the Mardigian Library became a reality at the St. John's Armenian Church Complex. These monuments to our Armenian History and Culture will continue to be a source of pride, for generations to come, for all Armenians throughout the world and particularly for all of us in this community.

Whenever such things as earthquake disaster struck, or famine and energy shortages occurred as a result of the conflict with Azerbaijan, it was always Hayr Soorp PAREN's quick, responsible reaction, and leadership that resulted in the strong successful community responses as exemplified by the "EARTHQUAKE RELIEF" and the "FOOD FOR ARMENIA" drives.

We are grateful to God for providing us a clergyman of the stature of HAYR SOORP PAREN AVEDIKIAN. There is no doubt that we miss his approach, with good taste, style, and attention to detail, in every project he undertakes. The loss of his vision and advice, and his qualities of love, devotion, courage, intellect, faith and commitment to his calling, our Church, and our community will be a void that will be felt by his flock for years to come. To many of us, as individuals, his departure is felt as the absence of a father, a brother, and a loving and lovable friend.

HAYR SOORP PAREN has truly been our good shepherd. May God bless him always.

Respectfully and sincerely,


Armen Hovnanian

cc: Mr. Vahram Fantazian
Chairman, Parish Council

Dr. Edward G. Sarkisian
17205 Cameron Drive
Northville, MI 48167

(313) 344-4321

April 29, 1993

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
630 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10016-4885
FAX 212-779-3558

Your Eminence,

At the assembly of March 26, 1993 two new members were elected to serve on the parish council of St. John's Armenian Church. I am one of the two members and am writing to express my concern with the failure of the current parish council to proceed in a timely fashion with the installation of the newly elected council members.

While we are all aware of the turmoil in our community with the departure of Father Paren, I am deeply concerned in the failure of our council and outgoing council chairman, in particular, to encourage a healing process. This community has great capacity and potential that is being harnessed to further divide rather than unify at a very critical time.

Your decision to assign a new pastor to St. John's should be deferred until the newly elected council has been installed and given adequate time to evaluate our position. I am asking that you validate the elections of March 26, 1993 as soon as possible. It would be a great honor if you would install the new council during your service in our parish on Sunday, May 9, 1993.

It was an honor to be chosen to serve St. John's. I have a great faith in my church, love of my heritage, and hope for this community. With your assistance and prayers, I know we will overcome this hurdle.

With best wishes, I remain,

Respectfully,



Edward G. Sarkisian, D.D.S.

May 10, 1993

The Most Reverend Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate
Eastern Diocese, The Armenian Church, U.S.A.

Your Grace:

My wife and I are among the vast majority in our Parish who would like to see
Father Paren return as our Pastor.

However, whoever the Pastor will be, he will need (1) an Assistant Pastor
and (2) An Advisory Committee. I suggest that an Advisory Committee be formed
to aid and work with the Pastor directly. This Advisory Committee will report
to the Parish Council and will be made up of volunteer people (perhaps some
or all retired persons) who possess various areas of expertise by way of
their career experiences.

A small group (five or six members) is recommended. Areas of expertise:
office management, financial management, building management - incl. food
service management? (this could very well be the Parish Council member assigned to/
served in this capacity in the past. This person would also be the liaison
between the Parish Council and The Advisory Committee), others.

I believe that the formation of such an Advisory Committee would allow the
Pastor to more efficiently execute his many many other duties as demanded by
our ever increasing large Parish activities.

This idea is not new with me nor the Parish. It has been talked about for years.
It was suggested by the Parish Council when I was a Parish Council member(1966-70).
Pressing matters and related circumstances prevented implimentation which I
believe is now possible.

Thank you.



George M. Kurajian, Professor Emeritus
The University of Michigan

Member, St. John's Armenian Church

May 18, 1993

His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate
St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016-4885

Your Eminence,

There are too few doers in this world. Many of us just wait for someone to lead the way. I'm writing to you to express my feelings about Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian. In my eyes and many of St. John's parish of Detroit, he was our mentor, our inspiration to do God's work. Now that he has felt moved to leave St. John's, I feel personally an endless sadness and void.

St. John's Church of Detroit is no doubt aesthetically beautiful, but I feel in my heart it is spiritually weakened without Father Paren. He inspired and breathed life into the community and its various projects to accomplish God's work. He did not do this for personal glorification or gain. He did this to praise God.

Father Paren urged the parishioners of St. John's to not only do for themselves and their families, but to look beyond and help their fellow Armenians around the world. He was the driving force behind all the fundraisers for the desperately needy Armenians, especially after the earthquake. He was the driving force behind the fundraisers for the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum and the Edward and Helen Library and the preservation of our history. He is a true leader - unselfish, loyal, trustworthy, caring, and a super intelligent human being. We will never find a more dedicated priest for the St. John's parish.

Father Paren's talents and abilities are infinite. His unmistakeable voice has and will bring tears to the eyes of those who hear him sing our church hymns. He is unwavering and steadfast to keep the traditions of the Armenian church. This can be a most difficult task in the 20th century. Many have fought for change.

I am saddened to say, we, the parishioners of St. Johns have forgotten about the "glorification of God"¹ and are more concerned with the "gratification of man."² Hayr Paren had to overcome many obstacles because of the movement toward the "gratification of man." Yet he never complained about his endless and increasing workload, doing the work of countless others.

Father Paren's achievements speak for themselves. I cannot believe he has been overlooked for elevation in the clergy. We, the parish of St. John's, should be ashamed of ourselves. We, his family, held him back from reaching his potential. He had to contend with petty bickering and vicious harassment and criticism. For what? He gave us his love, his guidance, his mental and spiritual self, not to mention his personal financial sacrifices. We failed to continue to do God's work and achieve together.

I think, maybe, if we were without fuel, water, food, we would think twice and recognize our ultimate goal to help each other. Hayr Paren never forgot his brothers and sisters in Armenia. He tried to instill this in us and teach us. I pray for his good health and happiness and to once again return to a healed parish. I hope you, Archbishop Khajag, can help our community to rethink our responsibilities in this life.

My family and I will miss Hayr Paren dearly and will hold all he has given us close to our hearts forever.

Respectfully,

Laurie Reizian

Laurie Reizian

¹"The Generation who forgot God," Time Magazine, 5 April 1993, p49.

²Ibid.

May 30, 1994
29652 Middlebelt
Farm. Hills, MI
48334

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Your Excellency:

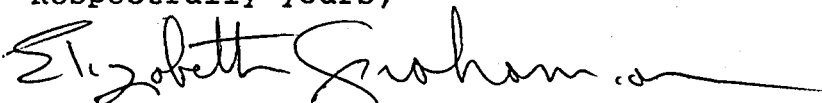
I hope you remember me. I was on the Parish Council of St. John Armenian Church in Detroit for the past six years. I write for our Church publication the Torch Bearer. I am also a reporter for the Mirror-Spectator.

I am writing out of concern for the Very Rev. Fr. Paren Avedikian. As you probably also remember, I am an admirer of the accomplishments of Fr. Paren. I did not want him to leave St. John. Almost 900 parishioners felt the same way. Our loss, and it is a great loss which has only begun to be felt in the community, should be another Armenian community's gain. Certainly 14 months of unemployment of Fr. Paren are a total waste.

It is a hardship for him to be unemployed. It is a loss for the Armenian people that a man of his considerable -- no incomparable -- talents is not being utilized. Please, please stop this waste and assign him. My only wish is that he had never resigned and thereby put himself in such a vulnerable position.

May I make it clear that he did not ask me to write. It is my own idea. I know of those vicious, almost satanic people in this Detroit community that have nothing better to do with their lives than to try to destroy this man. I will fight those who think that they will succeed. Until he is reassigned, I will continue to implore you to do so with frequent reminders.

Respectfully yours,



Elizabeth Aprahamian

Elizabeth Aprahamian
29652 Middlebelt
Farmington Hills, MI
48334



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y.

10016

10016-4834 41

