

3695 Frederick
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
28 November 1995

His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
630 Second Ave.
New York, New York 10066-4885

Dear Sir:

I am writing to you in a private capacity, not as an Ann Arbor, Michigan church council member, in the hope that you will again extend your good offices to help our Ann Arbor Armenian Community.

As an attendee of the Church in our community, I have a fervent desire to see the establishment of the Armenian Church in the Ann Arbor, Michigan environs.

I have noticed that on three successive Divine Liturgies led by our visiting priest (Father Diran Papazian), 42 to 44 adults attended services. Almost all required Communion. On alternate Sundays without a priest, only 13 to 15 adults attend services. Though all of us strive mightily to have larger numbers of attendees for the services, we are not succeeding for non-badarak services. The non-badarak service attendance and services are far short of a genuine **mass** and the parish attends accordingly.

Father Papazian is a kind, gentle, knowledgeable man...but, although he meets regularly with the church council members, he serves our community on a part-time basis. After I learned of the number of parishes he serves, I marveled at his dedication and endurance. Sooner or later the archdiocesan subsidy of the monies needed for his services here must stop; but, we can not afford a full-time priest's salary at this time. If we had 40 to 45 full time dues paying church members every Sunday, then we could possibly afford a full-time priest's salary.

The solution is staring us all in the face. We have, in our midst, a Senior Deacon who has been performing morning worship services at our parish for the past four years. He wants to be a priest. I understand he has been pursuing the Armenian priesthood for 23 years. The fact that he is gainfully employed outside of the Church may be viewed by some as a detriment to his dedication to the Church. However, I **vehemently disagree**. His employment elsewhere is a distinct advantage to us, **economically speaking**. Our parish can succeed with him with less than the 40 to 45 dues paying members because **he does not require any pay**. Michael Ohanesian is a dedicated church person who has faithfully served Ann Arbor for four years. His recent resignation from our midst was a result of the extreme frustration of the glacially slow movement on the part of some in the Diocese in letting him lead our parish as a priest. Obviously, any man who devotes 23 years of dedication and service to the Church can not be forever questioned and forestalled as to that dedication and loyalty.

When you graciously accepted the Ann Arbor church council's invitation to lunch at the Gandy Dancer restaurant, I mentioned that as a pragmatist, I would endeavor to push for certain accomplishments by our parish and then "the ball would be in your court." We have a strong core of people who, despite

limited attendance at church, have accomplished all but two goals that we have set for ourselves:

1. We need a physical plant we own that we can call our church.
2. We need a full-time priest.

A badarak every Sunday will, in time, bring on the desired number of dues paying members. We need a full-time priest. We can not continually ask you to subsidize us. We need this Church! With God's help and yours, we will have this Church. Ultimately, the decision is yours, but a decision forthwith is urgently needed. Our current Ann Arbor morale and drive is very high and we are dedicated. But this dedication and drive can be sustained only so long as we perceive that suitable progress is being made by all concerned. Without that progress, our Church can not succeed in the Ann Arbor area.

Won't you please help further? "The ball is in your court."

Respectfully,


John Sarkis Ohanian