

Zaven G. Hatutian
12606 Ensley Lane
Leawood, Kansas 66209
June 17, 1987

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate
Diocese of Armenian Church of America
630 Second Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016-4885

Your Eminence:

I Have received your letter dated June 5, 1987 for which I thank you. Your short presence among us was of great significance and spiritual enlightenment for all of us here in Kansas City; an awareness of belonging, and enhancement of our Armenian heritage.

Allow me, Your Eminence to go through the events of the past few weeks, here in Kansas City, in particular since the visit of Father Kasparian on June 3, 1987.

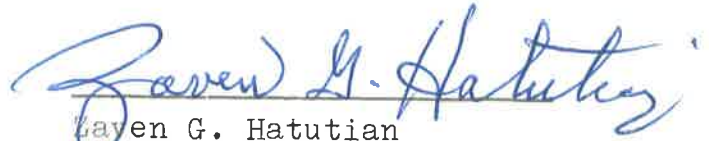
All of us are aware of the rift of the Armenian churches in the United States, a sorrow chapter in our history. From day one when we all met, we made it clear to each other that we will stay unified and not cast any allegiance to either part of our division in churches. After all, Your Eminence, you do not need to go very far to count the few Armenians of our community on your fingers. We have agreed to stay unified with no political affiliation.

All that changed on the day of June 3, when Father Kasparian visited us. The meeting of parish council in our home dragged into late hours at night. An ultimatum was issued to us by Father Kasparian: "Either you go by my wishes or the parish council is dissolved." Your Eminence, you should have seen the anguish among the parish council members. One by one, they walked away, with tears in their eyes and disbelief on their faces. Our hopes of understanding and planting the seeds of love amongst us was shattered. We felt that our basic human rights, the freedom to think, speak and decide for ourselves was stripped from us. Our democratic means have ceased to function. This was against our very basic moral belief.

I do not need to go far back but to remind you May the 14th, our historical day here in Kansas City when you assigned my daughter Jennifer to read Chapter XIII of the 1st Book of Corinthians during the Badarak. I could hardly restrain my tears of joy at that moment. It still vividly rings in my ears when Elizabeth Zakaryan approached you: "Serpazan Hair, would you baptize me?" An adult person of Protestant upbringing wants to be baptized in Armenian Apostolic Church?. O Lord, have mercy upon us....Armenians.

Your Eminence, our hearts and homes are open to you. I hope that in your very busy work schedule, you can devote little time to come and visit your lost flock here in Kansas City. Your words of May the 14th are still ringing in our ears; they will ring forever.

Hopefully and Prayerfully yours,


Gayen G. Hatutian