

CONFIDENTIAL

THE SECRET PLAN OF PRIMATE ARCHBISHOP TORKOM MANOOGIAN TO CLOSE THE HOLY CROSS CHURCH

Problem No. 1 -- After the St Vartan Cathedral was opened it was found that the average Sunday attendance was very small. It was filled only on special days, but on an ordinary Sunday the attendance in the Holy Cross was better than St VARTAN. The solution to this problem was to close Holy Cross so that those members would then transfer to St Vartan and help the membership.

Problem no. 2 - One of the problems in unity talks with the tashnag church has been the existence of the Holy Cross. Since Bishop Tourian was murdered there and buried there, it has been a symbol of the divided community. By closing Holy Cross this obstacle would be removed once and for all and unity would become easier to achieve.

The Solution -- To gradually downgrade the need for Holy Cross. This can be achieved by reaffirming the need for Holy Cross orally, but on the other hand by certain official acts slowly tightening the noose around the neck of the parish. This in fact has been the plan and with the events listed below one can see the pattern as it has developed.

1. ~~St VARTAN Cathedral opened in 1968.~~
2. Early 1970s an Armenian School and Sunday School was started in Westchester for the families that live there. The Armenian deacons were used as the teachers. These classes were held on Saturdays in Westchester. Those who took the children to this school withdrew from the Holy Cross Church as active members. In addition to removing the students from the then active Holy Cross Sunday School, this move also excused the parents from going to Holy Cross on Sundays. If the Archbishop was really concerned with the education of the Westchester pupils, he would have assigned a few of the deacons to help the existing Holy Cross Church and give it the much needed shot in the arm it needed but never got.
3. 1971 removed the full time pastor and replaced him with a part time priest. This situation was long desired by the parishioners, but a part time priest was not the answer. This created dissension in the parish which resulted in many ugly events and drove a number of people away from active participation. By offering a part time priest, the archbishop silenced a number of his critics who had requested a new priest but on the other hand it created disunity. This move created a split which until recently was still being felt in the church. A part time priest could not minister to the needs of the entire parish, therefore alienating more parishioners.
4. 1973 - For many years the Parish Councils had talked of moving the Holy Cross Church to another place. When the archbishop was asked this question, he refused to allow the parish to move. Instead he stated that both Holy Cross and Westchester were communities that could exist peacefully side by side. By refusing to allow Holy Cross to move to another place he gave the go ahead to the Westchester members to leave Holy Cross.
5. The Westchester Community was organized as a parish. Those who had been members of Holy Cross were told to become members of the new church and leave Holy Cross.
6. Father Arshen graduated from school in November 1973 but instead of becoming a full time priest he was given another part time position in the diocese thereby keeping him from becoming a full time priest in Holy Cross.
7. MAY 1974, the archbishop met with the Parish Council and informed them that Father Arshen was to be a full time priest. This assignment lasted until July 1974 when it was announced that Father Arshen was being sent to the Philadelphia church.

These are actual facts concerning the plan to slowly phase out the Holy Cross Church. LET THEM BE DENIED !!!