

February 13, 1986

The Very Rev. Fr. Paren Avedikian, Pastor
St. John Armenian Church
22001 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, Michigan 48075

Dear Fr. Paren:

Thank you for your letter of December 12, 1985. Your spirit of cooperation to solve the difficulties that exist are very much appreciated.

I will be pleased to visit Detroit on April 5 and 6, together with Elise Antreassian, the D.R.E. Director and Nancy Basmajian, the ACYOA Juniors Director, to meet with you and to consider the issues pertaining to the D.R.E. work.

As we have discussed during our telephone conversation a week ago, a D.R.E. Teacher Education Workshop will be held on Saturday, April 5, and on Sunday, Elise and Nancy will have the opportunity to visit the classrooms. Saturday night Nancy may also meet with the ACYOA Juniors.

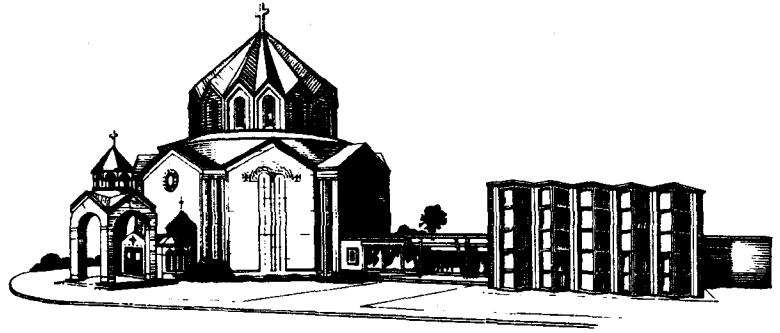
I will let you know at a later date our travel arrangements, and the D.R.E. will send you material for the workshop.

With prayers,

Fr. Khajag Barsamian
Vicar General

ՍԲ. ՅՈՎՀԱՆՆԷՍ ՄԿՐՏԻԶ ՀԱՅՑ. ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻ
ՄԵՄԱԳՈՅՆ ՏԻԹՐՈՑԹԻ

St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



VERY REV. FR. PAREN AVEDIKIAN
PASTOR

REV. FR. HAIK DONIKIAN
ASSISTANT PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY



PHONE: 569-3405



SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

December 12, 1985

Very Rev. Fr. Khajag Barsamian,
Vicar General
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Dear Fr. Khajag:

About a month and a half or two months ago, you had spoken to me regarding the "problem" between the D.R.E. and St. John's Church School. I apologize for being late with my explanation.

The following are the details of the "problem" from our viewpoint.

1. I have forgotten the date, but about four years ago when the directive came either from the Primate or the D.R.E. in regards to the graduating class tests being sent to the D.R.E., I objected both in person at the Diocesan Council and in writing because St. John's program was more extensive than the Diocesan D.R.E. program and because St. John's administers the tests two Sundays prior to graduation it would not have been feasible for us to comply with the directive. At the time, I received assurance from His Eminence that the reason for the requirement was to have the graduating class tests on file at the D.R.E. The explanation seemed reasonable enough, and I had intended to comply with the directive for the graduating class of 1983. Around Eastertime, I called the Diocese to speak to the Director and ask for diplomas for the graduating class. I was told that the Director was on vacation, and that I should speak to her Assistant, I believe, in Philadelphia. I called the Assistant. She gave me some excuses and I was given the run-around. I could not wait any longer, so I decided to go ahead and print St. John's Church School Graduation diplomas, and we have issued those diplomas to our graduates ever since.
2. I have been asked to provide the names and addresses of St. John's Church School Staff to the CRE/DRE since the time that Mrs. Valerie Zahirsky was the Director. An explanation was never given to me regarding the purpose of this request. My feeling on the issue has

been that since these individuals are volunteers to St. John's Armenian Church School, any communication from the Diocese to these volunteers should be made through me as the Pastor and Superintendent of the Church School.

3. I have objected to a number of articles and explanations in the D.R.E. Bulletins. The function of the D.R.E. Bulletins, I perceive, is to instruct. The individuals on the Church School Staffs have assumed the responsibility to teach our youngsters the teachings and the position of our Church on issues. For this reason, personal opinions on matters of faith, tradition and practices ought not to appear in the D.R.E. Bulletins. They may appear in other Diocesan publications. I have been the Superintendent of St. John's Church School since 1970 and reported this to the Diocesan Office annually in the Diocesan Questionnaire. Bulletins, up until the October, 1985 issue, have not been sent to me directly. They have been sent to the Assistant Superintendent's home.
4. In late 1983 or early 1984, I was informed by Mr. Frank Avakian Stoneson that St. John's Church School would be one of the Church Schools of the Diocese to test a portion of the new curriculum. I welcome this wholeheartedly, but to this day, I have yet to receive any of the new materials, and I understand that they are completed and under publication. Only a few chapters from Yeretzhin Rosalie Papazian's book were tested and evaluated at St. John's Church School only for the benefit of the author. Yet the largest Church School in the Diocese has been denied the opportunity to test a few of the books in the new curriculum.
5. On a few occasions, St. John's Church School Board and Staff members have participated in the D.R.E. Church School Workshops sponsored at the Diocese by Mr. & Mrs. Edward Mardigian. In every single instance each participant from Detroit has come back to me with the following statement. "What does the Diocese have against us?" Comments made by instructors such as, "Detroit does it wrong." are not appreciated, particularly when Detroit does it right, according to our Church's traditions and practices which are still in force.
6. In 1984 and 1985 St. John's Church School has not been invited to participate in the D.R.E. Summer Workshops for Superintendents and Staff Members at the Diocese, in spite of the fact that the sponsors of the program are parishioners of St. John's. It would not take much to antagonize the benefactors by making them aware that their own Parish is denied the opportunity to participate in these programs.
7. Each year the D.R.E. has been sending the circulars regarding the designation for the Lenten Offering for the year too late for us to comply with the designated purpose. Perhaps this doesn't pose a problem for the smaller Church Schools, but St. John's Church School's size must be considered in making these decisions. We have our own methods of collection which require advance notice.
8. Almost from the first day that she came to the Diocese, the new Director of the D.R.E. has gone out of her way not to converse with me, including during my most recent visit to Armenia in 1985. She deliberately avoided speaking to me both at the hotel in Yerevan, at the Yerevan Airport and

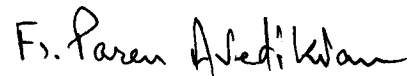
on the flight from Yerevan to Moscow. To my knowledge I have not done anything to harm her or spoken about her, since I don't know her well enough to say anything about her, good or bad. I wonder what the source of this antagonism, intolerance, and hate is? To my knowledge, she is an employee of the Diocese and ought not to be encouraged to display personal likes or dislikes in dealing with other individuals who hold positions within Diocesan Parishes.

9. Following the 1985 Diocesan Assembly, I was made aware that the Diocesan Annual Report had singled out St. John's as the Church which issues its own diplomas. To my knowledge there is at least one more Parish who does the same, yet no mention of their name was made in the Diocesan Annual Report. Is this the D.R.E. Director's way of harassing people who are not under her thumb? Are we running a Diocese on personal feelings or on a professional basis?

These are the unresolved issues that exist between the D.R.E. and its staff and St. John's Church School, and my understanding and principals in the administration of the Church School and the role of the D.R.E. Hopefully, you will be able to work out an acceptable solution to the existing issues.

I stand ready to cooperate with you to make your task pleasant and easy.

Yours in Christ,



Father Paren Avedikian
Pastor and Superintendent

PA/la



D.R.E. Teacher Education Workshop

1985-86

SCHEDULE

Saturday

9:30-10:00

Registration and Welcome

10:00-11:00

Great Moments in Teaching

11:00-12:00

Teacher talk/Student talk

12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:00-1:45

Your Sunday School

1:45-2:30

St. Perfection Sunday School

2:30-3:00

General Meeting



The New Sunday School

ALCOA, JR.

*Elise will send
you material for the
part of workshop*