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Տէր Բարի Բհնյ. Սէթճեան, Հովիւ

ST. LEON ARMENIAN CHURCH  
Rev. Patee Metjian, Pastor

March 20, 1984

His Eminence  
Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate  
Diocese of the Armenian Church  
630 Second Avenue  
New York, New York 10016

Dear Surpazan Hayr:

The Annual Parish Assembly of St. Leon Armenian Church met on Sunday, February 5, 1984. There was a special proposal presented to the Parish Council by Barbara Hovsepian. The Parish Council, in turn, presented an amended version to the Assembly.

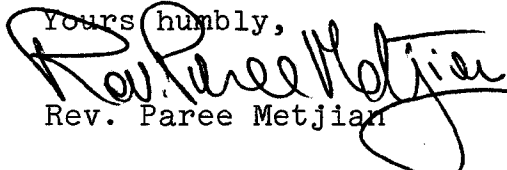
Briefly, the original proposal stated that "girls be allowed as well as boys and encouraged to train to be acolytes". The amended version stated that "girls as well as boys be allowed and encouraged to train and eventually be ordained as acolytes (receive the Four Minor Orders), provided the Primate gives prior expression of his approval". (See attached Resolution #2.)

The Parish Council took this attitude because in 1977 there were two girls who participated in the acolyte training program and they were denied such an ordination, except for the blessing of the veil.

Surpazan Hayr, on behalf of St. Leon Parish, I am requested to seek permission to allow girls to participate in acolyte training this year. If this permission is granted, they will receive the "Four Minor Orders", thus being allowed to serve as acolytes.

Your early and prompt consideration to this very important matter will be greatly appreciated. I have to add that an overwhelming amount of St. Leon's members are in favor of initiating such an action.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours humbly,  
  
Rev. Patee Metjian

RPM:vh

Attach.

12-61 Saddle River Road \* Fair Lawn, N.J. 07410 \* Telephones: (Code 201) Church: 791 - 2862

## RESOLUTION #2

### PROPOSAL:

That girls as well as boys be allowed and encouraged to train to be acolytes.

### INTERPRETATION:

Acceptance of this proposal would mean that any child, boy or girl, who requested training to be "tbir" would be allowed to train and serve in our church under the guidance of Der Paree. Upon successful completion of training, a formal request to receive the Four Minor Orders would be submitted to the Diocese, to be an acolyte with official standing.

### RATIONALE:

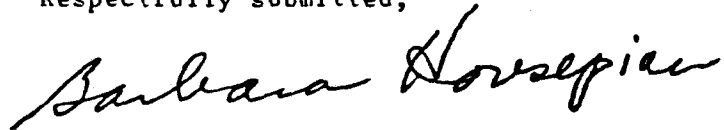
The Church has always, although slowly, made changes to keep up with the needs of each generation of worshipers. In the Early Church, both men and women served as Deacons. (See St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans 16:1-2.) The Armenian Church has had women serving in the Church in its past history, and even at present has at least one woman Deacon. It is only in recent centuries that this tradition has faded. It is time now to reinstate the tradition of women serving in the Church starting with the Four Minor Orders, Acolyte.

We have many interested girls and boys who wish to take a more active and important part in the Badarak. They feel serving as an Acolyte is exciting, interesting, fulfilling, and fun. They also feel a spiritual commitment to their Church in seeking this office. These children should be allowed to develop a greater knowledge of their faith and deeper desire to serve their Church through Acolyte service. There is no Church doctrine prohibiting women (girls) from serving in this capacity.

Our parish is small and we rely on a small number of interested boys to serve as Acolytes. The number of available servers would be increased to our benefit by allowing girls to become Acolytes.

In other Armenian Churches in our area where girls have trained to serve as Acolytes and are currently doing so, their record of devoted, reliable service has matched if not surpassed the record of the boys serving in their parishes.

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara Hovsepian

### PARISH COUNCIL WOULD ENDORSE A MODIFIED PROPOSAL AS FOLLOWS:

That girls as well as boys be allowed and encouraged to train and eventually ordained as Acolytes (receive the Four Minor orders) provided the Primate gives prior expression of his approval.