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St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church

678 Richmond Road • Richmond Heights, Ohio 44143 • 216-381-6590

April 7, 1996

To The Dues-Paying Members of St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church:

KRISDOS HARYAV I MERELOTS! CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD!

Dearly Beloved,

As this letter reaches you the Holy Church has just completed her commemorations of the most important events of our holy orthodox Christian faith. On the various days of holy week, Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Holy Friday and Holy Easter we prayerfully reflected on our own sins and shortcomings which sadly necessitated the crucifixion (the death of our Lord). We also rejoiced in the resurrection and the great promise of eternal life. At the start of this letter I ask you to remember that the Cross and the Resurrection are really what our church life is to be about. We are called to be witnesses in our daily lives to that great love shown to us by our crucified Lord.

Over the past month and a half our church community has been struggling with the very serious and lamentable issue of the misappropriation of funds by former parish council treasurer, David Andonian. At the Annual Parish Assembly of February 25, 1996 and all parish council meetings since the issue has been discussed at great lengths. The annual meeting began with the reading of David Andonian's letter in full admission of guilt and in promise of complete repayment.

Since the Annual Assembly, Parish Council and Auditing Committee have been working closely together and at a steady pace to arrive at a final accounting and to agree on the best and quickest manner for recovering the lost funds.

I am happy to report that at the beginning of March David Andonian made an initial payment of \$10,000 and on Wednesday, March 27 via telephone he agreed to sign a promissary note stating that the remaining balance of \$13,457.80 would be paid within 30 days. On Friday, April 5 he made an additional payment of \$3000.

On Sunday, May 19 a special parish assembly will convene immediately following church services to present an update on the progress of the misappropriation's issue to our membership. All dues-paying members are invited.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to the Auditing Committee, Parish Council and Diocesan Delegate for the countless and at times, emotional hours spent on this issue. I am most thankful that the membership has demonstrated their full confidence in our Parish Council and Auditing Committee. I must also commend the great patience shown by the community at large as we struggle to bring this sad chapter to a close while striving to reestablish financial credibility. Almost immediately after the misappropriations were discovered a new system of checks and balanced was developed and put in place. For more details on this, please feel free to ask any Parish Council member.

I fully realize that the issue of misappropriations has generated much anger in the community. However, we do well to remember the scripture which says, *God hates the sin, but loves the sinner. "Vengeance is mine", says the Lord.* I strongly suggest that all negative energies be immediately redirected toward the upbuilding of our community rather than to its possible splintering. Individuals acting or threatening to act independently of the Parish Council, Diocesan Primate and Diocese of the Armenian Church on official church business can only damage the smooth resolution of such serious issues. *Complaints concerning the Parish Council as a body or against any one of its members must be made in writing through the Parish Priest or, in his absence directly to the Primate and the Diocesan Council for decision.* (By-law 34)

In May 1997 St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church will be host to the annual Clergy Conference and Diocesan Assembly. This is a great honor for our parish. Every single Armenian in Cleveland should look forward and proudly join together in this united effort. This will be an excellent opportunity for all of us to come forward and lend our full support. There is no question in my mind that despite past misfortunes we can move ahead and make the Assembly a great and shining success.

Dearly beloved, Christ has conquered sin and death! Let us not forget the sacrifice that he made because of his love for us. Now is the time to take up your cross and and rededicate yourself to our holy faith (of the martyrs). Let us recommit ourselves once again to the greater glory of God and to the strengthening of our little flock of Armenian Christians in Cleveland.

May the blessings of the risen Lord be with you all. Amen.

With humble prayers,



Deacon Norman Odabashian

P.S. In the future, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

cc: Archbishop Khajag Barsamian