

# Saint Gregory The Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church



12 CORBETT AVE.  
BINGHAMTON, N. Y. 13903  
(607) 722-8801

## St. Gregory Armenian Church 1988 Parish Assembly Chairman's Report

The past year has been one of the bleakest years in the history of our Parish. In my report last year I stated that "dissent is healthy but division is destructive and it appears that the latter has become very much a reality in our Parish." This apparently fell on deaf ears and during the past year, differences of opinion became personal vendettas. Mis-truths and half truths have been disseminated around the entire country and our reputation as a parish has not become one to be proud of.

Unfortunately, a group of our parishioners refused to respect the will of the majority regarding the retention of Father Sooren Chinchinian as our Parish priest and, as a result, we have all become the losers. There has not been one major successful church function during the last year due to a lack of cooperation. Two of our church dinners given by the Parish Council after Badaraks by visiting priests were even boycotted.

On January 30, 1987, His Eminence Archbishop Torkoom Manoogian and Judge Vincent Gurahian, Chairman of the Diocesan Council, visited our Parish and met with the Parish Council and the parishioners urging us to work out our differences. Subsequently, Serpazan relieved Haya Soorp Sooren Chinchinian of his duties at this Parish as of May 17, 1987. Unfortunately, Father Chinchinian did not physically leave this area for several months which created more tension and friction.

Because of the volatility of the situation, and information which I believe to be valid that the priest who had been relieved of his duties by the Serpazan would continue to perform Badarak in our Church, the Parish Council Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, and the Treasurer, because of the urgency of the matter and lack of time for a full council meeting, decided to change the locks to secure the church and obtain the services of a church custodian as soon as a vote could be taken at the next Parish Council meeting. On June 8, 1987, a notice was sent to all dues paying parishioners asking for their requirements of the use of the Church so that appropriate arrangements could be made to give access to the building. See the notice attached at

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the end of this report. We received only one reply. After a custodian was obtained, arrangements were made for him to open the Church door every Sunday morning. From my standpoint, I can say that there was never any intention to restrain any individual, organization, or group from free access to the Church for legitimate use.

Father George Arakelian performed Badarak in our Parish in June 1987 and we had a resounding response. Father Carnig Halagian performed Badarak in November 1987 and the response was similar. Father Gdanian of Troy, N.Y. was scheduled to perform Badarak in September 1987 and cancelled for last minute reasons. Father Mesrob Semerjian, who was scheduled to perform Badarak in October 1987, cancelled due to emergency surgery.

In my conversation with Father Gdanian, he informed me that he plans to retire soon and will be happy to serve our Parish on a monthly basis. Father Carnig Halagian has told me that he would be willing to visit our Parish whenever possible. I don't feel that two Badaraks a month, nine or ten months of the year, is at all unrealistic or unaffordable.

I have also contacted Garo Papazian at the Diocese and he is willing to visit us and help get our Sunday School going. He has already had conversations with Adrienne Papazian of our Parish. Sunday School has not been held in the Church since May of 1987.

The Church roof was recently completed and painting of the Church Hall, exterior caulking, painting of the exterior trim and surfacing of the blacktop remain to be done as capital projects.

Lastly, I would like to say that although the aggravations have been ever present, the rewards have been innumerable, and I would like to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to serve on the Parish Council over the past ten years. I am also grateful for the solid support I have received from my fellow Council members. Let us remember our purpose and the sacrifices and dedication of our fathers and mothers before us and resolve to go forward from this point on.

Respectfully,

Dr. George P. Rejebian  
Chairman, Parish Council  
St. Gregory Armenian Church