

Nov. 93-16/28

Prelacy Responds With Statement on New Parish in Georgia

NEW YORK, N.Y. - The Prelacy Executive Council has issued the following statement on the establishment of a new parish in Atlanta, Ga.:

For many years the small Armenian community in Atlanta, Ga., was an example of a unified action, with all its members working under the umbrella of the Armenian Independent Cultural Association of Atlanta (AICAA).

The executive body of this association always invited clergy from both the Diocese and the Prelacy alternately to offer religious services, to the satisfaction of all.

In September 1986, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Prelate, visited the community by the invitation of the AICAA and during his sermons as well as in informal conversations encouraged the community members to preserve the existing structure, and suggested that their community should spearhead a pilot project of a unified parish wherein small communities in the U.S. could become a model of unity and cooperation.

Unfortunately, this principle was violated by the Diocese recently, when Diocesan parish

council was set up against the expressed wishes of the majority of those present at a community meeting.

When during the said meeting many people suggested to form a coalition parish council composed of two representatives from the Diocese, two from the Prelacy and one neutral individual, the visiting clergyman representing the Diocese commented that "We are not in the business of selling mixed vegetables."

Under these circumstances, at the request of the majority of the members of the Atlanta community, the Prelacy Executive Council has decided to appoint a temporary Board of Trustees under the jurisdiction of the Prelacy, composed of the following individuals:

1) Armen Gheblikian, 2) Mrs. Siran Meguerian, 3) Ms. Barbara Telalian, 4) Mr. Arshag Ohanian, 5) Mr. Bedros Didoyan.

The function of this Board of Trustees will be to organize the community and hold open elections for a permanent Board of Trustees.

The visiting pastor of the new community is Very Rev. Shahe Panossian.