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DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA, 630 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016 212 686-0710

ARCHBISHOP TORKOM MANOOGIAN, PRIMATE

September 11, 1978

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

Your Eminence:

As directed, I arrived in Toronto on August 27, 1978, and was met at the airport by the members of the Parish Council. That same evening, I had a meeting with the Parish Council and Diocesan Delegates of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church. Missing were Hratch Boyajian and Arto Cavouk. The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere, but the lack of pastoral leadership for the parish was felt. The meeting began with a prayer and my explanation of my mission. I stressed the fact that I was sent by Your Eminence to consult with the Parish Council concerning the need, if any, of a second parish in the Greater Toronto area.

After a lengthy discussion concerning a wide range of subjects which were felt important to the parish, and after hearing the opinions and suggestions of everyone present, the following is the summary of the meeting:

1. The nomination of a new parish priest by Your Eminence is of the utmost importance.
2. Bishop Aris without delay should be made to leave Canada.
3. At present, there is no need for a second parish.
4. The parish should study the possibility of moving to a new site in the North East area of Toronto. There is a Feasibility Committee studying this future plan.

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5. Every effort should be given to the task of re-uniting the parish.
6. All the church organizations should be revived and strengthened.

The following day, Monday August 28, 1978, I met with the five individuals nominated by Your Eminence at the home of Khachig Kouyoumdjian, to discuss the possibility of forming a second parish in Toronto.

I opened the discussion by re-iterating the fact that the Primate and the Diocesan Council does not recognize the incorporation of the so-called "Second Parish" and that it was my intent to consult with them, if there is a need for a second parish in the Greater Toronto area. After a lengthy meeting, the following is a summary of the discussions:

1. There is a definite need for a second parish in the North East area of Toronto to meet the ever increasing needs of the fast growing community.
2. The present parish is not in the position to tend to the needs of the large Armenian population in Toronto.
3. They have a list of over 400 individuals of whom only less than ten percent are members of the Holy Trinity parish, who are petitioning for a second parish.
4. They have the financial means to cover the costs of a new parish.
5. It is felt that the second parish will insure the preservation of the faith and heritage of so many Armenians who at present do not attend Holy Trinity for a number of reasons, and are deprived of an Armenian Church and Community Center.

On August 29, 1978, a meeting was held at Holy Trinity Armenian Church between the Parish Council and the five individuals nominated by Your Eminence. Besides the seating arrangements and a personal difference, the meeting was held in a cordial and "relaxed" atmosphere.

I opened the meeting with a prayer and once again stressed the purpose of my visit to Toronto, that is, by the directive of His Eminence the Primate, this meeting is for the sole purpose of consulting with them to see if there is a need for a second parish in Toronto or not. The meeting was lengthy and both sides expressed their views, each re-iterating their opinions concerning the said matter expressed previously at the separate meetings.

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The following are my observations and opinions concerning the meetings I had with both sides:

1. There definitely is a need for a parish priest to be appointed as soon as possible.
2. Bishop Aris should be removed from Canada. His presence is stumbling block for the peace and progress of the community as a whole.
3. The Parish Council Chairman is the dominating force on the council. He is a qualified person but lacks the spirit and finesse in his position.
4. The "Second Parish" is "guided" by Armen Kurkjian who is the influential person of this group.
5. There is a need for a second parish. The Greater Toronto area is a large area.
6. An Armenian Community Center is being built in the North East section by the A.R.F. and has the potentials of attracting a large segment of the Armenians in Toronto.
7. The second parish, with its facilities, would be a deterrent for the separated brethren.
8. There exists misunderstanding and mistrust on a personal level amongst many individuals.

It is my personal opinion that steps should be taken as soon as possible for the welfare of the community.

Your humble servant,



Father Houssig Bagdasian
Vicar General