

Message from Karekin II, Patriarch of the Armenians

Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch, Catholicos of all Armenians

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XVI INTERNATIONAL ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE

*Message of Blessing of His Holiness KAREKIN II
Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians
to the 16th International Ecumenical Conference*

As Supreme Patriarch and Pontiff of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church, we extend our blessings and best wishes from the spiritual center of all Armenians the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin to you, the participants in the 16th International Ecumenical Conference.

This initiative is Godpleasing, since in today's contemporary world, spiritual fathers who bring their service to the Lord, and Christian intellectuals who witness to the luminous faith granted from heaven, have gathered together to express your thoughts, ideas and views regarding spiritual paternity. You have come to assess the great experience and legacy of spiritual fatherhood bequeathed to us by the holy fathers of the Church, the hermits, the saintly monks, as well as gracefilled individuals in modern times who lived with the greatest devotion to God.

The Holy Church of Jesus Christ, throughout its centuries of history has always led man to the eternity of heaven, liberating him from the deceiving illusions of evil. This mission commanded by God has also been effective and fruitful as a result of spiritual fatherhood having a place of great importance in the life of the faithful.

Spiritual paternity has similarly played a great role in the rich tradition of our Church throughout the centuries to free the believer from the tumults of sin and to protect the true harmony of mankind's spiritual inner world following the example of the sacrifice of Isaac in the Old Testament as a living sacrifice dedicated to God. As Abraham, with his unequivocal faith and God as his refuge, led his son to the mountain of sacrifice; and his son who obediently and without protest followed him, thus does the spiritual father lead the son or daughter entrusted to him through divine grace to the heights of introspection and selfsacrifice. In this manner, all faithful Armenians have found refuge in their Lord in heaven at the most difficult times of our history and have repeatedly ascended the mountain of selfsacrifice and have been placed as an offering before God; but the strength of salvation and resurrection of our Lord has always granted ascent to their new life and new endeavors.

Today, in light of everchanging developments in the world and in these conditions of globalization, the emphasis of spirituality and the importance of spiritual paternity is truly an imperative within Christian life. It becomes necessary and beneficial for each and every believer, as a shield against intolerance and its associated evil consequences, which rears its head in human society; and as the catalyst with which to promote the reinforcement of reconciliation and love, mutual respect and trust.

We convey our Pontifical blessings to the organizers of this conference for their commendable diligence and their implementation of this Godpleasing initiative, and with prayers to heaven, we wish success to the work of this meeting. We ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your mission, and the Lord's compassionate mercy and protection for the entire world and all peoples.

May the Grace, Love and Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all. Amen.

With Blessings,

KAREKIN II
SUPREME PATRIARCH
CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS