

# Message from Karekin II, catholicos of the Armenians

ss Karekin II, supreme patriarch and catholicos of all Armenians

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## **XVII International Ecumenical Conference**

We greet the organizers and all participants of the 17th annual International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality and convey to you our pontifical blessings and best wishes from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, the spiritual center of the Armenian people and headquarters of the Armenian Church.

It is gratifying that this year's conference, entitled "The Spiritual Struggle in the Orthodox Tradition," will reflect on the issues of human spirituality, the struggle to overcome temptation, strengthening prayer life and asceticism. These topics, viewed within the scope of 21st century perceptions and comprehensions, will consider the positions and teachings of renowned and respected ecclesiastical authors.

In Christianity, prayer holds a place of prominence, for it fortifies the spiritual world by communicating divine graces, and as St. Paul the Apostle says, "...Our inner nature is being renewed every day" (2 Corinthians 4:16). Indeed, spiritual enlightenment dispels hopelessness, depression, difficulties and anxieties. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us how to pray. He showed us that prayer was the key to overcoming the temptations of the evil one. Thus he served as an example for us, exhorting us to be vigilant servants and laborers in the vineyard of God.

In man's personal, family and societal life, the source of tragedy and calamity is found in the inner spiritual life of man. In today's world, we see manifestations of the consequences resulting when man mistakenly chooses evil over good: wars, atrocities, disasters, acts of intolerance, and conflicts between nations and religions. New times create new challenges for Christ's Holy Church and for humanity as a whole. The solution to these challenges requires the unified cooperation of sister Churches, who must with bolder diligence commit to spreading the illuminating message of the Gospel of the Lord. With the goal of fortifying the spirit of solidarity and love in the world, we must keep the divine light of faith and true spirituality alive in the hearts of men. Collaboration between Churches, theological dialogues, joint discussions on societal issues, and the realization of important initiatives will promote a greater knowledge of one another's traditions and spiritual treasures. Through the sharing of our different heritages with each other, our mission will become more fruitful and a better future shall await the world.

We extend our sincere wishes for a successful conference and offer our prayers to heaven, asking the Holy Spirit to bestow us with the courage to continue spreading of the light of the Gospel of Christ in the modern world, and to instill the love and peace of God into the souls of men. May the Almighty strengthen all of you in the course of your proceedings and grant you renewing achievements for the glory and splendor of the Holy Church.

"Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love" (2 John 1:3).

KAREKIN II,  
SUPREME PATRIARCH AND CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS

**All the items about the  
XVII International Ecumenical Conference**