

Message from Karechin II, catholikos of all Armenians

His Holiness KAREKIN II, Patriarch and Catholikos of all Armenians

Bose, 7-10 September 2011

XIX International Ecumenical Conference

on Orthodox spirituality

From the spiritual center of all Armenians, the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, We extend Our Pontifical blessings to you on the occasion of the Bose 19th International Ecumenical Conference

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We welcome the commendable initiative of the annual International Ecumenical Conference, held this year under the theme of 'The Word of God in the Spiritual Life'. The spiritual strength and unaffected faith of Christian peoples are nurtured from the blissful source of God's word. The Divine Truth was expressed in words, empowered to change human lives.

Your endeavor to come together to discuss the importance of the Bible and the holy literary works of the Early Church Fathers and writers, the rich monastic and eremitic experience inspired by the word of God, is truly admirable. The word of God is not purely the letter encompassing it; it is, above all, the spirit, which is expressed by the word; as Saint Paul asserts 'the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life' (2 Corinthians 3:6).

"We recognize the Holy Bible as our Father, and the Holy Apostolic Church as our Mother" (St. Yeghishe, Vardapet). This sentence reflects how in the fifth century the pious sons of Armenia used to convey their innermost feelings and devotion for the word of God. It was the longing for the word of God that gave birth to the Armenian alphabet in order for it to be translated and delivered to the people to regenerate the spiritual and national life. The first written sentence in Armenian translated the insightful words of God: "To know wisdom and instructions; to perceive the words of understanding" (Book of Proverbs, 1:2). The wake of Armenian culture and the greatest masterpieces of written script, science and art were brought to life by the enormous yearning for the word of God.

Today, with the help of modern technology, information spreads around the world within seconds, and we live in times of excessive information. Yet the word of God should prevail over other words in the interest of mutual understanding, peace and Christgiven love among different societies and peoples. Moreover, in present day, when false ideas are abundant, the knowledge and spread of the eternal and transfiguring word of God becomes of crucial importance, for as Jesus Christ says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

Dear participants, We bring our heartfelt wishes and prayers to you, beseeching the virtues and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the preaching and spreading of the word of God.

May our Omnipotent Lord grant you boundless success and ensure beneficial outcomes from your joint work at this gathering.

The grace, love and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!

His Holiness KAREKIN II

Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians

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