

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II
SUPREME PATRIARCH AND CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS**

*To His Holiness Karekin II
Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians*

"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:3)

On the joyful occasion of the tenth anniversary of your election and enthronement as Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, I extend to Your Holiness my warm fraternal greetings.

I give thanks to God for the blessings he has bestowed on the Armenian Apostolic Church through Your Holiness's ministry. I also know of your personal commitment to dialogue, cooperation and friendship between the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Catholic Church, clearly expressed by the various meetings that have taken place recently between Your Holiness and the Successor of Peter. I pray that the good relations that have been established between us may continue to grow in the years ahead.

The recovery of freedom for the Church in Armenia towards the end of the last century brought joy to Christians throughout the world. The immense task of rebuilding the ecclesial community fell upon Your Holiness's shoulders. What has already been achieved, in such a short time, is truly remarkable: new initiatives have flourished for the Christian education of the young, for the training of clergy, the creation of new parishes, the building of new churches and community centres, as well as the promotion of Christian values in the social and cultural life of the nation.

Your Holiness, I implore Almighty God that, through the intercession of Saint Gregory the Illuminator, we may be ever more closely united in a holy bond of Christian faith, hope and love. On this significant anniversary, I pray that the blessings of the Triune God may rest upon Your Holiness: may the love of God the Father enfold you, the wisdom of the Son enlighten you and the fire of the Holy Spirit inspire you.

With sentiments of esteem, I assure you of my fraternal affection in the Lord.

From the Vatican, 27 October 2009

BENEDICT XVI