

VISIT OF THE SECRETARIAT OF STATE,
CARDINAL TARCISIO BERTONE TO ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
RELEASED ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEETING OF
HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II,
SUPREME PATRIARCH AND CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIAS
AND HIS EMINENCE TARCISIO CARDINAL BERTONE,
SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE HOLY SEE
Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin
04 March 2008

His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, and His Eminence Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone, Secretary of State for the Holy See, came together in the Mother Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin with a holy greeting of peace and offered their fervent prayers to Almighty God in heaven.

The State Secretary, Cardinal Bertone, conveyed the warmest greetings of unity in Jesus Christ and the fraternal love of His Holiness Benedict XVI, the Pope of Rome, to His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians. Cardinal Bertone also presented a handwritten letter from the Pope, with his invitation to visit the See of Peter.

His Holiness and His Eminence offered their gratitude to God for this cordial meeting - a sign of the continuing development of ties between the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Catholic Church - to know one another better, to appreciate each other's incomparable spiritual heritage, and to love one another, confirming their equal calling to serve mankind as is required by our one Lord Jesus Christ. They agreed to continue taking steps on these blessed paths.

The Catholicos and the Cardinal appealed to God during these difficult days for Armenia, so that peace and reconciliation be established within the country. They prayed together for the souls of the victims and asked the Lord to keep and protect the Armenia people and reinforce them with faith, hope and love.

The Cardinal expressed the complete support of the Catholic Church to the Armenian Church, for her efforts utilizing her high moral standing, aimed at providing solutions to all concerns through the promotion of dialogue and peaceful means and fostering a common sense of responsibility, so that the dignity of the Armenian people and state remain unharmed within international society.

His Holiness and His Eminence jointly entreated the Most High to make statesmen and politicians realize that politics is also a spiritual calling, which demands honesty, mutual respect, love tolerance and defence of the rights of the poor and vulnerable.

May God bless Armenia and all Armenians - the first Christian people in the world - so that all of Christendom can continue to enjoy their exceptional and irreplaceable contributions.