

**THE MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II
CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS
AT THE ECUMENICAL REQUIEM SERVICE FOR THE VICTIMS
OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**

*(Saint Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral,
Yerevan, 24 April 2005)*

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Dearly beloved faithful,

We are living in days of remembrance and spiritual evocation, dedicated to the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. On the anniversary of this great tragedy of history, we are joined by representatives of many nations who have come to pay their respects and pray with us, as well as many governments who have issued resolutions condemning the Genocide of the Armenians. Today we commemorate April 24 for the 90th time. From Armenian Church altars throughout the world, the dispersed Armenian nation offers prayers to heaven with Divine Liturgies; and in all corners of the earth, they humbly bow their heads before memorials and monuments to the Armenian Genocide. On the hill of Tsitsernakaberd, state officials of the Armenians, thousands and thousands of our people, accompanied by representatives of different nations and states, bowed down as well before the eternal memories of our martyrs, and with heartfelt emotion in this evening hour of peace, we once again entreat the Almighty to grant rest to their countless souls. We pray that Almighty God keep and protect the world in peace and goodness, so that no people ever again endure the tragedy of genocide. We pray for the creation and progress of life, and in the brotherhood of peoples, which is the significance and purpose of God's creation, since the paths of life are the paths of the Lord. "For He created all things, that they might exist; and the generations of the world are wholesome." Wisdom of Solomon 1:14
With this faith, our people survived the tragedy of genocide, and with the hope of their re-born life, they commemorate its 90th anniversary. Our people believe that they shall see the dawn of that righteous day, when the first genocide of the 20th century will be universally recognized and condemned.

Ninety years ago the Young Turk authorities decided that by eliminating the Armenian population they would solve the "Armenian Question". The turbulent and confused circumstances of the First World War became the most opportune time to organize the Armenian massacres and forced deportations. Western Armenia was emptied of its native population. We lost more than 30 dioceses, and thousands of churches and clergymen. Our fragmented people were dispersed throughout the world. Today, however, it is not merely the pain of genocide in our souls, but also feelings of pride and consolation, that Armenians, grief-stricken and displaced, settled on foreign shores, were able to stand tall once again with faith and hope in their souls, and rebuilt their homes and elevated their spiritual and national life.

We are proud and consoled to remember that in the catastrophic days of the genocide, our people relying on God, unified their might to protect this small piece of land in Eastern Armenia from the same murderers - land on which our new statehood - the first Armenian Republic, was born. God willed that our people, condemned to death by a wickedly conceived evil plan, should live so that today the following question be raised before the judgment of mankind: "Where are the three million Armenians who were living in the Ottoman Empire, primarily on their ancestral homelands?" Genocide does not have a statute of limitations and it cannot have one, since mankind cannot choose the paths of death. The paths of life are the paths of men.

Our time bears the responsibility to not leave the obligations of the present day to tomorrow. The recognition of the first genocide of the 20th century now will benefit the reinforcement of intolerance for violence and prohibition of trampling of human and national rights, and will advance the strengthening of humanitarian values.

As Pontiff of All Armenians, on behalf of our people dispersed throughout the world, we extend words of gratitude today to all countries and peoples who, in the most difficult times of our lives, accepted and welcomed the Armenians who had survived the massacres. We also send a message of gratitude to all states, international organizations and individuals who have recognized the Genocide of the Armenians and who contribute their efforts to make that recognition universal. Today, with prayer and humility, we also remember those individuals, who in those dark days, raised their voices of protest for the sake of our people being annihilated.

Our words of thanks also to the representatives of Sister Churches, official delegations, members of non-governmental organizations, intellectuals from different countries and ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic missions accredited in Armenia, who are here on the occasion of the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide to pay their respects, pray together with us and are present today for this requiem service. We bring our love and blessings to the survivors of the Genocide present here today, who bear the courageous spirit and will of our people, and whose reward, according to the words of our Lord, is great in heaven.

May God hear our prayers we offer to heaven asking for rest for the innocent souls of our martyrs, and bless all efforts borne from the love of peace, justice and life. ?For He created all things, that they might exist; and the generations of the world are wholesome.?

May the grace, mercy and blessings from our Father in heaven be with us and with all. Amen.