



The Holy See

CONCESSION OF THE ECCLESIASTICA COMMUNIO TO THE NEW PATRIARCH OF CILICIA OF THE ARMENIANS

LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

To His Beatitude Raphaël Bedros XXI Minassian
Patriarch of Cilicia of the Armenians

I have received the letter with which Your Beatitude informed me that today you have been elected Patriarch of Cilicia of the Armenians by the Synod of Bishops, requesting the concession of ecclesiastical communion.

I wish to join in the joy of the sons and daughters of that Church and of the universal Church, who greatly accompanied with their prayers the Bishops gathered, first in Lebanon at the beginning of summer, and in these days in Rome, at the Pontifical Armenian College. Every member of the Armenian Catholic holy People of God was waiting for his Pastor, to be known by him, called by name and led by the strong and gentle word of the Gospel.

The election of Your Beatitude has come at a time when people are particularly burdened by various challenges. I am thinking of the suffering in Syria and Lebanon — countries where the Church of Cilicia of the Armenians is present — as well as the pandemic, which is still far from being overcome in many parts of the world. All persons of good will, especially Christians, are called to be neighbours and to demonstrate they are brothers, overcoming indifference and loneliness. Even under the floods of history and in the deserts of our time, we can and must walk towards the Crucified and Risen One.

We know the Armenian people as experts in suffering, because of the many trials throughout its more than 1,700 years of Christian history, but also because of their inexhaustible ability to flourish and bear fruit, through the holiness and wisdom of their saints and martyrs, the culture of their doctors and thinkers, and the art that knows how to carve into the rock the sign of the cross like a tree of life, testimony to the victory of faith over every adverse force in the world.

The Church Your Beatitude has been called to lead is fully integrated in the affairs of the Armenian people, preserving its memory and traditions, and at the same time deeply linked to the Successor of the Apostle Peter: I entrust to you the care of the younger generations, the promotion of vocations, the wise harmony you must be able to find between the different entities of your community, such as the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, the Mekhitarist Congregation and the Patriarchal Institute for the Clergy of Bzommar, as well as many of your sons and daughters who were formed and live within the Latin Church but are well aware of their Armenian heritage.

May the All Holy Mother of God and the saints of your tradition, especially Saint Gregory of Narek, whom I had the joy of proclaiming a Doctor of the Church, guide you, be of example and intercede for you: may they show us above all the path of authentic fraternity and ecumenical dialogue with our brothers and sisters of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

May the Patriarchal Church of Cilicia of the Armenians, led by Your Beatitude together with the Bishops of the Synod, continue to make its way in these first decades of the third millennium.

As the Successor of the Apostle Peter, called to confirm the brethren in the faith, I gladly grant you the ecclesiastical communion requested, in accordance with Tradition and the norms in force, conveying to you my embrace of peace and my Apostolic Blessing.

Francis

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