



The Holy See

VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS ON THE OCCASION OF THE APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO ARMENIA

22 June 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In a few days I will have the joy of being with you, in Armenia. Even now, I invite you to pray for this Apostolic Journey.

With God's help, I come among you to fulfil, as the motto of the journey says, a "visit to the first Christian country". I come as a pilgrim, in this Jubilee Year, to draw upon the ancient wisdom of your people and to drink from the wellspring of your faith, which is steadfast as your famous crosses carved in stone.

I come to the mystical highlands of Armenia as your brother, enlivened by the desire to see your faces, to pray with you and to share the gift of friendship. Your history and the events of your beloved people stir in me admiration and sorrow: admiration, for you have found in Jesus' Cross and in your own fortitude, the wherewithal to always rise up again — even from among the most terrible suffering in human memory; sorrow, for the tragedies that your fathers have lived in their flesh.

Let us not allow the painful memories to take command of our hearts; even in the face of the repeated assaults of evil, let us not give up. Let us instead do like Noah did, who, after the flood, did not tire of looking to heaven and released the dove over and again, until one day it came back to him, bringing a tender olive leaf (Gen 8:11): it was the sign that life could resume and that hope must rise once more.

As a servant of the Gospel and a messenger of peace I wish to come among you, to support all efforts on the road to peace, and to share our steps on the path of reconciliation, which generates

hope.

May the great saints of your people, especially the Doctor of the Church, Gregory of Narek, bless our meetings, to which I look forward with tender longing. In particular, I look forward to embracing my Brother, Karekin and, together with him, to giving fresh impetus to our journey towards full unity.

Last year, from various countries, you came to Rome, and at the tomb of St Peter, we prayed together. Now I come to your blessed land to strengthen our communion, to advance along the path of reconciliation, and to allow ourselves to be enlivened by hope.

Thank you and see you soon! *Tsedestiun!* [See you soon!]