

THE MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II
SUPREME PATRIARCH AND CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS
THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NATIVITY AND THEOPHANY
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, January 6, 2012

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

“Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does
not have the Son of God does not have life.”

1 John 5:12

Dear faithful sons and daughters in the Homeland and the Diaspora,

Today before our souls and minds is that life-giving “great and wondrous” mystery which shone out over the heavens and the earth, when the bright star stood still over the cave in Bethlehem and the angels proclaimed the glad tidings of the Holy Birth of the Savior Son of God, saying, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” *Luke 2:11*. The gospels tell us how the wise Magi who had travelled from afar and shepherds nearby, hurried toward the manger and bowed down before the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and welcomed the arrival of the Savior to the world.

On the feast of the marvelous mystery of the Holy Nativity, we are all pilgrims to Bethlehem, either by visiting the Holy Land or by making our souls Bethlehem, to bow down before the infant Jesus with the wisdom and strength granted to us by faith, to recognize Him and accept Him as the Only Begotten Son of God and the way to eternal life. As the apostle writes, “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” Today in the “Bethlehem of the Armenians” – this holy sanctuary where the Only Begotten Son of God descended – and in all of our churches established through its light, we, dear ones, and all children of our nation, joyfully praise the birth of the Savior who came to earth for us, and confess: You are our Lord. You are our Savior. You are the source of life and the path to eternity. This confession has illuminated and continues to illuminate the path of humanity. Through Christ, God’s love was revealed to mankind; the Son of God came into the world to eliminate sin, dissipate the darkness of death, and to lead humanity to its Creator – to accept everlasting life. Through Christ, divine love is dispersed throughout the world entire – over man and nature – to always renew and fill it with life and joy. However a way of life opposed to the divine will turns life into a focus of problems and

challenges. Let us look at the modern world. It is burdened with manifold difficulties, deprivations, contradictions and conflicts. The rejection of Christ and His commandments gives birth to wars and tragedies, harms our planet, becomes the cause of a weakening soul and spirituality, as well as the violent interruption of God-granted life – murder and suicide. The universal crisis of our day, which is explained through political, economic and material causes, is also fundamentally a result of the alienation and straying from the luminous path that leads toward God, the rejection of the gifts of heavenly love by sinful ways. Christ is life and in keeping his commandments, God's love, truth, holiness, justice and mercy are implemented in this world, leading it towards the good and perfect, the full life that was our Lord's earthly life, which was faith and love for the heavenly Father and blessing for mankind.

Dear and pious faithful, faith and love are those unshakeable foundations, through steadfast reliance upon which shall the life of our country and people become stronger and be filled with joy and delight. The fruits of faith and love are the good works of honesty, righteousness, sympathy, support and assistance to one another, which shall always accompany us so long as our path does not divert from Christ's luminous path. In our days, as well as in our lives, alongside the works built by faith and many God-pleasing enterprises, unfortunately we see God-denying processes, behavior incompatible with the Christian character of our people, distortion of our cherished national values, as well as ignoring the spiritual in favor of overvaluing material possessions and money – such that they become the main objective rather than a means of organizing a good and fair life. Truly, manifestations such as these empty life of the life-sustaining presence of Christ, denying it of that spiritual joy, empathy, philanthropy, noble and lofty emotions, and God-granted salvation. Christ warns of that destructive path, saying, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" *Mark 8:36*. Dear ones, we shall renew our lives today through the true example of love shown by our Lord; our lives that are not yet free from needs and difficulties, from major external and internal issues that impede the progress and prosperity of our country and people. The challenges and demands of our present lives cannot undermine our will to overcome the obstacles and barriers and, supporting one another, to serve the strengthening of our land, the progress of our nation and the building of a bright future. The advancement of our life will open bright new horizons before us, if we unite our national efforts and commit ourselves to work to bring goodness to society, with the aspirations of serving the nation and the Homeland, combining the abiding of the law with love, justice with clemency, wealth with mercy, power with assistance, and ability with service, because we accept and profess the life-granting Son. Today, with the example of the Magi

