



Armenian Catholicos to visit Pope of Rome

His Holiness Karekin II, head of the of the Catholicate of Etchmiadzin of the Armenian Apostolic Church, will visit Rome from 7 to 9 May to meet and pray together with the Pope.

Pope Francis and Karekin II, elected the 132nd Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians in 1999, will visit the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and various other dicasteries of the Roman Curia.

They will visit the tomb of St. Peter and pray before the statue of St. Gregory the Illuminator, which is located on the north courtyard of the Vatican basilica.

The Armenian Church consists of two catholicates and two patriarchates, and around six million faithful. Independent from an administrative point of view, the two catholicates of Etchmiadzin and Antelias are in full communion. The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople refer to Etchmiadzin for spiritual questions.

Following Vatican Council II, new relations have developed between the Catholic Church and the Armenian Church. Representatives of the two catholicates of Etchmiadzin and Antelias are members of the Mixed International Commission for theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

During the Jubilee year 2000, the Catholicos Karekin II visited the Church of Rome. In 2001, Pope John Paul II paid a visit to the Catholicate of Etchmiadzin. The patriarch later headed the Armenian delegation during the funeral of John Paul II. Karekin II also met with Benedict XVI in 2008 and 2012, and was present during the inauguration of the Petrine ministry of Pope Francis.