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ARMENIAN HOLY APOSTOLIC CHURCH CANADIAN DIOCESE
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BISHOP BAGRAT GALSTANIAN, Primate

June 13, 2013

To Our Beloved Armenian Faithful:

For more than 1700 years, Armenians have prided themselves in, and defined themselves by, their dedication to their Christian faith and their commitment to a deeply democratic and civilized value system. Historically, we have been passionate about our Church and devoted to the tenants of our Christian doctrine, and have worked tirelessly for generations to preserve our identity and protect our future.

Canadian-Armenians have been no different. We greatly value and protect both our Church, our Clergy and our Communities. We stand tall as stewards of democracy, our constitutional right to religious practice and our inalienable right to free speech. These are, undeniably, what enables and keeps a civil society.

However, it is with great shock and dismay that we are confronted in recent days by public behaviours that go beyond any reasonable scope of civility, legitimacy or legality...what we are now experiencing has become nothing short of un-Christian behaviour. Verbal and written attacks have been issued against members of our Clergy, volunteer leaders of the Diocesan Council and specific members of our Church communities across the country. The attacks are threatening, mean spirited, antagonistic, ill-informed, damaging and demoralizing. Additionally pathetic is that the authors of such slander continue to hide under the cowardly umbrella of anonymity.

We are appalled, disgusted and condemn these aggressive and slanderous tactics and will not allow such bullying and malice to be confused with free speech. We demand an end to such outlandishness, wickedness and spite and commit to using every legal means possible to weed out and prosecute the hateful few, and ensure that we protect the good and virtuous majority of faithful within the Armenian Church of Canada. We cannot imagine that any Armenian who is true to our Church and our community would condone or encourage any of these behaviours.

Notwithstanding the legitimate election outcomes following a legal, transparent and democratic Annual Assembly process, unlawful and unchristian behaviour will not be tolerated within our Diocese. We are better than this! We are stronger than this! We urge all of our membership to join us in stopping these damaging and destructive attacks.

If any member of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Canada has any questions, concerns or comments, they should direct them to our attention specifically and we will respond accordingly.

We are resilient because of our Ancestry, and remain hopefully for a unified and robust future...for the ties that bind us as Armenians will always be stronger than that which threatens to divide.

Yours in Christ,

2013 Diocesan Council
Armenian Church of Canada