

# REFLECTIONS ON JOURNEY TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

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Bishop Bagrat Galstania, [Primate](#), Montreal, 14 March 2011

 Sireliner,

As we approach the Great Lent and we prepare ourselves spiritually to greet and celebrate the glorious and victorious day of the Holy Resurrection, which this year falls on April 24, I wish everyone God's abundant blessings, peace and happiness in your personal and family life. This is the appropriate season to reflect on the past, to think of the future, and to further our quest for harmony in our community.

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It has been almost five months since I issued my open letter [JOURNEY TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR COMMUNITY](#). I am very pleased with our community's overall reaction to this letter and the public discussion that it has generated, and I would like to thank all those who circulated my message through many different channels.

I personally received numerous positive remarks about my appeal. The volume of supportive e-mails, text messages and verbal comments, and the comments posted on various electronic forums by concerned individuals, has been most encouraging. This is an indication that the overwhelming majority of our people, in particular our younger generation, share the thoughts expressed in the letter. I am also encouraged by the fact that various organizations have recently initiated cross-community dialog on this subject. We are all obviously concerned with the future of our people in Armenia, Artsakh and in the Diaspora.

I am convinced that now more than ever we need unity or harmonious cooperation in our community, and I would like to further elaborate on this vision and on some practical suggestions on how to achieve it.

The word community connotes a sense of "common unity", and we must work hard to entrench a spirit of unity, communion, fellowship and harmonious cooperation in purpose and action otherwise the future consequences for us all will be appalling. We need to become a community in the true sense of the word, so that we may together face all of our internal and external challenges.

We need to start by initiating open dialog between all facets of our community in order to discuss and define common issues such as the identity crisis among our youth, the state of Armenian schools and education, and the commitment to maintain and strengthen all that has been accomplished in the past. Rather than taking an "us" versus "them" attitude, these discussions need to involve all those who are concerned with these issues and are interested to participate.

In order to do this, we need to create a permanent forum where our community in its entirety can meet in an organized manner to clearly define the challenges we face, and arrive at a consensus on how best to address them. My suggestion is that this forum be a National Consultative Council comprised of all of our organizations and some prominent concerned individuals.

We also need to hold a series of conferences, workshops and symposia across Canada in order to define the kind of community we want to have so that we can more clearly have a common goal to strive for.

My suggestion is that a renowned, credible and, academic institution such as the Zoryan Institute, is commissioned to organize these conferences, as an independent external facilitator, and that they involve a wide cross-section of our community, with attendance open to all who are interested and concerned with these issues.

Personally, I would like us to set very high goals in terms of developing a unifying Armenian identity in the multicultural setting of Canada. Among the many specific projects that can be considered, I suggest having:

- A revitalized and highly competitive educational system in our Armenian schools, and the establishment of Armenian studies programs in various universities and colleges.
- Well established structures for social services, care centers for the elderly, Armenian health clinics, and scholarship funds for higher education.
- Various other missions and structures that enjoy the support and care of the entire community.

I am ready to bear my share of responsibility and dedicate all the necessary time and energy required and/or requested of me to help facilitate the process of achieving this unity of purpose and fellowship in our community.

I wish you all a blessed journey throughout the Lenten period, hoping that we can find in the Holy Resurrection a new beginning for our community.

With love and prayer,  
Bishop Bagrat Galstanian  
Primate

