



Our Lord Jesus Christ declares, *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty"* (John 6:35). Seeing that we all believe in the one and same Lord Jesus Christ, as members of the one Christian household, do celebrate the feast of the Nativity in peace and love. On this joyful occasion, we take this opportunity to extend to all of you, beloved sons and daughters of the Holy Church, to all our blessed Assyrian Christian community and to all our fellow Christians:

*May the feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed unto you all!*

We earnestly pray that in the same manner the glory of God shone upon the shepherds on the day of the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the light of heaven may also shine and enlighten the hearts and minds of all the nations of the world so that they might be live together in peace, tranquility and love. As Christians, we in particular are in great need of the peace and unity that our Lord Jesus Christ has left for us on earth. Our Lord Jesus said to His Apostles: *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you"* (John 14:27). We must remember that we are all brothers and sisters, united together as living members of the one mystical Body, which is the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the sacrament of the Holy Baptism is the one and same spiritual mother of all the baptized faithful. We continually profess, saying: *"We believe in one Holy Apostolic Catholic Church"* that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself established on earth.

The Church here on earth is a part of the Church in heaven, and has been sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God abides in the Church and remains in the Church continually until Christ comes again. This same Spirit also sanctifies the Christian believer by the divine grace of the Father given to us by mystery. This sanctification enables the Christian believer to obtain eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ established only one Holy Church on earth. He, the Lord, is the only and invisible head of the Church. Even though at the present time the one Holy Church of Christ is called by many different names, yet all the Christian faithful are members in the one Church which our Lord established on earth. Therefore Christians should not disrespect their fellow Christians. The supreme head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, commands all of us to love and respect one another so that we all will be worthy to delight in the divine love of Christ.

Today, we Christians who are dwelling in the various countries of the Middle East are known and labeled by three different ecclesial names: the Chaldean Church,

Syrian Church and the Assyrian Church. However, as Christian believers we must love and respect one another and work together as members of the one flock of Christ. Ethnically, we enjoy a common history and language. Therefore, we are not three nations but one nation, known as 'Assyrians.' Thus, as one people, we are all responsible to maintain the unity of the sons and daughters of our nation.

We prelates and priests ought not to engage ourselves in the political affairs of our nation. Rather, we should utilize our experience and knowledge in the ecclesial field and not in the political one. Notwithstanding, we pray for the those actively involved in bettering the condition of our people and nation, being guided in their social and political work by the principles of Christ our Lord and of His holy Gospel. We beseech our faithful to work towards unity and understanding; these ought to be the foundation of any work embarked upon for the bettering of the condition of our people, in particular in the Middle East, we persecution continues for our nation and martyrdom for the Gospel of Christ.

We ask all the faithful sons and daughters of our Holy Church to continually and tirelessly extend their aid to the prelates and priests who are in need of their help, and who minister to their spiritual needs. It is the obligation of all members to support the Holy Church. The obligation of a baptized faithful is not merely restricted to paying his or her annual dues, rather the most important obligation of a member is to maintain his or her faith, to be obedient to the canon laws of the Church, to attend the spiritual services and in particular the celebration of the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, and to hear the Word of God proclaimed by the prelates, priests and deacons of the Holy Church.

We encourage the faithful worshipers to be mindful to apply themselves, together with their families, to attend classes of catechism offered in each parish, and to place their children in the Sunday School, the Youth Ministry activities, and the Church Choir, etc.

It is a must that each parish maintains a parish committee. Each parish must designate the most faithful and active members to serve as members of the diocesan council and the parish committee in order to function as advisors and helpers to the parish priest, the bishops, and the metropolitans. They must work together in faith, love, respect, and in obedience for the greater cause of the progress and benefit of the Holy Church.

We ask you all, O faithful sons and daughters of The Holy Church and the Assyrian nation, to be observant of the laws and constitution of the country in which you reside and/or hold citizenship. In this manner, you will be respected and accorded honor by

those governing your country and as citizens you will be able to live in peace and harmony with all men.

As sons and daughters of the Assyrian Church of the East, make every effort to maintain and preserve your Faith, liturgy, sacraments, canon laws of the Holy Church with great care and diligence. In the presence of all men, be ready to give an account of your faith and the hope which you hold, namely Jesus Christ. In all things and in every action, be Christ-like and faithful to your vocation.

As a nation, always be proud that you are Assyrians. Keep your Assyrian and Aramaic language, knowledge of your history and literature. Make every effort to keep your love toward each other pure and sincere.

In conclusion, again we extend a most blessed Christmas and an equally blessed New Year 2012. We pray that the coming year will be filled with every blessing, peace, and tranquility in the four corners of the world, and especially in Middle Eastern countries. We also pray for the unity and understanding among all Christians, while offering prayers for the health and prosperity of all the faithful of the Holy Church and the Assyrian believing Community.

May the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, forever; Amen.

+ *K. Mardinkha*

†Khanania Mardinkha IV

*By Grace: Catholicos-Patriarch of  
the Assyrian Church of the East*



Written at our Patriarchal Cell in  
Morton Grove, Illinois (USA); this  
8<sup>th</sup> of December 2011.