

المجمع السونهادوسي المقدّس
لكنيسة المشرق الاشورية



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❖ *The Holy Synod of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East* ❖

For Immediate Release

22 January 2014

Official sources of the Roman Catholic Church and the Chaldean Catholic Church have released the news of the consent given by His Holiness Pope Francis for the election to the episcopate of three reverend priests of our sister Church, the Chaldean Catholic Church, as well as the reception of the former and laicized bishop known as Ashur Soro with the assignment to the titular see of Foraziana in pastoral ministry to the Chaldean Catholic Diocese of St. Peter, San Diego, California (USA).

The Assyrian Church of the East offers its sincere congratulations to His Beatitude Mar Lous Raphael I Sako and all the clergy of the Chaldean Church, and prayers for the upcoming episcopal consecration of the newly elected bishops, namely: Reverend Fathers Yousif Thomas Marqos, O.P., Habib Hermizd Jajo and Saad Serop Hanna. We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of His Church on earth, will shower His blessings upon the newly elected bishops, and adorn them with His gifts, and guide them in their episcopal ministry for the glory of His name and the good of His Church.

At the same time, the Assyrian Church of the East demonstrates its great amazement at the reception of Ashur Soro as a bishop in the Chaldean Catholic Church, for this reception exerts a negative influence and poses an obstacle to the path of rapprochement and the unity of our two Churches. This path which the Assyrian Church of the East had taken and labored for with great effort for many years had been demonstrated by sincerity and genuineness, particularly with the late His Beatitude Mar Raphael I Bidawid, and in hope, with His Beatitude Mar Louis Raphael I Sako.

Genuine rapprochement, with a view towards ecclesial unity, requires foundational principles which include mutual respect and deference for the ecclesiastical governance and synodical decrees of an independent Church.

The Church of the East, which is founded upon the Apostolic Tradition and faith in the Sacred Scriptures, respects freedom of conscience of each person in choosing his or her faith or

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dogma. Therefore, it has no concern with regard to the dogmatic choices held to by Ashur Soro, in particular since it has already recently decreed concerning his person in a definitive and synodical manner with regard to his uncanonical behavior in the Assyrian Church of the East and among our people. These actions were widely known and made known to all of our sister Churches and a great many of the faithful, with many proofs and in writing, not to mention that many other uncanonical actions were left unannounced by the Church to the public until this very time.

Rather, just as it is concerned about her relationship with the Church of Rome and other sister Churches, she is particularly concerned about her relationship with the Chaldean Catholic Church in light of the desire to strengthen and build this rapport. In sincerity and truth, the reception of Ashur Soro into the Chaldean Catholic Synod is a genuine obstacle which cannot be over-looked nor discounted by the synod of another Church. We had hoped, and yet continue to hope, that the Chaldean Catholic Church and the Church of Rome would and will seriously study and address this obstacle and its possible effects on the future of our rapprochement and the relationship between our Churches in the genuine spirit of the Gospel and in a spirit of mutual respect between us as sister Churches.

The Assyrian Church of the East is continually called to give hope and to proclaim optimism to her faithful while living in dangers against our identity as a Church and Nation, particularly in the Fatherland and in the diaspora as well. This hope is given by the Church to her sons and daughters as the vigilant guardian and true heir of the orthodox and apostolic faith of the patriarch, fathers, teachers and martyrs of the historic Church of the East.

The hope and labor, to which the Assyrian Church of the East is genuinely committed, is her unity and integrity as the one holy, apostolic and catholic Church—the Church of St. Simon Peter, and St. Thomas of the Twelve, Ss. Addai & Mari of the Seventy who disciples the East, St. Ephrem the Teacher, St. Narsai the Harp of the Holy Spirit and of the martyred patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun XXI.

The Assyrian Church of the East recognizes that this hope is alive in the hearts and minds of her faithful, who also have an important role to play in its aspirations in fulfilling it by means of proclaiming it and living it in their daily and familial lives. Therefore, the Church asks her faithful that the discussions might be calm and charitable, and guided by a spirit of fraternal respect and moral responsibility. We ask our faithful not to lose hope in nor neglect the commitment to a genuine and fraternal rapprochement, and the unity amongst our Churches and our Nation in a Christian spirit and with the mutual respect of one towards the other as

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sister Churches. Because unity is the will and desire of the Master and Head of the Church, who is her Savior, it is also the patron of her future and that of her children in the homeland. On account of this, it does not behoove us to shun away from this future.

Let us pray that the Lord Jesus Christ to guide His Church and give her wisdom; let us pray to Him that He might grant peace in our lands that our Nation may live in tranquility and in love.

Given this 22nd day of January, 2014; from the Secretariat of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East.

By Grace,

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✠ Mar Awa Royel

*Secretary of the Holy Synod
of the Assyrian Church of the East.*