



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

from the hands of terrorists. May the Lord bless the armed forces of the country of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and our various Assyrian forces involved in the effort to liberate and secure the territories held by ISIS.

4. Also, the Holy Synod offers its prayers for all the associations, organizations and political parties of our Assyrian people, and to all those working for the cause of advancing unity in our nation. The Synod prays the Lord to help the organizations and parties serving Assyrians to work in a unified spirit for the common benefit of our nation and people without exception.
5. The Holy Synod also prays for Syria, which for the past five years, the bitter combative situation has led to the displacement and migration of a great many of our people. We offer our thanks to God for the release of those kidnapped on the 23rd of February 2015. The Assyrian people have faced difficult circumstances which have led to the abandonment of our villages & churches along the Khabur River. The Holy Synod prays for an immediate cease-fire and a lasting peace in Syria so that human life and its dignity may be protected and respected by all those concerned, in these difficult times.
6. The Holy Synod prays for the Republic of Lebanon, wherein thousands of our people have lived for many years. The election of a new President of the Republic is an important step towards progress for the Lebanese people. In particular, it is a sign of unity for the different political parties of the country. Many of our people from Syria and Iraq have fled to Lebanon seeking a safe refuge for themselves and their families. We are grateful to the Lebanese government for providing such an important opportunity, through which they can safely arrive to their final destination.
7. The Holy Synod discussed the general conditions of the migration of the Assyrian people from the Middle East to the Western countries. The forced and induced migration from our ancestral lands is negatively impacting the present and the future of our people. It weakens our ties to the cradle of our nation, effecting the loss of our identity and assimilation, directly causing the alienation of our people from our ancestral lands. The Holy Synod calls on its Assyrian flock who were born in their ancestral homeland to preserve the citizenship of their home country (of birth), even as they migrate outside of the Middle East and receive a new citizenship.
8. The Holy Synod reviewed the importance of maintaining the liturgical rites of the Assyrian Church of the East. More specifically, the preservation of the traditions inherited from the blessed Apostles and the Fathers of Church, and handed down to the Church these more than two millennia. It is the responsibility of the prelates and clergies to maintain and preserve this treasure for succeeding generations.



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9. The Synod fathers stressed the importance of strengthening and expanding the spiritual education of the faithful by the pastors of the Church. Bishops and presbyters, who are pastors that guide their faithful unto a true Christian and life grounded in the Church, ought to observe diligently the divine offices and hours of prayer, the fasts throughout the year, and all liturgical rites. Pastors are obliged by virtue of their office to teach these to their faithful who are incorporated into Christ by the mystery of baptism, and have thus become members of His holy Body, which is the Church. All the faithful, each in their own parish, have an essential role in the Church because through baptism, they are called to partake of the one "royal priesthood" (1 Pet 2:9) of all believers so as to share in the spiritual work of the Church and its mission to the world.
10. The Holy Synod also discussed the need to preserve the nucleus of the Christian family, consisting of a man, a woman and their children, who are sanctified in Christ. Their bond is a sacred one, founded by the Creator himself as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures. The family unit is the foundation of the Church and of society, and it is through the family that the spiritual life of the faithful grows and is nurtured. We urge parents to encourage their children to actively participate in the life of the Church, so that they may fully realize this spiritual growth.
11. Concerning the Youth of the holy Church, who indeed are the present (and future) of the life of our Church, the Holy Synod established a Commission for Youth Ministry to be administered by a bishop. At the same time, we ask bishops and priests to have the zeal to strengthen the youth ministry in their dioceses and parishes.
12. The Holy Synod emphasizes the importance of dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and other apostolic Churches. We are called to fulfill God's commandment, "*That they may all be one...*" (John 17:21). All the Churches are obliged to give a unified witness to the Truth, who is Jesus Christ, and to the power of salvation to mankind in the present day.
13. In conclusion, the Holy Synod expressed its gratitude to the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq for its warm reception and for the help afforded in the safe convocation of the Holy Synod. We pray to the Lord Jesus Christ for peace and tranquility in the world.

Issued at Erbil, Iraq on the 12th day of November, in the year of Our Lord 2016