

PATRIARCHATE
of the
HOLY APOSTOLIC CATHOLIC ASSYRIAN
CHURCH OF THE EAST

Erbil, IRAQ



بطيركية
كنيسة المشرق الأشرورية
اربيل، العراق

ܡܨܚܘܬܐܢܐ ܕܡܫܚܘܬܐܢܐ
ܕܡܨܚܘܬܐܢܐ ܕܡܫܚܘܬܐܢܐ

Patriarchal Epistle for the Feast of the Holy Nativity 2020

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill..." Luke 2:14.

Our venerable brothers in the Holy Synod, the metropolitans and bishops; the reverend presbyters and the elect deacons, and the faithful sons and daughters of the Assyrian Church of the East:

A blessed Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ to all of you!

The Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in addition to being the most prodigious and spiritual event brought about for the salvation of mankind, was also the most historical event in all of human history. This holy Birth, by its spiritual and anthropological doctrine, brought about the age of a renewed humanity: "*For, behold, I shall create a new heaven and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come to mind...*" (Isaiah 65:17).

In accord with the promises of God spoken through the prophetic proclamations, the Lord brought about the holy Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh. On the very day of His holy Nativity, the good news of salvation was pronounced by the angel, saying: "*Do not be afraid, for I announce to you great joy that shall be for the whole world. For, today is born to you the Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David...*" (Luke 2:10-12).

Beloved sons and daughters of our holy Church, and of our Assyrian nation, we are all witnessing in this present time the spread of the dangerous coronavirus through the world. However, as firm believers let us remember our forefathers the Ninevites. Let us imitate them in prayer to God, and in praising His holy Name saying: 'Yes, Lord and Savior, we shall not fear because we believe and are hopeful in Your great majesty;' "*And, behold, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age*" (Matthew 28:20).

On this blessed occasion, we say to all of the faithful of our holy Church and our Assyrian Nation, that notwithstanding all of the present crisis in the world, yet as those who believe firmly in the mercy of God, we are obliged to ensure that our love for God is true and firm, and that it is genuine also towards one another. For, it is only by our love for God and one another that we will be able to draw God's mercy to ourselves. On this blessed occasion let us call to mind the example given at the time of Mar Sawrisho, and how God lifted the pestilence from them through prayer and fasting. Again, at the time of the Assyrian King Sardanapolis, through prayer and fasting God preserved Nineveh from destruction. Even today, in the likeness of our Assyrian ancestors and forefathers of all generations who were faithful to and hopeful in God, let us draw near to Him and come to His holy house, which is the Church. Let us offer prayer to God and glorify His holy Name, for He shall save us from every affliction, on which account St. Mar Narsai the Harp of the Holy Spirit said: "For this reason did God build a house for Himself on the earth, that whomsoever desires to see the Lord might come to His house."

In conclusion, again we say: may the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed upon all of you, and may you have a blessed New Year 2021. We offer fervent prayer to God the Father that the new year might be delivered and free from the oppressive coronavirus, and filled with every blessing, peace, tranquility and good health to all the inhabitants of the earth. We also pray to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the greater rapprochement and understanding among all the nations of the earth, and among all Christians. May the Lord grant good health and prosperity to all of the children of our holy Church and our Assyrian Nation.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit with all of us, forever and ever; Amen.

Given at Patriarchal Cell, Erbil, Iraq, on the Feast of the Nativity, 2020 A.D.



 **GEWARGIS III Sliwa**

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

