

بطریرکیّة کنیسة المشرق الاَشوریّة باتریهرکخانهی کهنیسهی روّژههلاتی ناشووری

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Patriarchal Epistle for the Holy Feast of the Nativity 2023

Our brothers in the apostolic ministry: the Venerable Hierarchs members of the Holy Synod; the Reverend Presbyters and the Elect Deacons, and the Faithful of the Assyrian Church of the East:

Receive Prayers and Apostolic Benediction.

I send to you all from the land of our forefathers these brief words of greetings on the occasion of the Holy Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who was born from the Holy Virgin Mother, the Most Blessed St. Mary, for the salvation of the entire human race.

One of the titles given by the Lord's Prophet Isaiah for the Son of God regarding His birth as a true man is 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6). Along with this, Jesus was called by the Prophet, "Wonderful One, Counselor, and the Mighty God of the worlds," whose authority He bears upon His shoulders. With these exalted and divine titles, the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity was thus prophesied. Yet, with these very titles, the one that I realize the world is in most dire need of is that of the 'Prince of Peace.' In the world today, there is a copious amount of turmoil, division amongst peoples, conflicts between countries, and unrest in many nations. Collectively, humanity is troubled by the various tempests that surround it; and thus, the world is in urgent need of peace.

However, true peace can only come from and through He whom the Prophet called prophetically, the 'Prince of Peace,' who is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. The definition of peace does not only mean the nihility of wars and conflicts in the world or the abundance of tranquility. It was God who first brought into existence genuine peace in the heart and the soul of humanity when He sent His Son to the world to save us from sin and death. Consequently, every type of sin and disorder in the world derives from the absence of peace in the heart of man, and this is the peace that only the Lord can give to humankind through the meditation of Jesus Christ. When we accept the peace of God in our hearts, through Jesus Christ, then our responsibility is as Christians, to go out and become ambassadors of the peace of God in our homes, Church, nation, and our entire community at large that we are living in, wherever it may be.

With this Holy Nativity of our Lord, let us all be instruments of the peace of the Lord God by the means of our pure and genuine Christian living, faithful to the commandments of our Lord. As we look around us, as sons and daughters of the Assyrian Church of the East, how much are we in need of the peace of Christ our Lord in our Church and in our nation? How many various divisions are amongst us and within us? How much is the faith diminishing as a result of the children of the Church distancing themselves from the way of faith of the Lord God and from their duties as Christians, or they are searching to fulfill their faith in places and profane ways outside of the Holy Church? This is all a consequence of the turmoil, uncertainty, and doubt that is prevailing in the hearts of believers.

Beloved in the Lord: Let us be assured that our faith of the Assyrian Church of the East bears the true Christian faith, which was preached by the Holy Apostles of our Lord to all of the world, and they also established Churches in various lands and regions. As the Apostles declares, this faith was "…once and for all time delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Therefore, our dear spiritual children, I



want to confirm you in the genuineness of your faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in the framework of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. The Apostle Jude exhorts us that we must contend for the sake of our faith, which is holy and orthodox. This requires the zealous labor and diligence of our brother hierarchs in their respective dioceses and of our spiritual sons, the priests in their parishes, in unisons with the deacons and Church committees; so that we may all together, as one unified body can preserve our holy faith without any alteration whatsoever. Let us all be servants of our holy faith in every aspect of our life and society.

On this occasion, we are remembering all the children of our Holy Church and our Assyrian nation who are migrants far from their homeland in various countries, for they are awaiting to arrive at a haven of peace for themselves and their families. Today, we have thousands of Assyrian migrants in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and other countries. It is our continuous duty to be stewards of aid for these children of our nation to meet their various needs in these distressing circumstances. I thank all of you for supporting the Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organization (ACERO), which is working beyond measure to meet the needs of the children of our nation, without distinction, in these countries, and in many other parts of the world.

In conclusion, I pray that the holy peace that was announced by the heavenly hosts to the shepherds and to humanity at the birth of the Son of God in the flesh, may rest upon you all and remain with you continually. Together, let us all pray to the Lord God to bring an end to the catastrophic armed conflicts that, today, trouble countries in the East and the West, for there are many innocent victims who are losing their lives and facing great losses in the battles between nations. It is my sincere hope that the new year of our Lord, 2024, be blessed for you all and for all of humanity, without distinction, so that it may be a year abundant with tranquility, peace, and blessings of the Lord God for the entire human race; amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all; amen!

Given from our Patriarchal Cell at the Great Church of the Holy Apostles of the East, in Erbil, Iraq, on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, 2023 A.D.

🕆 Mar AWA III

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