ܣܘܪܝܐ ܐܪܬܘܕܟܣܝܐ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܘܬܐ

SYRIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE
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BAB TOUMA, P.O.BOX 22260
DAMASCUS - SYRIA

البطريركية السريانية الأرثوذكسية
للسريان الأرثوذكس
بـاب تومـا - ص.ب ٢٢٢٦٠
دمـشـق - سـوريـة

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Christmas 2020

By the Grace of God

Ignatius Aphrem II

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East
Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church

IGNATIUS APHREM II
Patriarch
of Antioch & All the East
Supreme Head of the
Universal Syrian
Orthodox Church
2014

Our beloved Children in Christ,
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

ܗܘܠܐ ܠܝܠܕܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܘܡܠܝܠ: ܡܪܝܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܠܝܬ ܟܬܝܒܐ ܕܥܡܢܘܐܝܠ ܗܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܥܡܢ.
ܘܢܬܩܪܐ ܠܗ ܐܦ ܓܒܪܐ ܪܒܐ: ܗܐ ܓܢܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܩܘܒ ܡܪܝܐ ܕܣܪܘܓ ܐܡܪ (ܡܪܝ ܕܡܪܝܐ
ܕܣܪܘܓ)

"Great things are mentioned in the Holy Scriptures about this Child, Who is born from the Virgin as it is written, Emanuel is God with us, and he shall also be called the mighty one" (St. Jacob of Sarough)

In the midst of the difficulties we are experiencing this year, Christmas comes to remind us that God is present among us. He assumed our humanity, was incarnated and born for the sake of our salvation, to renew our nature and restore us to the dignity of His children, assuring us of eternal life.

We, humans, are always in need of the assurance that God is close to us in order to take refuge in Him every time we face difficulties, and when we feel despair and hopelessness. He is able and willing to give us peace, security and strength in this life, for nothing is impossible to Him.

Behold the barren (Elizabeth) has given birth to a child who proclaims the mercy of the Lord.

ܦܛܪܝܪܟܘܬܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܝܬܐ ܕܐܢܛܝܟܝܐ ܘܟܠܗ ܡܕܝܢܚܐ

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بطريركية انطاكية وسائر المشرق للسريان الارثوذكس
باب توما - ص.ب ٢٢٢٦٠
دمشق - سورية

Behold the Virgin (Mary) gave birth to the Savior while her virginity intact.

Behold the Mighty Lord willingly abandoned His glory and became flesh.

He is in the midst of His Church, therefore she will not perish. Christmas reminds us that "God became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1: 14). In the fullness of time, a Savior was born unto us in a humble manger in Bethlehem. At that time, our fears vanished and hope was renewed in our hearts by the words of Angel to the shepherds telling them: "Do not be afraid; for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2: 10-11).

Today, humanity is facing enormous challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic which has spread worldwide, resulted in the collapse of world economies, and produced unprecedented crises adding to the suffering of our people, especially in the Middle East. Many pains and adverse situations we are experiencing are indirectly related to our rejection of Emanuel (God is with us) and our refusal to allow Him to be close to us. Therefore, we encourage people of good will and decision makers throughout the world, to return to God and to work together to establish peace, stability and justice for all. With the birth of the Lord, we know that a great light shines in the darkness, the light of salvation and hope that the catastrophies we are witnessing shall not overcome us, for God is with us. He strengthens us in our despair, He empowers us over the tribulations, He enriches our poverty and heals our wounds, He comforts us and has mercy on us. How great is the comfort of those who trust the Lord; their sadness and pain will be turned into joy and happiness. The world becomes thus enlightened and full of hope, and like the Angels on the day of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, we will relay this hope and joy to all the people and sing: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Luke 2: 14).

Dearly beloved children in Christ,

On the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and the New Year, we pray for you and wish you all a blessed new year of 2021, that it may be full of joy, good health, hope and prosperity.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.