

**Final Communique of the Meeting of the Patriarchs of the Syriac-  
Speaking Churches in Atchaneh  
Lebanon on Friday, December 16, 2022.**

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God, Amen

We, the Patriarchs: Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East,

Mor Ignatius Youssef III Younan, Patriarch of the Syriac Catholics of Antioch, Cardinal Mar Beshara Boutros Al-Rahi, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East,

Cardinal Mar Louis Raphael Sako, Patriarch of the Chaldeans in Iraq and the world,

Mar Awa III Reuel, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East in Iraq and the world.

We thank God for granting us to gather in His holy name as brothers and church shepherds together in this official meeting of the Patriarchs of the Syriac heritage churches, at the invitation of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East.

In our meeting today, we discussed, through research and study, issues of common interest, and emphasized the following:

**First: Syriac spirituality**

Our churches are proud of their ancient Syriac heritage, which unites them and constitutes a rich sacred historical heritage that stems from our historical unity, our single Syriac language, and our common church and liturgical rites. Our Syriac spirituality is rooted in our churches, and we live it in the Eucharist, the Church's prayers, and the teaching of the Syriac saints fathers who enriched the

whole universal Church with a spirituality that has tested and continues to experience the depth of monastic life and the missionary dimension, and it is aware of its message in the world, and it has brought the Christian faith to the countries of the Near East, including India.

It is also proud of this distinctive treasure that its fathers passed on from the dawn of Christianity through centuries punctuated by many troubles and tribulations. However, our churches clung to their legacy and preserved throughout their historical path the teachings and traditions that they inherited with apostolic fidelity, zeal, and leadership. And here we are today, we find it necessary to strengthen the bond between our churches and intensify cooperation among them at various levels, in the service of our spiritual children everywhere, and in an effort to spread our Syriac heritage, shed light on it and preserve it with all care as a precious pearl and a sacred deposit for generations.

### **Second: The Syriac Presence in the Middle East and Pastoral Challenges**

We affirm that we are one people with its common Syriac heritage, rooted in the core of this beloved East and in the foundation of its formation, despite the multiplicity of our churches and the diversity of our apostolic traditions. Our witness to our Christian faith in general and the Syriac faith in particular has been our constant concern and source of concern.

Therefore, we devoted an inconvenient time to delve into our role in the life of our East and how to strengthen it, and we discussed the available mechanisms to work to support the presence of our children in the land of the East, which was baptized with the blood of our fathers and grandfathers. In this context, we renewed our firm determination to continue our paternal care for them in order to establish them in their homelands, and to reduce the bleeding of migration due to the existing conflicts and conflicts and the difficult political, economic, social and living conditions that the world is going through, especially the

Middle East region. Therefore, we pray for the people of our countries who are suffering because of these crises that affect the daily life of all citizens, and we affirm to complete the endeavor together, and to spend the precious and precious in order to present the Christian witness, work for the good and dignity of man, and demand all his rights.

### **Third: The Syriac presence in the countries of expansion**

Our thoughts occupy and worry about the dispersion of our children in the countries of expansion after they were forced to migrate to their motherland in the East due to acts of violence, persecution and uprooting, as a result of the dire living conditions, which prompts us to follow up on their affairs and be keen to secure spiritual and pastoral service for them, and urge them to adhere to the faith of their fathers and grandfathers.

Their identity and heritage, spreading this glorious historical heritage in the new societies and countries in which they live, and passing it on to new generations. Even if they were physically forced to leave their motherland, we encourage them to maintain close ties and solid ties with it, by supporting the just causes of their people and continuing to visit them, and by providing possible support to the ecclesiastical pastors to whom we have entrusted their direct care in the countries of exile, and by assisting the church in performing its pastoral mission in the countries of exile. The suffering countries of our East, so that our churches can carry out their pastoral duty in various fields, especially health, education and social.

### **Fourth: Partnership in testimony**

We thank God for all the efforts exerted for our openness as churches to one another and our constant striving towards the desired rapprochement and unity of faith, especially through our participation in the various committees of official theological dialogues between churches.

We pledge to respect the theological and doctrinal specificities of each of our churches, stressing the bond of "ecumenism of blood" that unites us in our testimony of our faith in the Lord Jesus and our defense of our existence and presence in our country, as well as our common commitment to human service.

Created in the image and likeness of God.

#### **Fifth: The common Syriac heritage**

It is important for us to acknowledge the efforts of the researchers and the initiatives of the institutions that sought and seek to study and disseminate our common Syriac heritage, in particular the efforts of the curators of the Symposium Syriacum and the Pro Oriente Foundation, and we emphasize:

1. Our desire to find common mechanisms for teaching the Syriac language, which was spoken by the Lord Jesus and His holy apostles, and to work to spread it and study it in depth with the available traditional and modern means.
2. The importance of enhancing areas of academic cooperation and exchange of experiences, especially at the level of students and professors of faculties of theology.
3. Encourage specialization in Syriac studies in universities.
4. Revitalizing the Syriac heritage conferences in the Middle East.
5. Formation of joint committees to discuss issues of common interest, especially those related to rites and liturgy.
6. Holding seminars, meetings and activities aimed at spreading awareness among the members of our churches in the countries of the East and the world of expansion about the common Syriac identity of our churches, and motivating the rising generations to preserve this authentic historical heritage and strengthen their belonging to it.

#### **In conclusion**

We renew our thanks to the Lord God who accompanied us in our meetings and discussions, and we ask Him to bestow upon us the gifts of His Holy Spirit so that we continue our testimony to Him with strength, courage and wisdom, and we work together to care for the flock of Christ that was entrusted to us and to preserve our ancient Syriac heritage. We agreed to move forward with this meeting on an annual basis

We also pray for security, peace, justice and stability in the whole world, especially in our beloved East, the cradle of Christianity and the source of our roots, our civilization, our heritage and our culture, in which we are founding and rooted, and for which the Church made great sacrifices, recalling in particular the suffering of their Eminences, Metropolitans Mar Gregorios Youhanna Ibrahim and Paul Yazî, the disappeared, along with the rest of their kidnapped priests and laymen, praying for them and asking those with influence and good intentions to work diligently in order to reveal their fate.

And we renew our call to the sons of our churches to cherish and be proud of their past and present, and to remain steadfast and rooted, each in his homeland, performing a living testimony to our Christian faith, in love, joy, tolerance, and coexistence with our brothers in humanity and our partners in the homeland, on the basis of pluralism, freedom, human rights, citizenship, justice, and equality. , and building peace, being concepts that reinforce common values and interests, trusting in the promise of the Lord Jesus who said to His Church: “Behold, I am with you all days, until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

And on the occasion of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, the New Year 2023, and the Advent (divine apparition), we extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes from the sons and daughters of our churches all over the world. With the angels of Bethlehem, and with the hope of righteousness, we pray for security and peace in the entire world.