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SYRIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE

OF ANTIOCH & ALL THE EAST

BAB TOUMA, P.O BOX 22260

DAMASCUS - SYRIA



BY THE GRACE OF GOD



باب توما - ص.ب. ٢٢٢٦٠
دمشق - سورية

Ignatius Zakka I Iwas
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East
Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church

No.E225/10



17-December-2010

Apostolic Benediction to our beloved Metropolitans and to our beloved spiritual children: the Reverend clergy and the faithful of all our Malankara Syrian Jacobite churches and congregations in the Arabian Gulf Region, North America, Europe, Australia and Singapore.

At this splendid occasion of the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord and our God Jesus Christ, we are overjoyed to extend to you all, our paternal greetings and prayerful best wishes of a Merry Christmas. The blessed apostle saint John depicts the birth of Jesus as follows: "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father*". (John 1:14). The living presence of Jesus, the Word of God, is the answer for the trials and tribulations faced by all humanity at large. The sufferings of the present time, when endure with the Word Incarnate, lead to Glory which is yet to be revealed. Let us dedicate ourselves, our Churches and the whole creation during this Christmas, to obtain the glorious liberty of the Kingdom of God. The Word of God has to be accepted and received with humility and repentance in our lives so that we may bear spiritual fruits. Every believer of the true faith has to live and act according to the living Word of God. As you know it was in Antioch, the disciples were called Christians, for the first time. One becomes a true disciple only when one continues to live in the Word of God. The root cause of today's problems in the world is the ignorance or the unawareness of the true message of the Bible. The Word will become flesh in our lives when we start to obey the commandments of our Lord.

Our dearly beloved spiritual children, today we face a lot of difficulties and sufferings in every realm of our lives. "*We suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.*" (Romans 18:17). With the blessed apostles, prophets and martyrs we may also rejoice in our sufferings as true Christians. The presence of the living Jesus amidst us gives us strength and courage to endure the pains and agonies for the sake of the greater glory of God. At the same time, we should reject every kind of evil in our lives in order to be in the grace of God. Let this Christmas tide be a milestone in our lives to turn away from every sinful attitude and malevolent behaviour. Let us hold the helping hands of the Mother of God; through whom the Word became flesh in the world, to live a life of grace and to endure all the sufferings. Mother Mary is the Mother of Glory, Mother of Love, Mother of the Word of God and the Mother of Grace. Let us offer ourselves to Her during this Christmas so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the power to comprehend the breadth and depth of the love of God and the freedom of the Spirit. We wish you all a Blessed New Year and extend our Apostolic blessings to you. May the grace of God be with you all. **ܐܡܝܢ ܘܚܘܨܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ**

Copies to : All Metropolitans in Charge of the Gulf Regions, Europe, Australia, Singapore, and North America