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ANTIOCHIAN SYRIAC ORTHODOX CHURCH

*Antiochian
Syriac Orthodox Church*



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Metropolitan and Primate Mor Severius Moses

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Date : 22.09.11

HOLY SYNOD OF THE ANTIOCHIAN SYRIAC ORTHODOX CHURCH 21ST TILL 22ND OF SEPTEMBER 2011, CHANDAI, FRANCE

SOME OF THE DECISIONS

1. Mor Philipose Mariam:

- A) Mor Philipose Mariam is accepted as the Metropolitan of the newly established Archdiocese of France and Africa. He is also the Secretary to the Holy Synod.
- B) We accept Mor Philipose Mariam through laying on of hands (sub conditional). Mor Philipose Mariam from his side has to carry out the same action (sub conditional) on the clergy of his Archdiocese to be fully accepted.

2. Mor Yuhanon Mariam:

- A) Mor Yuhanon Mariam, the auxiliary bishop of Mor Philipose Mariam, will be only accepted in our Church after: a) he had visited the Primate several times until considered to be sufficient; b) he had learned perfectly all liturgical actions of our sacred Syriac tradition; c) the Holy Synod decides to accept him.
- B) We will have a friendly relationship with Mor Yuhanon Mariam. Mor Philipose Mariam will speak with all the parishes and inform them, that Mor Yuhanon Mariam doesn't belong to our Holy Synod. Mor Yuhanon Mariam is allowed to celebrate for our faithful the holy liturgy and to baptize. We give him time until 8th of September 2012 to belong to us or not. When we agree to accept him it will happen also only through laying on of hands (sub conditional).

3. Acceptance of new Priests and Bishops

- A) If a priest from another Church wants to belong to us, there will be a minimum of one year until accepting him fully. In this year the priest will be tested and he has to learn perfectly all the sacramental liturgies of our Church. After this year the Primate will take the decision regarding his matter.
- B) To accept a bishop it will take two years. After the petition of the bishop is accepted a two-year-alliance will start. In these two years everything regarding the bishop and his diocese will be proved. All of them have to adopt the whole Syriac tradition and its liturgy. After the two years the Holy Synod will decide whether to accept him or not.

4. Priest Seminary

- A) We want to open the new priest seminary at the headquarters on September 2012. Until that time every thing has to be organized.
- B) The Primate will organize the schedule of the studies and will forward them to the bishops.
- C) Our students in Africa can study in Cameroun under the supervision of Fr. Charbel.
- D) The candidates shall not be under the age of 17.

5. Spirituality

- A) The “Shbitho” should become the personal prayer book of the faithful.
- B) The faithful shall be instructed in the spirituality of our Church and how to behave inside the church and the monastery and how to behave with the bishops and priests.
- C) Fasting: The faithful may decide to keep either rule of fasting. a) Who wants to continue the old tradition of fasting (i.e. no animal products) is allowed to do that; b) The new fasting rule is: just to abstain from meat and fish, but to keep this kind of fasting the whole day through Wednesday and Friday and other fasting days. The holy week has to be kept by all faithful according to the old tradition (i.e. no animal products); c) Nobody is allowed to break the rule of fasting. To break it means to commit a sin against this rule of the Church.
- D) The fasting days are: ten days before Christmas, three days Ninive fasting, 50 days before Easter, three days before the feast of the Apostles, five days before Assumption of Virgin Mary and every Wednesday and Friday except between Easter and Pentecost.

6. Constitution of the Church

The Constitution of our Church is discussed and finished. It will be made ready to be published by the Primate and will handed over to the bishops.

7. Calendar

In the next Holy Synod we will take the final decision according to which calendar our Church will celebrate Easter.

8. Appointment of the next Holy Synod

The next Holy Synod will be held from 7th till 8th of September 2012.



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Metropolitan and Primate of the Antiochian Syrian Orthodox Church

For these and many others reasons in the Holy Synod we have made new regulation of fasting to be fair to all our faithful and to give the opportunity to everyone to observe the commandment of fasting:

1. Anyone who wants to keep the old vegan fasting is allowed to do that
2. The new rule of fasting is that there may be eaten and drunk everything except meat and fish. The fasting during the Holy Week, however, is to be kept vegan according to the old tradition. Fasting is observed on Wednesday and Friday all day and thus does not cease after the Vespers (evening prayer).
3. The fasting days are: ten days before Christmas, three days Ninive fasting, 50 days before Easter, three days before the feast of the Apostles, five days before Assumption of Virgin Mary and every Wednesday and Friday except between Easter and Pentecost.
4. No one is allowed to break the fasting commandment of the Church. Either one fasts according to the old or the new rule. But anyone who does not keep any of these rules and breaks them is committing a sin against the commandment of the Church.

Through this new regulation, we want to show clearly the pastoral care of our holy church and we wish from our heart that this new regulation may lead our faithful to fast joyfully, happy and authentically. Only such kind of fasting helps men for their salvation and is a sweet smelling fragrance for the Lord. We also point out that fasting is not just limited to eating and drinking. Fasting has also to take place in the spirit and the soul, that means, one may practice especially during Lent the Christian virtues of love, mercy and forgiveness to be similar in our deeds to Christ our Lord.

May the blessing of Almighty God be with you all, through the intercession of his beloved mother Virgin Mary and the chiefs of the apostles Peter and Paul. Amen.



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