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SYRIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE
OF ANTIOCH & ALL THE EAST
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Christmas 2023

**His Eminence Mor Yacoub Eduardo Aguirre
Archbishop of Central America**

**“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will
be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”
(Isaiah 9: 6)**

Your Eminence, dear brother in Christ,

As we prepare ourselves for the celebration of the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are once again reminded of the reality of our broken world. The diminishing of faith of many, leading to the denial of the existence of God offers an easy path towards self-destruction. Man is distancing himself from God, distorting thus the image of God after which he was created, by rejecting God's work in his life. Consequently, man treats his fellow human beings unjustly, mistreats the creatures entrusted to him by God, damages the earth and corrupts nature.

The birth of our Lord Jesus Christ is a proclamation of renewed and lasting hope for all humanity on earth, especially in the East, a region that has been crushed by existential tragedies such as disasters, economic crises, devastating and oppressive wars, revealing the harshness of people and their estrangement from God. Let this Christmas be an invitation for all nations and governments to stop injustice and tyranny in our tormented East, including Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and wounded Palestine which is currently witnessing a humanitarian tragedy that should shake the conscience of every human being.

We congratulate you offering our best wishes on this Christmas and New Year 2024. We ask the Lord to fill all hearts with joy, peace and hope.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Ignatius Aphrem II
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East