30/05/2024

Speech of Patriarch John X In the register of the tomb of President Hafez al-Assad



Qardaha, May 28, 2024

We visited the tomb of the immortal President Hafez al-Assad, accompanied by the Bishop of Latakia, Mr. Athanasius Fahd, on May 28, 2024. In this event, we say:
“May God have mercy on President Hafez al-Assad. This is a word of truth that we say for history and write down today in this record in gratitude for President al-Assad’s benefaction to Syria. During his mandate, Syria enjoyed political and social stability and became a regional player in the Middle East and the world. May God have mercy on President Al-Assad, whom opponents, more than supporters, acknowledge as a first-class statesman, a man of strategy, and a man of stance. He loved and respected those who expressed his opinion frankly despite dissent and turned away from those who used flattery and promises in the language of politics.

His obsession was Arab solidarity, which he tried to bring from the shell of a dream to the ground of reality. His foreign destination was Palestine and the usurped Arab

rights. His goal was Arab dignity and Syrian dignity, which he considered the first touchstone of politics. In politics, he knew how to use the toughness of a military and also knew how and when to use cunning and wisdom. A solid negotiator, he never compromised rights or dignity that he considered the most precious possession. He fought and negotiated. As a politician and patriot, he gained enemies and friends. With all this, he earned the respect of opponents rather than friends. He read history deeply, carefully, and wisely. He knew how to draw inspiration from the lessons of the past to face reality, for God, the light of the heavens and the earth bestows upon us His blessings in His luminous manifestations.

Hafez al-Assad did not differentiate among denominations; he never knew the logic of majority and minority. He abhorred sectarianism and rejected the use of religion for sectarian mobilization, in a region that has been boiling with denominations throughout history until our present day. He searched for what united him and embraced Arabism as a unification and the Levant as a melting pot.

For the Christian part, the Church during his reign, as before, lived in freedom of worship. Being Christian was not an obstacle to anyone. Indeed, Christians, equally with others, held the highest positions in the state. The patriarchs, bishops, and other clergy were commonly treated with respect, as is the case today.

May God have mercy on the soul of President Al-Assad, a real statesman, a man of stance, a man of measured wisdom and political strategy. We remember his good days and pray to the One Holy God in Three Lights to cover him with His mercy and goodwill.

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