10/03/2025

Homily of Patriarch JOHN X Sunday of Orthodoxy, Mariamite Cathedral



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

This Sunday, which is the first Sunday of Great Lent, is the Sunday of Orthodoxy—the Sunday of right belief or correct faith. This Sunday emphasizes the necessity of right belief, which our Lord grants through clarity of mind and purity of heart. Right belief is a mission that obliges its bearer to express and proclaim it openly. Do you not ask in every Divine Liturgy, praying to the Almighty Lord to grant the bishop this right belief and to declare it, saying: ” Among the first be mindful, O Lord, of our Father and Metropolitan N. … rightly dividing the word of thy truth!”

From this responsibility toward you, my beloved, and toward our dear country—its security, stability, and territorial unity—I turn to the President, saying:
Mr. Ahmad Al-Shara, the Honorable President of the Syrian Arab Republic, we have

blessed and congratulated you on the victory of the revolution, as well as on your assumption of the presidency. You are now the first leader and head of the nation, and we want you to be the president of a united Syria—one Syria, embracing all its regions, diverse communities, spectrums, tribes, and confessions.

Mr. President, two days ago, I heard a sheikh, a friend of mine, publicly say that the Noble Prophet instructed his followers that “If they go to war against a people, they must not harm the innocent, must not betray, must not mutilate, must not kill a woman or a child, and if they find a monk in his hermitage, they must not kill him. This is the Prophet’s tradition, and whoever violates it is neither of our religion nor of our values… Our religion forbids us from killing the innocent. Killing the elderly is not part of our religion, burning homes is not part of our religion or rituals. Our revolution is founded upon noble principles, and we will not allow anyone to corrupt it, harm it, or tarnish its reputation.” This was told by our revered sheikh.

Dear beloved ones, we earnestly invoke God’s mercy upon all civilians and public security forces who have fallen, and we pray for the swift recovery of the wounded and injured. We also affirm the necessity of forming a fact-finding committee to ensure accountability for those responsible for the spilling of innocent blood, whether among civilians or public security forces.

Mr. President, may God protect you,

The tragic events unfolding in the Syrian coastal region have claimed the lives of many civilians and public security personnel, leaving numerous others wounded. However, the majority of the victims were not affiliated with any militant factions; rather, they were innocent, unarmed civilians, including women and children.
The sanctities and dignities of the people have been violated, and the slogans and chants being used are spreading division, fueling sectarianism, and undermining civil peace. Additionally, numerous cities, towns, and villages have seen their homes burned and their possessions looted. The targeted areas have primarily been those inhabited by Alawites and Christians, and many innocent Christian civilians have also lost their lives.

Residents of certain areas were forcibly displaced from their homes, only to be shot and killed, after which their houses, belongings, and vehicles were looted—such as what happened in Baniyas, in the Al-Qusour neighborhood.

Mr. President, the icon of the Virgin Mary has been smashed, trampled upon, and desecrated. She is the Virgin Mary, whom all Muslims honor alongside us, and whom the Holy Qur’an dedicated an entire chapter to—Surah Maryam—affirming

that God chose her and made her the most honored among all women of the world.
Mr. President, this is not your message, and these actions stand in stark contrast to your vision for a new Syria after the revolution’s victory.
Therefore, we appeal to you: with your wisdom and efforts, put an immediate end to these massacres. Stop them at once and restore a sense of security and stability for all Syrians, regardless of their affiliations.

Mr. President, we urge you to advance national reconciliation, civil peace, and peaceful coexistence, and to uphold freedoms as a supreme value in a society founded on the principle of citizenship—just as you have consistently proclaimed and expressed.

Mr. President, we pray for your well-being and for your leadership to guide Syria toward the springs of salvation and the harbor of safety and stability.

Let sectarianism fall, and let the nation live.

Long live a free and dignified Syria.

Long live, Syrians—Muslims and Christians alike. Let us stand firm and join hands to bear witness that we are the children of the Most High, the Lord of heaven and earth.

Let us rejoice with the angels in heaven, proclaiming: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”

Peace be upon you all.

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