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Patriarch of Antioch and All the East John X issues message on the occasion of the blessed fast of the Virgin



By the mercy of God Almighty

John X

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

to

My brothers, Pastors of the Holy Church of Antioch

My sons and daughters, everywhere across this Apostolic See

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.(1)

At the beginning of this blessed fast of the Virgin, I address all of you with the most fervent greetings, praying that God may protect you and grant you success.

We lift our eyes to our Mother the Virgin Mary, beseeching her to intercede to her Son that He may show compassion to the world and have mercy on us.

We entreat her to embalm the wounds of us all, asking for her intercessions for the sorrowful, the grieving, the sick, the imprisoned, the missing, the kidnapped, and anyone in distress, grief, and tribulation.

We ask her intercession for the dissipation of this epidemic which killed many people. We ask her intercession for the medical and services staffs who watch over the health of others. We ask her intercession for the repose of the departed souls and the comfort of their families and relatives.

We ask her intercession for the return of our kidnapped brothers, Metropolitans John and Paul of Aleppo, and for the return of all the kidnapped. We also pray to her for the peace of the whole world.

“Proclaim from day to day the glad tidings of the salvation of our God.”(2) This is what we sing in our prayers.

Let us take these words as a motto for our life in this fast. Let our words, our actions, and our whole life be a good tidings of salvation, comfort, and joy for others.

Our human speech is limited to philosophical conjectures that fall apart and disappear; and our verbal quarrels are fleeting and transient.

Therefore, St. Paul the Apostle recommended: “ But avoid foolish controversies”. (3)

We are the sons of the Eucharistic communion, that cry in one heart and one voice after Holy Communion: “May our mouth be full of your praise o Lord”.

Hence, our speech towards the other should not be for self-satisfaction, but “Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.”(4)

You are the joy of all that sorrow, and of the oppressed a guardian, and nurture of all the poor, comfort to the estranged, a support you are to the blind, visitation of all the sick, a shelter and succour to those brought down by pain, helper of orphaned ones: you are Theotokos in the Highest, O spotless Maiden; hurry, we beg you, to redeem your slaves.(5)

Many years with blessing and grace.

1. 2 Thessalonians 1:2
 2. Psalm 96:2
 3. 2Timothy 2: 23
 4. Romans 15:2
 5. From the Small Paraclisis Service
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Source