



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO HIS HOLINESS MAR GEWARGIS III,
CATHOLICOS PATRIARCH OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST**

*His Holiness Mar Gewargis
Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East*

I received with joy the news of the election of Your Holiness as Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. I gladly extend to you and to the clergy and faithful of the Assyrian Church of the East my good wishes and prayerful solidarity, asking the Holy Spirit to bestow his abundant blessings upon your lofty ministry. It is my prayer that Your Holiness may be an inspirational pastor for the flock entrusted to your care and an untiring builder of peace and harmony, serving the common good and the good of the entire Middle East. I join Your Holiness in prayer and solidarity with all who suffer because of the tragic situation in the Middle East, especially our Christian brothers and sisters and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria. With you, I ask the Lord to grant them strength so that they may persevere in their Christian witness. In expressing gratitude to Almighty God for the bonds of fraternity between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, I hope and pray that our continuing friendship and dialogue may be further developed and deepened. May our heavenly Father fill Your Holiness with peace and strength for the noble task that awaits you.

From the Vatican, 18 September 2015

Franciscus PP.