



Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches

The Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches
630 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10016

February 15, 2017

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God, Amen,

The Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches (SCOCH) was disturbed to learn that on February 8, 2017 six bishops of the Syriac Orthodox Church issued a statement accusing H.H. Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, of deviating from the Orthodox Faith. The six bishops further declared that they had intentions not only to administer their dioceses independently of the Patriarchate, but also to cause enduring division by ordaining parallel bishops for all of the existing dioceses of the Syriac Orthodox Church.

For its part, SCOCH declares its unequivocal support for His Holiness Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II, a learned teacher and a stalwart defender of the Holy Orthodox Faith. During his tenure as Patriarchal Vicar of the Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese of the Eastern United States from 1996-2014, H.E. Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim – as His Holiness was then known – labored alongside the members of SCOCH for the growth and development of our shared heritage of Holy Orthodoxy here in the United States. During that time, His Holiness established himself as a pillar of the Pan-Oriental Orthodox Movement and one of the driving engines behind the reinvigoration of SCOCH, and cultivated the growth of the faith that is our shared inheritance in the hearts of all around him.

The Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches condemns any action which might create schism within our communion, and urges the six bishops to reconcile themselves to their Patriarch and to the Holy Synod, which supports him. Now more than ever, it is crucial that we come together and not foster division among ourselves. The Standing Conference supports any efforts at reconciliation between the six bishops and His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, and will meet personally with His Holiness to declare our support for him when he next visits the United States early next month.

With Love in Our Savior Jesus Christ,

Abp. K. Barsamian

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (New York)
President, Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches of America