

The Miracle of Your Love

YOUR love is working a miracle in Iraq.

When Daesh (ISIS) extremists committed genocide, there were fears it could spell the end of almost 2,000 years of continuous Christian presence in Iraq.

But – thanks to you – a miracle of love has taken place.

Not only have **you helped the faithful survive one of the darkest periods of persecution**, but – with your support – they are back home building anew out of the ashes of destruction.

Pope Francis was, at the time of writing, due to visit Iraq in March 2021.

“I think constantly of Iraq,” the Pope has said. **“We must ensure that the Christian**

presence in these lands continues to be... a sign of peace, progress, development and reconciliation between individuals and peoples.”

When plans were announced for a Papal trip in March 2021, the Pope envisaged meeting the people whose very presence in the Cradle of Christianity has been sustained by your help.

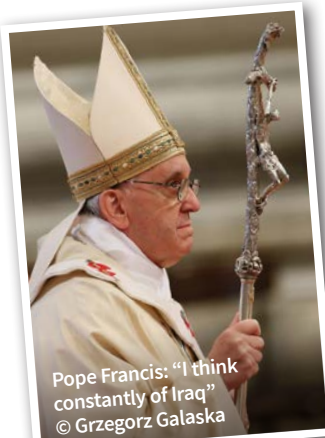
Thank you so much for what you have done – but **there is still so much to do.**

Little children cannot start their education unless their kindergarten is rebuilt and Dominican Sisters long to return to their burnt-out convent.

In addition, priests cannot fulfil their ministry unless homes are repaired and so many desecrated churches need to be restored for worship.

At a time of global pandemic, Iraq has been especially badly hit. But, with your help, **ACN is giving urgent COVID medical aid.**

Leading ACN Iraq project partner Archbishop Bashar Warda told us: “We are a people who have been marginalised to the very edge of existence. We cannot survive without your help.” ☕



Pope Francis: “I think constantly of Iraq”
© Grzegorz Galaska



Miracle of Charity: In Erbil, Kurdish northern Iraq, Sisters take care of a young boy at a displacement camp for families who have escaped Daesh (ISIS) militants



A COVID-19 patient receives oxygen treatment © Chaldean Archdiocese of Erbil

ACN provides COVID oxygen machine

AN oxygen machine is being dispatched to COVID-hit northern Iraq – thanks to you, the friends of ACN.

The £49,360 oxygen generator system will be installed in Maryama Catholic Hospital, in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan.

The COVID infection rate in the region has risen to 75 percent.

The virus has spread fast among displaced communities, struggling to self-isolate and short of medical supplies.

Appealing to ACN for help, Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda said: **“I ask ACN to cover the cost [of the project] as we are badly affected by COVID.**

“The community and IDPs [internally displaced people] look to us to help them,” he added. “We need a constant supply of oxygen which is the most vital tool against the virus.”



The Miracle of Medicine: Maryama Hospital, in Erbil, northern Iraq, was opened in April 2020 © Chaldean Archdiocese of Erbil

Archbishop Warda emphasised that private hospital COVID care is prohibitively expensive and that state hospital beds were full.

He added that, rather than bringing patients to Maryama Catholic Hospital to receive the oxygen, nurses and doctors would use refillable cylinders to treat people at home.

The hospital expects to treat 70 COVID patients a week.

ACN has already provided medical equipment for the Maryama hospital, which opened in 2016. ☩

Faith in the future



Students at the Catholic University in Erbil © Chaldean Archdiocese of Erbil

ACN has prioritised help to support young Christians unable to afford education.

The charity has supported Archbishop Bashar Warda’s plans helping students, many of whom belong to displaced communities driven out of their homes by Daesh (ISIS) and starting a new life in Erbil, in Kurdish northern Iraq.

ACN’s scholarship programme is vital for students at the Catholic University in Erbil – 60 percent of their fees are covered by the Church.

The intake for this year was 66 students but Archbishop Warda wants

to build it up to 250 students, expanding the range of degree courses so the university has equal standing with other higher colleges of education across the country.

Enabling the students to gain university degrees and go on to take the lead in society is a critical part of the struggle to ensure a long-term future for Christians and other minority faith groups in the country.

Archbishop Warda told us: **“The Catholic University in Erbil is the critical anchor project to enable the Christians to remain in Iraq.”** ☩

Help build a convent and school



Eager to learn: A young Christian

DESECRATED, bomb-blasted and abandoned, Batnaya was one of the Christian villages in the Nineveh Plains worst affected by violence and extremism... But even here hope is rising from the ashes of persecution.

Already, 75 families have gone back to Batnaya.

Now some intrepid nuns are appealing for your support so they can realise their dream of returning home to help the village community to start afresh.

The Dominican Sisters need ACN’s help to:

- **Rebuild their convent, which was completely destroyed;**
- **Rebuild the kindergarten they ran, which was also very badly damaged.**

For their convent, the Sisters plan a building big enough to enable them to resume their work, teaching children, catechising the youth, preparing youngsters for their First Holy Communion, providing counselling and helping families in special need.

For their kindergarten, the Dominicans want to replace the old two-storey building with a new structure, complete with classrooms, dining room, meeting hall and offices.

The Sisters believe that by returning and rebuilding their community they will encourage many of the 200 other families in nearby villages to take the big step of coming back.

Sister Luma Khudher said: **“We want to return as soon as possible together with the people who are tired of living far from home.”** ☩



Bomb-damaged: Replacing the kindergarten in Batnaya is an urgent priority



Desecrated: St Addai’s Chaldean Church, Karmlesh, in Iraq’s Nineveh Plains

Renewing the cornerstones of faith

“ONE DAY, THE CROSS WILL BE DESTROYED.”

Thus read the graffiti scrawled on the wall of the church. Entering the building, the smell of smoke was overwhelming,

The altar had been smashed up. The tabernacle was in pieces. The wall behind was riddled with bullet holes.

Such is the desecration we at ACN have seen in churches all across Iraq’s Nineveh Plains, desecrated by Daesh (ISIS).

And yet, Christ is coming back to Nineveh.

As a sign to the displaced faithful that now is the time to come back and rebuild, ACN is committed to restoring churches, parish halls, kindergartens, convents and other core structures across the region.

For example, ACN is helping to bring back to life the Old St George’s Church, in Bartela.

Dating back to the 15th century, the church was ransacked and set ablaze by Daesh (ISIS).

With your help, the whole structure is being restored and ACN is helping with new lighting and other electrical work, redecoration and plumbing.

One of the faithful told us: **“Thank you for all that you are doing for us. Who have we to turn to but you?”** ☩

Foundations made to last

WHEN Father Thabet returned to his parish of Karmlesh after Daesh (ISIS) militants had been finally forced out, his heart sank when he saw the state of the church's community centre.

The building in the Nineveh Plains had only just been expanded to cater for demand when in 2014 the extremists invaded.

Returning some three years later, Father Thabet faced the awesome task of **rebuilding a centre that was once the beating heart of the local community with up to 200 events every year** – everything from conferences to catechism classes, wedding receptions to funeral wakes.

With meeting rooms downstairs and a large conference hall above, unfortunately the building cannot be used until structural repairs have taken place – redecoration, floor repairs, electricity, lighting and plumbing.

It is one of many parish centres ACN has



Build to stay: Work gets underway next to a church in the Nineveh Plains

been asked to build and **the charity is determined to deliver on its promises, with up to 50 percent of people now back in the towns and villages once**

occupied by the militants.

Father Thabet said: "Any help you can give us will be vital. Thank you so much for your love and concern." 🙏

ACN help for Iraq

THANKS to you, since the Daesh (ISIS) genocide, ACN has been...



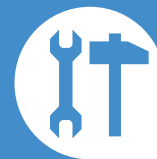
Branching out in faith: A Palm Sunday procession in Ankawa district, Erbil, Kurdish northern Iraq



Providing emergency help – food, shelter, medicine and schooling – **11,800 families supported**



Repairing homes across the Nineveh Plains – **2,860 homes repaired** across six towns and villages



Restoring church-run buildings – **Designated for repair are 363 churches, chapels, orphanages, clinics, care homes, kindergartens, schools and colleges**



Offering COVID-19 medical help – 75 percent of Christians have contracted coronavirus and ACN is providing an oxygen machine



Giving Mass stipends – Every month at least **120 Masses are said in Iraq** for ACN benefactors

Please help the faithful of Iraq in any way you can.