



Office of the President

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Most Reverend William S. Skylstad, D.D.
Bishop of Spokane

February 2, 2006

By FAX

His Beatitude Emmanuel III Delly
Patriarch of Caldei
P.O. Box 35130
Hay Al-Wahda
Mahallat 904
Rue 8 Imm. 44
12906 Baghdad, IRAQ

Your Beatitude,

Our Conference of Catholic Bishops was alarmed by the apparently systematic targeting of Christian churches in Baghdad and Kirkuk on January 29 at a time of worship and the bombing near the Vatican's Nunciature. We are greatly saddened by the deaths and injuries of the innocent victims of these heinous acts. We wish to assure you of our solidarity with the Church in Iraq at this difficult time. Our prayers are with the deceased, the survivors and their families.

We condemn all of the violent attacks against innocent people in Iraq without regard to the religion or political identity of the victims. It is particularly reprehensible when terrorists attack religious communities at times of worship or religious events. This contempt for God and for human life must yield to genuine religious freedom and respect for the life and dignity of all. We hope that these recent attacks are not a new sign of a pattern of attacks against Christians, who are not only an ancient presence within Iraqi society, but who are also essential participants in creating a truly democratic future for Iraq.

We assure you of our continuing solidarity and pray for all of the people of Iraq. We pray in a special way for our sisters and brothers in the faith that you may have freedom, security and peace.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend William S. Skylstad
Bishop of Spokane
President