



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN INTERNATIONAL

Vatican City, 12 April 2017

Dear sisters and brothers of the Nineveh Plains,

Christ is risen! He is truly risen! We of „Aid to the Church in Need“ address this greeting to you on this Easter feast that is so special for you. We share your joy that now, after the time of darkness and sorrow, you may once more celebrate the Resurrection of Christ in the liberated towns and villages of your birth. After these years in which fear and suffering seemed to have the last word and in which you followed Christ on the way to Golgotha, may you now at last see the light of the Resurrection once more in your own lives.

During the time when you were expelled and your towns and villages lay in the hands of the men of violence, we were always at your side with our prayers and our loving concern. Innumerable people throughout the world shared in sympathy in your fate. We know, however, that not all this support and solidarity could unmake the suffering you endured. Many of you still mourn much loved family members. No one can measure the pain and sorrow that has befallen your families. Nonetheless, we want to tell you that the testimony of our Christian brothers and sisters on the Niniveh Plains, many of whom have followed Christ in persecution and suffering and even at the cost of their own lives, is for us a shining example. We ask the intercession of these new martyrs and pray to God that HE may transform the mourning of your families and fill your hearts with consolation.



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With all our hearts we pray that God made grant you and your families the grace soon to be able to return at last to the places where you have your roots and where your ancestors have dwelt for so many centuries. May this Easter feast be for you the beginning of a new life in the light of the Risen One and may the ringing of your bells and the sound of your hymns never again fall silent there. May peace dwell once more in these places where, since the beginning of Christianity, the praises of the Risen One were always sung and may you, your children and your children's children dwell for ever in peace and security in your ancestral lands and be permitted to celebrate many more Easters there in years to come.

We pray for you, and with you, and we call on the Christian faithful in all the world to join with us also. Please pray also for us.

We wish you and all your families a joyful, blessed and grace-filled Easter Festival and a speedy return to your homes.



Card. Mauro Piacenza

President of *Aid to the Church in Need*

