

Why the Pope's visit to Iraq is considered historic - what is the significance of considering pilgrimage

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Welcoming His Holiness, reviewing the following

On 4th March, one day before the arrival of His Holiness the Pope to Iraq, I wrote an article welcoming his Holiness reviewing some of the messages he wants to send to Iraqi's and the world, linking them to the values and goals that Hammurabi Human Right Organization has been working on for years.

Happily we received the Pope's words and wills delivered a day after the visit, whether in the presidential palace in Baghdad or in the Church of Sayidet Al-Nejat that came in line with what I went to, as if I were with him when drafting the paragraphs of his speech or it came with telepathy, I say with modesty.

The second day a courtesy visit will be done to the Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Al-Sistani in Najaf, the gateway to reconciliation and safety for Iraqis.

Then he will head to the historic city of Ur, where the first landing of messages and calls for God's worship, tracing the traces of the first Prophet of God, Abraham " father of prophets".

On his return to Baghdad in the afternoon, the Pope will celebrate Holy Mass at the Chaldean Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Baghdad.

Many asked me why is visit historic, at a time when we see the same status in all the Pope's visits to countries.

For comparison, the difference is significant, as it is historic because it was the first apostolic visit since the first centuries to Christianity, when the missionaries spread to this Immaculate Land or because it came as the first visit of His Holiness in a long time he did not leave Rome due to Coronavirus pandemic or was the first visit of the Pope of Vatican to Iraq after it was a great dream that plagued the Popes who preceded him, especially Saint Pope Paul II.

From my point of view, it is historical as according to my conviction, it gives hope to serve as a turning point and an opportunity for a new Iraq, that is aware of diversity, respects its contents, is keen to protect and preserves its vocabulary, and supports the momentum of national unity within the preservation of pluralism and respect for all religious, ethnic and cultural identities..

It is also historical, in the sense of reviving the ancient history of Iraq with all its landmarks, monuments, cultures and identities, which were rooted since the days of Sumer, Babylon and Assyria, and going back to the roots to revive the past and access for the future, including respect for the characteristics of the history of this ancient people's evidenced by the fact that to this day, Iraqis keep their ancient languages ... such as Arabic, Aramaic, Syriac, Armenian, Kurdish, Eizidie and others, to confirm that history is made by people and societies, not by rulers and authorities.

Yes, it is historic because it came at a time when Iraq is facing serious dangers aimed at spoiling the salt despite that the salt is Iraqi .It lies in the diversity of its population, meaning the danger of losing Iraq's diverse identity with the human and moral meanings being the spirit of peaceful coexistence and true brotherhood.

The visit is historic for included a meeting of his Holiness with the the leader of Shiite Muslims in Iraq and the world, the Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Al-Sistani , is considered as a meeting of two high mountains of values and faith, of two men known for their passion for peace- and the triumph for the rights of the weak, especially since His Holiness Pope Francis calls him by many a "Pope of the Poor" because he is keen to be a messenger to help the oppressed, the needy, the marginalized, and victory for them, and that is Heavenly message.

It is a historic visit, when the Holy See counted a pilgrimage, and the pilgrimage by faith, as always known, is to be performed by visiting sacred areas.

Iraq is always blessed in the eyes of the world and still, if God bless it, since humanity accepted its obedience through the father of prophets "Prophet Abraham" and its sanctity deepened, when it witnessed the neighborhoods of other prophets, such as the Prophet Ezekiel and the Prophet Nahum and others among Jews,

And it is the land of the saints and righteous among Muslims, and inside Iraq established the first Christian Mar Toma church Mar Mary, Mar Edey and others. Therefore, (the Church of the East) in Iraq, Chaldean and Shuri is a deeply rooted apostolic church.

I have been recounting the story of "Blessed Land" for years, I remember when my colleagues took the decision to leave homeland. I used to tell them how your hearts and consciences obeyed to leave this blessed land, answers to me was with pain saying, “to be blessed for you and for others who remain in Iraq we cant bear fear and panic anymore.”

Hoping that the objectives of the letters will be transformed into work projects to serve all Iraqis and protect their dignity without discrimination and put an end to all quotas and narrow interests that have targeted the unity of Iraqi diversity, hoping objectives of this visit to achieve peace in Iraq and the countries which one of my media friends describes as representing the arc of crisis in the world and a source of concern for all opportunities for solidarity and coexistence between people.