



CNEWA: Catholic Near East Welfare Association reports:

**In the Iraqi city of Mosul,  
all 25,000 Christians have now fled in terror.**

That's right, all 25,000 Christians. The extremists ordered them to convert, pay a tax or die. Then they robbed these poor families at gunpoint as they departed — forcing them to give up passports, identification papers, and even the money in their pockets.

**Thousands of frightened families now huddle  
in vulnerable Christian villages, and one is now under attack.**

Local sisters, priests and religious workers are scrambling to provide shelter. Local villagers are struggling to provide food and water. But it just isn't enough.

**Most of these Christians are women, children or elderly.  
And ISIS wants to expel or destroy them all.**

Right this minute, Iraq's Christian families face absolute annihilation.

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**The Chaldean Catholic Church** As early as the 13th century, Catholic missionaries – primarily Dominicans and Franciscans – had been active among the faithful of the Assyrian Church of the East. This resulted in a series of individual conversions of bishops and brief unions, but no permanent community was formed. In the mid-15th century a tradition of hereditary patriarchal succession (passing from uncle to nephew) took effect in the Assyrian church. As a result, one family dominated the church, and untrained minors were being elected to the patriarchal throne. When such a patriarch was elected in 1552, a group of Assyrian bishops refused to accept him and decided to seek union with Rome. They elected the reluctant abbot of a monastery, Yuhannan Sulaka, as their own patriarch and sent him to Rome to arrange a union with the Catholic Church. In early 1553 Pope Julius III proclaimed him Patriarch Simon VIII “of the Chaldeans” and ordained him a bishop in St. Peter’s Basilica on April 9, 1553. The new Patriarch returned to his homeland in late 1553 and began to initiate a series of reforms. But opposition, led by the rival Assyrian Patriarch, was strong. Simon was soon captured by the pasha of Amadya, tortured and executed in January 1555. Eventually Sulaka’s group returned

to the Assyrian Church of the East, but for over 200 years, there was much turmoil and changing of sides as the pro- and anti-Catholic parties struggled with one another. The situation finally stabilized only on July 5, 1830, when Pope Pius VIII confirmed Metropolitan John Hormizdas as head of all Chaldean Catholics, with the title of Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, with his see in Mosul. The Chaldean Catholics suffered heavily from massacres during World War I (1918) when four bishops, many priests, and about 70,000 faithful died. The location of the Patriarchate shifted back and forth among several places over the centuries, but gained a measure of stability after it was set up at Mosul in 1830. In 1950 it moved to its present location in Baghdad after substantial migration of Chaldean Catholics from northern Iraq to the capital city. The Chaldean Catholic Church’s relationship with the Assyrian Church of the East improved dramatically after the signing of a joint christological agreement between the Pope and the Assyrian Patriarch in Rome in November 1994. In August 1997 the Holy Synods of the two churches formally instituted a commission for dialogue to discuss pastoral cooperation at all levels [see Assyrian Church of the East]. Chaldean candidates for the priesthood study at St. Peter’s Patriarchal Seminary in Baghdad. In 1991 the Chaldean Holy Synod established Babel College for Philosophy and Theology next to St. Peter’s Seminary. It aims to provide a higher scientific education for priests, monks, nuns and interested lay people, and is affiliated with the Pontifical Urban University in Rome. Today the largest concentration of these Catholics remains in Baghdad. There are ten Chaldean dioceses in Iraq, four in Iran, and four others in the Middle East. The Chaldean liturgy can be traced back to the Syriac Christian culture of Edessa, and attained its present basic structure in the 7th century. The liturgical language is Syriac, and a number of Latin customs have been adopted.

The war in Iraq that has been in progress since 2003 has dealt a heavy blow to the Chaldean Catholic community there. In 2007 Patriarch Emmanuel III said that large number of Chaldeans had left Iraq because of various forms of persecution. He spoke of internal persecution by Muslim extremists who were chasing Christians out of their homes and lands, and external persecution by the occupying armies. He cited in particular the decision by American troops to transform Babel College into a military base against the wishes of the Patriarchate. There are two Chaldean Catholic dioceses in the United States. The Eparchy of St. Thomas the Apostle of the Chaldeans was established in 1982, and is under the leadership of Bishop Ibrahim Ibrahim (25585 Berg Road, Southfield, Michigan 48034). It has five parishes in the Detroit area and two in Chicago. The Eparchy of St. Peter the Apostle of the Chaldeans in San Diego (established in 2002) has six parishes in California and one in Arizona, and is headed by Bishop Sarhad Jammo (1627 Jamacha Way, El Cajon, California 92019). In 2006 a new eparchy of Saint Thomas the Apostle of Sydney was established for Chaldeans in Australia and

New Zealand, led by Bishop Djibrail Kassab. There are eight worshipping communities for approximately 29,000 Chaldeans in the two countries. In other areas of the world, Chaldeans are under spiritual supervision of the local Latin ordinaries.

**Location:** Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, France, USA

**Head:** Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako (born 1948, elected 2013)

**Title:** Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans

**Residence:** Baghdad, Iraq

**Membership:** 419,000

<http://www.cnewa.org/default.aspx?ID=59&pagetypeID=9&sitecode=HQ&pageno=2>



This week in our study of the meaning of color in our icons we look at the colors **RED** and **PURPLE**: Being a limitless color, red is near enough to light that it is sometimes used as the background color for an icon. It reveals the dynamism of exuberant activity without imitating the dissipation of vivid yellow. **Because of its forceful, irresistible radiance and its close link to the color of blood, principle of life, red is often considered as the first among the colors. Possessing a terrestrial character, it symbolizes youth, beauty, wealth, health, love, but also war.** It is associated with all the great festivities among numerous and different nationalities.

If divine love—the Holy Spirit—is expressed symbolically by pure red, a reddish-orange frequently colors the flag of revolutionaries. To lose one's blood (red) amounts to losing one's life. Wine, a result of the sun, is the image of blood which rejoices the heart and accelerates its pulse. Plotinus in his *Enneades* (Book VI, Ch. 3) sees fire as being one of the archetypes of beauty. The cipher for the Holy Trinity is the number 3, which is itself an image of fire since vahni in Sanskrit is translated both as fire and as three (love and communion). We celebrate the feast of St. John the Baptist during the summer solstice when the sun is at its zenith; this feast announces Jesus Christ as He who will baptize no longer with water, but with fire (Mt 3:11). The Nativity of Christ is commemorated just at the time when daylight stops waning and the sun begins its ascent to prolong daytime once again. The icon of the Nativity reveals the “New Sun,” the Light shining in the darkness of night.

A symbol of sacrifice and of altruism, red is an important color in Christianity. The tunic of Jesus in the praetorium is red, as are vestments for martyrs, the cloak of St Michael the Archangel and the fire-red Seraphim, whose name in Hebrew means “burning.” But let us also note that red can similarly mean egoism, hatred,

diabolical pride and by extension, hell-fire.

**PURPLE** was reserved for the highest of dignitaries by Homer himself in the *Odyssey* (XIX, 225). We also read in the Bible the passage of Daniel receiving purple robes as a reward (Dan 5:29), and in the parable of Lazarus, the rich man is dressed in purple (Lk 16:19). For the Byzantines purple was the symbol of supreme power. Their emperors always wore purple, except during their assistance at liturgical ceremonies, for which they dressed in white. Furthermore, Justinian's Code strictly forbade the sale and trading of purple dye or cloth outside Byzantium.

Red and blue, although strongly contrasted spiritually, create a good harmony. This fact is particularly noticeable as we look at the Virgin Theotokos dressed in a red maphorian, symbol of her humanity, and a blue robe, symbol of the divine, for she is the human creature who bore in her womb the Son of God. The purple robe and blue cloak of the central angel in the icon of the Trinity by Rublev emphasize at once the humanity, the sacrifice and divinity of Christ. The purple vestment is both royal and priestly. The two colors bear testimony to the two distinct natures assumed by Christ in a unique hypostasis.

Taken from *The Icon Window on the Kingdom* by Michel Quenot.  
Translated by a Carthusian Monk. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. 1991. pp. 113 – 114.



The Catholic Association of Parent Educators will present a talk entitled «**Creation, Evolution, and the Crisis of Faith**» on Friday, 26 September, from 1:00 – 2:15 pm at Norwin Public Library, 100 Caruthers Lane, Irwin, PA. It is free and open to the public. Mr. Andrew Prizzi will be the presenter. All are welcome. See flyer in Narthex for more information.

The book **MASTERING THE ART OF MARRIAGE: *Staying Together When the World Pulls You Apart*** is strongly recommend to all who are considering marriage, are newly married, or married for 38 years! Fr. Constantine Nasr is the author of this very readable book. He has served in pastoral ministry for 37 years counseling starry-eyed couples about to be wed; standing in the trenches with those fighting to save their marriages; rejoicing with those celebrating their 50th wedding anniversaries; weeping with those whose marriages failed. Married for 38 years and the father of two, he understands firsthand the pressures on a marriage and a family. Honestly and frankly he confronts those issues that must be mastered for marriages to succeed. This book may be ordered through **Ancient Faith Publishing**.