

International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians, 8/9 May 2021

I am delighted that the Archdiocese will be celebrating the International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians on 8th/9th May. It offers Western Christians a moment to remember and give thanks for all we owe to the Eastern Churches, not least the first preaching of the Gospel, the monastic tradition, the different liturgical traditions and the witness of the Eastern Christians down the centuries, which has been, and still is, an inspiration to our Faith.

Now, already an oppressed minority group in the Middle East, Eastern Christians face the added crisis of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

I want to ask you to consider taking a voluntary second collection in your parish for the work of the Catholic charity, Fellowship and Aid to Christians of the East (FACE), which devotes itself exclusively to supporting Eastern Christians in the Middle East by offering grant aid to projects in education, healthcare and pastoral care which are organised under the patronage of Eastern Catholic Churches.

Following Pope Francis' recent apostolic visit to Iraq, our Archdiocese, in partnership with FACE, has started an educational exchange project between schools in the Archdiocese and the Immaculate Conception School in Beirut, Lebanon.

Further information from FACE is available on the diocesan intranet: a leaflet with a brief message template for your Parish Newsletter, a Bidding Prayer for Eastern Christians, and details of how parishioners can support FACE financially. There is some background information for priests on the work of FACE. You will also find news stories for example on the Immaculate Conception School, Beirut Project, on the Archdiocesan website, which you may wish to share:

www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/face

I have asked Monsignor Daniel McHugh to be responsible for co-ordinating this Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians, and he will be happy to respond to any questions you may have as to how you can get more involved in this initiative. As Co-ordinator of Ethnic Chaplaincies, Eparchies and Missions here in the Archdiocese, he has links with the communities involved. Also, FACE will be pleased to respond to requests for further information. Monsignor Danny has asked if you could let FACE know the total for any second collection taken in your parish in support of their work as they would like to ensure a thank-you letter is sent to each individual parish.