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**Press Release – Wednesday 13 August 2014 - Immediate**

**Attn: Newsdesks, Photodesks and Religious Affairs Correspondents**

**Statement by Cardinal Seán Brady calling for prayers for peace in Iraq**

Cardinal Seán Brady, President of the Irish Episcopal Conference, has asked parishes to pray for peace in Iraq especially on 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“The horrifying reports of the human suffering of the people of Northern Iraq are heart-rending. The violence and bloodshed being carried out against people because of their religion is truly shocking. Christian communities are being targeted in a particular way, as people are forced to flee from their homes because of the violence that has caused immense harm.

Following the calls for peace by Pope Francis, I ask all Catholic parishes in a particular way on this coming Friday, 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption, to offer special prayers for the people of Iraq and for peace in the wider Middle East. The Feast of the Assumption reminds us of the dignity of the human person. In 1950, five years after the end of the Second World War, the dogma of the Assumption was proclaimed, something which underlined the sanctity of the person, body and soul. I ask that people offer their Friday penances in radical solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Iraq.

It is important that concrete humanitarian steps are taken in order to respond to the desperate situation of the Iraqi Christians and to protect the religious freedom of all minorities. The solidarity that we can offer those people is even more important in these days.

I pray that Our Lady, Queen of Peace, may intercede for the suffering people of Iraq at this time.”

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### **Prayers for Christians in Iraq**

Prayer written by the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Iraq, His Beatitude Louis Rafael Sako

Lord,

The plight of our country is deep and the suffering of Christians is severe and frightening.

Therefore, we ask you Lord to spare our lives, and to grant us patience, and courage to continue our witness of Christian values with trust and hope.

Lord, peace is the foundation of life;

Grant us the peace and stability that will enable us to live with each other without fear and anxiety, and with dignity and joy.

Glory be to you forever.

### Sample General Intercessions

- Let us pray for those persecuted for their faith in Northern Iraq. May the Lord give courage and hope to those who are suffering and grant peace and justice to all. Lord hear us.
- Let us pray for refugees and those driven from their homes because of their Christian faith: that the international community may respond generously and work to protect their human rights. Lord hear us.
- On this feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, let us pray that those persecuted for their faith and driven from their homes may feel her maternal protection. Lord hear us.

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