

# The Visit of Pope Francis to Iraq

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## Its Significance for Religious Relations



May 6, 2021

12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. EDT [RSVP Required](#)

Location: Online Zoom Webinar

The apostolic visit of Pope Francis to the people of Iraq during March 5-8, 2021—his first international journey since the COVID-19 pandemic began and perhaps his most significant—was a pastoral success for the diverse Christian communities there and a game-changing step in relations with Muslims. Pope Francis drew attention to the martyrdom, displacement, and destruction experienced by Christians, Muslims, and Yazidis—an “ecumenism of blood” to which he often refers—and offered messages and prayers for peace and reconciliation. Ayatollah Sayyid Al-Sistani opened a significant channel of communication inviting Pope Francis to a rare private meeting. Together, they discussed human fraternity, religious views in common, and dialogue and peaceful accompaniment.

Cardinal Michael L. Fitzgerald, M.Afr., a widely recognized expert on Christian-Muslim relations, will offer reflections on the visit after two months, especially for the future of religious relations. Cindy Wooden, Rome bureau chief for Catholic News Service who traveled on the journey, will respond and share her thoughts. Jason Welle, OFM, director of studies for the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (PISAI), will moderate. Fr. Diego Sarrió Cucarella, M.Afr., president of PISAI, and John J. DeGioia, president of Georgetown University, will offer introductory remarks. John Borelli, special assistant for Catholic identity and dialogue at Georgetown University, will conclude the program.

*This is the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies' fifth Georgetown Lecture on Contemporary Islam. The series is sponsored by the Office of the President at Georgetown University, and this year's lecture is co-sponsored with Georgetown's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding.*

*This event will be recorded and a captioned video will be posted to this page after the event date. Please RSVP to receive an email notification once it is posted.*