



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL
1011 FIRST AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022

June 12, 2018
Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Dear friends in the Lord,

It is a joy to greet you as you gather for the blessing of this icon of *Our Lady of Aradin, Mother of the Persecuted Church*.

The Blessed Virgin Mary depicted in this icon is dressed in the traditional clothing of Northern Iraq, a place where people of faith are under siege. The artist himself lost his home in Qaraqosh, on the Nineveh Plain, formerly the largest Christian town in Iraq. He had to flee to Lebanon, where he and his family are now living as refugees.

How timely, and how relevant, that we welcome our Mother to the heart of New York as we work to welcome her suffering children.

This was made possible thanks to the Nasorean Foundation, whose vital work bringing attention to the plight of Christians throughout the world and especially in the Middle East is more necessary than ever. Thank you for this gift to the City of New York and for your tireless efforts to lift up our brothers and sisters forced from their homes.

Many thanks as well to Saint Michael's Church for making a home for this icon in what will surely become a place to pray not only for the persecuted Christians of Iraq, but for all displaced Christians of the Middle East. A gathering place of quiet reflection for those who cherish the precious gift of religious freedom, so vital to the life of the suffering Church the world over.

Please know that I join you in prayer that those people of faith who have been displaced by violence and intolerance will find comfort in the loving arms of the *Mother of the Persecuted Church*, and one day be able to return safely home.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

†Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York