

## **Pope on Iraq: Enough With the Bloodshed**

Urges Citizens to Rebuild Nation After 5 Years of War

VATICAN CITY, MARCH 16, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI made a strong appeal for peace in Iraq today, in the wake of the kidnapping and death of the archbishop of Mosul.

The Pope led the praying of the midday Angelus in St. Peter's Square after he celebrated Palm Sunday Mass. He began his pre-Angelus address with a tribute to Archbishop Paulos Faraj Rahho of Mosul.

The 65-year-old archbishop was kidnapped Feb. 29 after leading the celebration of the Way of the Cross. His two guards and driver were shot and killed.

After nearly two weeks with no news of the prelate's whereabouts, his kidnappers called Wednesday to say he was dead and disclosed where his body could be found.

On Thursday, his body was retrieved from a shallow grave near Mosul, showing signs that the archbishop had been dead for a few days. He was buried Friday in a celebration led by Cardinal Emmanuel III Delly, patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans.

"At the end of this solemn celebration in which we have meditated on Christ's Passion," the Holy Father said today: "I would like to recall the late Chaldean archbishop of Mosul, Monsignor Paulos Faraj Rahho, who tragically died a few days ago.

"His beautiful witness of fidelity to Christ, to the Church and his people, whom he did not want to abandon despite numerous threats, moves me to cry out forcefully and with distress: Enough with the bloodshed, enough with the violence, enough with the hatred in Iraq!"

Lift up your heads

The Holy Father went on to plea for an end to the upheaval caused by the war in Iraq, which began five years ago this week.

He said: "And at the same time I make an appeal to the Iraqi people, who for five years have endured the consequences of a war that has provoked upheaval in its civil and social life: Beloved Iraqi people, lift up your heads and let it be you yourselves who, in the first place, rebuild your national life!"

"May reconciliation, forgiveness, justice and respect for the civil coexistence of tribes, ethnic groups and religious groups be the solidary way to peace in the name of God!"

On Monday, Benedict XVI will preside over a memorial Mass in the Vatican for Archbishop Rahho. Vatican Radio will broadcast the service.