

THE PATRIARCH OF BAGHDAD :

“NO MORE WARS”

An interview with His Beatitude Mgr. Emaneuel III Delly

By **MARIA PIA PICCIAFUOCO**

In the long list of illustrious people who have visited the places of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina a person, very special for all those concerned about peace, can now be included: Mgr. Emaneuel III Dely, the Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, today Baghdad. On Sunday 30 October, in the church of St. Pio during the celebration of Mass in which he presided he invited all the faithful present at the “cordial and fraternal encounter”, to ask Padre Pio’s intercession for “peace with God, peace in souls, peace in families and peace in the world”.

Interviewed later by the Padre Pio TV and Radio broadcasting station (Tele Radio Padre Pio) he enlarged on and made clearer his message.

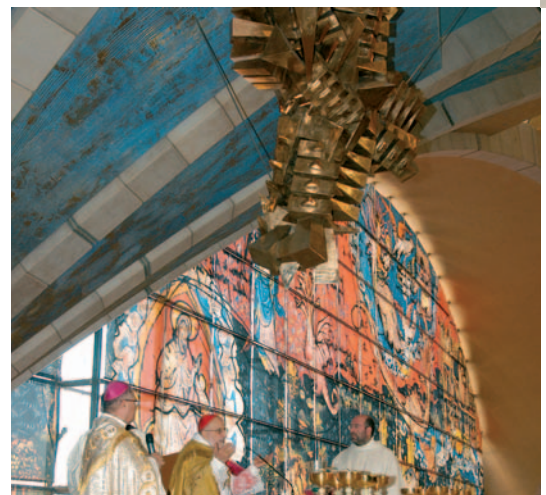
You are here in Italy for the extraordinary synod of Chaldean bishops as well as for the ordinary synod of bishops and during the rite of the Eucharistic adoration, you prayed in Arabic. What were your feelings and prayers?

Yes, we prayed on our knees with the Holy Father in the basilica of St. Peter before the Blessed Sacrament. The Eucharist is the foundation of the Church, it is the life of every Christian, of every faithful. Jesus is everything for us, as Benedict XVI said speaking to the children. When we are before the Blessed Sacrament, we must say simply: You are our friend and our everything. These were and are my feelings and those of all the Chaldean faithful.

You come from a place that has an ancient history, in terms of civilisation, culture and religion. Also your Christian community goes back many centuries. Now you find yourself in a church dedicated to a saint of our time, with the future before you. What effect does this

have on you?

I wished to meet Padre Pio ever since 1958. The Lord did not answer this wish until your invitation of last 23 September, but I was unable to accept and my auxiliary, Mgr. Shlemun Warduni, came. He then had to stay on to undergo surgery which he



recovered from marvellously. Now I know that St. Pio wanted us to both come here to San Giovanni Rotondo and to meet here in this city of charity, of spiritual and bodily relief, a true second Jerusalem.



MGR. EMANUEL III DELY, THE PATRIARCH OF BAGHDAD GIVING THE HOMILY ON SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER IN THE NEW CHURCH OF SAINT PIO OF PIETRELICINA.

the present day. We have all the freedom that is necessary for a good Catholic to fulfil his duties. It is enough that we do not get involved in politics and the questions that concern the different parties.

What are the duties of a Christian in Iraq, today?

Many Christians unfortunately are leaving. However, everyone must do what they can to avoid war. War causes evil and never causes good. For this reason we, as religious and clergy, must not get involved in politics. It is not our work, just as it is not the work of a medical doctor to build houses! If, we, the clergy, got involved in politics we would make no headway. Our duty is to guide our people and our faithful in the just ways that Our Lord desires and that Holy Mother Church indicates to us.

In Italy and other countries people are having second thoughts as to whether military action was necessary in Iraq. What are your views on this?

I think like the Holy Father that there should not have been war. And he did everything possible to avoid war. Other countries also were against the war. We do not know why the Americans wanted this war and it is not my place to judge them. The only thing that I can say is that we are not and never will be in favour of war, today or at any other time. ■

Were you satisfied with the new Iraqi Constitution that was voted after the referendum?

Yes, I felt a sincere feeling of joy. The country continues however to live with difficulty. The only thing which we lack is peace, tranquillity and security: this we ask for each day during our prayers, that peace, tranquillity and security may be given to all

Iraqis, without distinction or discrimination.

Do you believe that freedom of religion will be permitted?

We have reservations as far as concerns the Constitution even though it contains many other beautiful things. Freedom of religion already exists in Iraq and has done since the beginning to

