



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK

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To the priests, deacons, seminarians and people of the Diocese of Little Rock:

Next weekend, from March 5-8, Pope Francis will be making an historic pastoral visit to Iraq. I would like to encourage all of us to make a special effort to support Pope Francis in prayer during this critical time, both in the Prayers of the Faithful during Mass as well as in our own private prayer.

Due to the coronavirus threat and obvious security concerns, I believe that prayer is very much needed, both prayer in support of Pope Francis' efforts as well as prayer for the suffering people of Iraq. The Christian population of Iraq in 2003 prior to our invasion of that country was 1.5 million people. Due to that disaster followed by the depredations of the so-called Islamic State and consequent emigration to other countries, the Christian population there has declined to under 400,000. Let us pray that the Pope Francis' visit will bring people hope and provide an opening for peace after so many years of conflict and division.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Anthony B. Taylor
Bishop of Little Rock