

# ModernMARTYRS

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## Fr Ragheed's STORY

Watch a video about Fr Ragheed and the Christian community in Iraq that he was forced to leave behind.



**MARTYR**

### Father Ragheed Ganni

**Pray for us**

Father Ragheed Ganni, was a Chaldean Catholic priest in the parish of the Holy Spirit in northern Mosul, Iraq.

On 3 June 2007, after celebrating the evening Mass, Father Ragheed was accosted by one of his killers who had earlier ordered him to close the church. Asked why he had not done so, he replied "How can I close the House of God?"

**After being ordered to convert to Islam and refusing, Fr Ragheed – and three of the sub-deacons with him – were shot dead on the spot.** Fr Ragheed was 35 years old .

Father Ragheed was one of many priests who had studied in Rome with the help of an ACN scholarship. Although he could have extended his studies there, he decided to return to Iraq because he felt his people needed him. One of the last letters he wrote was to thank ACN for its support.

The former head of the projects section of ACN, Marie-Ange Siebrecht, who knew Father Ragheed personally, said after his killing, "His death has been a great shock. He was a sign of hope for the Church in Iraq. He had been ready to give a great deal more for his country, and now he has even given his own blood".

In a letter written by Fr Ragheed three years before his death he tells of his struggles, "The most difficult thing was not knowing whether I'll see the sunset of that day. In the evening I could never guarantee if I'd see the sunrise on the following day. The attacks against the churches, including my parish church and the neighbouring parish church where I assist in the youth centre, were a matter of despair for so many people who became so afraid of going to church... Although I feel so strongly that people in Iraq, and in particular Christians, have the right to live as other human beings with dignity and freedom, I still feel that the current situation is a way to give testimony in a world seeking hope. That is why I am still optimistic that a better future is nearer than we ever thought. Please keep us all in your prayers so that peace and justice may be established."

Fr Ragheed lived to bring Christ to his nation and to his people. He lived knowing that he may be called to give his life. Christians in the Middle East continue to suffer but they do so with the inspiration of men like Fr Ragheed Ganni.

**MAKE A DONATION**

**- in honour of Father Ragheed to reinvigorate Christianity in the Middle East. Your offering will rebuild churches and church properties damaged by war and provide food baskets and rental assistance for Christian families.**