

Australia: Anthony Fisher, Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Speaks Up on Behalf of Assyrian Christian Refugees

As reported today by Tess Livingstone, for the 'Australian'.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/europes-migrant-crisis/fleeing-christians-should-go-to-front-of-queue-archbishop/story-fnws9k7b-1227516995573?sv=3361e5edbe699ac496e255cbb083dc3>

“Fleeing Christians Should Go to Front of Queue”: Archbishop

‘Australia should prioritise persecuted Christian refugees over other groups fleeing the Syrian conflict, says Sydney’s Catholic Archbishop Anthony Fisher.

‘Archbishop Fisher called on the Abbott government to increase overall refugee numbers “very substantially” to accommodate thousands more of the Christians fleeing Islamic State to Turkey and Europe.

‘He told The Australian the “monumental crisis” justified “last resort” military action, including Australia extending air-strikes to Islamic State targets in Syria as well as Iraq.

“There are concerted campaigns to drive Christians from the Middle East”, he said. “Other groups are also suffering badly and being persecuted, but many Syrian Christians have relatives and a cultural affinity in Australia and we should be honouring those ties and connections.”

‘Archbishop Fisher said negotiation and diplomacy were always

preferable to military action. Even carefully-targeted air-strikes killed and injured “people other than just the evil-doers”.

“But sometimes force is all that you have got to bring about justice and advance a solution”, he said.

‘Brisbane’s Catholic Archbishop Mark Coleridge said the church’s welfare agencies and migrant communities were equipped to settle, accommodate, feed and educate Syrian refugees.

“We are already doing that”, he said. Archbishop Coleridge said Australia, through its involvement in two Iraq wars, had contributed in a small way to the international political failures that had added to the “demonic tapestry” woven by Islamic State and other terrorists.

“Unlike Communism and Nazism, that were atheistic ideologies, Islamic State is a lethal combination of totalitarianism and radical Islam”, he said.

Well, Archbishop, normative Islam is both a total and a totalitarian system. Islamic State is...Islam. Pure Islam, and perfectly in continuity with the contents of the canonical texts and the Sunnah of Mohammed. – CM

‘Archbishop Coleridge said a bombing campaign was unlikely to shorten a very long conflict.

‘In a statement, Australia’s Anglican primate, Melbourne Archbishop Philip Freier, warned that Australians could expect a heightened risk of violence on our soil if military actions were extended into Syria. Australians should think about the consequences of being engaged “in a hot war of that kind, and the domestic responses which seem to be an unacceptable restricting of our freedom.”.

What do you mean by that, Archbishop Philip? That we

shouldn't do anything more, because it might upset the Muslims inside our gates? That measures currently taken to restrain the Islamic Fifth Column on our soil, are unacceptable? I think you need to wake up. In the meantime, I'd like to see you backing your Catholic brother on the subject of our fellow Christians in Iraq and Syria who are being subjected to genocide...by Muslims. – CM

'The Anglican Church has called on the Abbott government to allow an extra 10,000 refugees from Syria into Australia.

No word on whether the Anglicans – like the Catholics – have had the gumption to request that those 10,000 life-saving tickets to Australia be reserved for the threatened-with-genocide Assyrian Christians. – CM

'Melbourne Bishop Philip Huggins, chairman of the Anglican Church's Working Group on Refugees and Asylum-Seekers, has written to Tony Abbott and Immigration Minister Peter Dutton, offering to facilitate the settlement of refugees.

I shall have to try to find out whether he is proposing to 'settle' Muslims, or Christians. – CM

"The focus of Christmas would also provide an opportunity for exceptional generosity."

I hope that that generosity will focus on our fellow Christians, who will be exterminated or forced down into the living death that is Dhimmitude, if they are forced to remain in Syria and Iraq. Barnabas Fund has noted that many Syrian Christian refugees do not stay in the UN camps, even, because the Muslim 'refugees' there tend to bully and attack them and prevent them from receiving assistance. – CM

'Archbishop Fisher was meeting Syrian Catholic leaders and the heads of church welfare agencies and parishes to discuss what might be done to provide housing in families, parishes, and convents, and to provide welfare, health-care, employment

services and friendship to traumatised newcomers from the Middle East.

And it's clear that in this case the traumatised newcomers are envisaged as being Christians. – CM

"He said that the current persecutions were the worst against Christians in history, including those under maddened Roman emperors. "It's estimated that 100,000 Christians are now martyred every year, 11 killed for their faith every hour."

'In Sydney, Syrian Catholic Priest Father Rahal Dergham, 33, who came to Australia to serve the Syrian community in 2008, said he had left a flourishing country, but as a result of the "catastrophic" Arab Spring his family was now scattered between Lebanon, Moscow and Brazil. His home village, near the city of Hama, was recently shelled by Islamic State.

'Islamic State had beheaded one of his former colleagues, Father Francois Murad, and posted the footage online. Entire villages had been kidnapped, he said, with the women and girls taken into sexual slavery. His parishioners knew of people who had been kidnapped by Islamic State, and whose families had sold houses, land and cars to pay "huge ransoms". "Some were then returned to their loved ones, cut in small pieces." he said.

'Father Dergham favoured a combination of allied air-strikes and ground fighting by the Syrian army to tackle Islamic State.

"Someone has to stand and fight to recover the territory Islamic State has taken", he said.

'Father Dergham said his parishioners, who attended churches in Concord and Fairfield in Sydney, could take in 200 to 300 Syrian refugees immediately. Local Iraqi communities (*in the context, this must mean, 'local Iraqi Christian communities'* – CM) were ready to help and those in Melbourne and Brisbane

would also respond generously.

'Australia should give Christian refugees priority and avoid the radicals (*that is: the pious Muslim jihadis* – CM) that Islamic State was planting among those who are fleeing Syria.

"Islamic State has said it will send half a million jihadi into Europe as refugees that way", he said."

Judging from Archbishop Fisher's quoted words in the article, it seems that he has been listening to the testimony and pleas of Syrian clergy and other Syrian members of his flock. I just hope that other Christian leaders in Australia – such as the Anglican clerics mentioned in this report – are also listening, and placing pressure on our government. There are some hopeful rumblings, which are discussed in another news report that I will be putting up tomorrow morning.

I will add that the 'Australian' permitted Comments. Most seem fairly sensible and able to see the point of affirmative action on behalf of the mortally-threatened Assyrian Christians. Some, alas, are not. And that latter category are out in force on social media where the same article is being discussed. It is really rather peculiar that those who in other contexts would be all for positive discrimination and affirmative action on behalf of minorities, are having conniptions at the very idea that Australia should offer any sort of special assistance to a Christian minority who are suffering ferocious persecution meted out by Muslims.

Personally, I hope our government listens to Archbishop Fisher – and his Assyrian Christian colleagues such as Fr Dergham – and does as he is asking, and that thousands of imperilled and suffering Christians from Syria may soon be scooped up and carried to (relative) safety in the great south land under the Southern Cross, to join those of their tradition who – fleeing from previous terrible persecutions inflicted on them by Muslims – somehow managed to escape here in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

