

we ask you to pray for us
we thank you for any help will you offer

The Catholic University of Erbil

" We believe that change starts here"

Why a catholic University in Erbil?

As Christianity in the Middle East in general, and in Iraq in particular, is experiences a critical stage in its history that threatens its very existence and that of its faithful, and due to the ongoing immigration of our Christian community that puts at stake our future existence on our ancestral land; And because of the great challenges that face our Christian community on its ancestral land where it is being rooted out, its will subdued, its memory wiped out, and its identity torn to pieces;

The Catholic University of Erbil comes as a contribution to save what can yet be saved for the sake of preserving this community, the identity of its civilization and rich culture and heritage; a people that founded ancient civilizations that once flourished in Mesopotamia and the East in general, offering the world the first alphabet, script, the wheel, school, literature and music; a people that served as a bridge for transferring the Greek philosophy to the East; a people that served as a rich source for providing the East with science, knowledge, and intellect for centuries, and a people that carried the " Good News" to Mesopotamia and from thereon to our lands and the heart of the East as far as India and China spreading the spirit of Christianity through martyrdom.

The forced displacement of our faithful in Mosul and the Christian villages in the Plain of Nineveh (PN) in June 2014 has added more to the suffering of our Christian community as more than 125,000 Christians from the various church denominations were forced to deny Christ, pay tribute, or leave their villages, homes, and properties. However, they chose to leave everything and cling on to Christ. They arrived in Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniah, and Kirkuk.

The Chaldean Archdiocese of Erbil received more than 6500. We worked to start a relief program to alleviate their plight in terms of accommodation, health care, and education.

Today, more than 1200 students from both sexes aging between 17-18 face an unknown future, as there are not sufficient places for them in the universities of Kurdistan Region (KR). Besides, it is impossible for them to join the universities in Mosul nor do they have an opportunity for higher education after graduation from high school for the running and the coming years.

The CUE is a message to those who want us thrown out of the circle of history. It means we are staying because we are deeply rooted in this soil for thousands of years. All that is beneath and above its soil speaks of what our intellect has achieved, our hands have created, and of the blood that was shed in witness to how deeply rooted we are. It is also a witness to our remarkable history that inspires us today to move beyond the plight of our present on to the future in peace, coexistence, and brotherhood.

The CUE seeks to realize the following goals:

One: Academically

1. Meeting the increasing community requirements and providing educational opportunities for those who wish to pursue their higher education;
2. Contribution in boosting the level of higher education and scientific research in KR;
3. Provision of opportunities for a robust study at the university level and get accredited and acknowledged awards, especially for young men and women. This would open the door wide for them to access numerous catholic universities all over the world;
4. Provision of modern rare scientific disciplines to prepare specialists, technicians, and experts in a variety of fields;
5. Provision of research services;
6. Serve the national objectives of the components of KR according to the principles of democracy and human rights away from sectarian, ethnic, and racial tensions;
7. Provision of opportunities for scholarships in international universities, especially the catholic universities;
8. The existence of a robust and distinguished catholic university in its curricula, methodology and new approach to knowledge that is integrated in sublime human values is bound to create an atmosphere of academic competition amongst the universities of KR and Iraq where the CUE will begin with creating change to cope with the modern developments of our time;
9. The CUE in KR is expected to be an additional qualitative academic, and scientific value added to that of the Iraqi and KR universities;
10. Based on the quality assurance standards and innovation that will be adopted by the CUE, it is expected to be a focus of attention for students coming from various ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds and hence we will have thus opened for them the opportunity to reach out to the outside world in a modern and scientific manner;
11. The CUE will have an active and distinguished role in helping the KR to have access to 246 catholic universities across the world.

Two: Culturally

1. The opening of a CUV in KR would contribute to showing Kurdistan as a protecting environment for ethnic minorities at a time when other neighboring environments witness exclusion and marginalization of such minorities. This in itself would give an impression to the international community that the region is more tolerant and inclusive towards the other different ones;
2. We think that our university will make a big contribution into the process of bringing about change in KR and Iraq at large towards inclusion and tolerance, and hence comes the motto: ((We believe that change starts here)).

3. Our university would work to create a university community that is rich, multiple, and diverse from the ethnic, national, religious, ideological, and linguistic point of view with an aim to graduate students who have an in-depth knowledge of the other and conversant with their culture without fearing for their own identity;
4. Through its course of action that is based on 'in search for truth whatever' and the 'liberation of minds from fear, fictitious and wishful thinking' and the so-called 'critical thinking' as well as its modern and developed study programs, to produce open minded students who believe in science as means and solution of crises rather than deformed graduates that have no appreciation for science;
5. The university would work to provide liberal and professional knowledge and create a diverse and comprehensive community;
6. We should also bear in mind that the CUE, through the Department of Oriental Studies, will work to restore and revive our oriental cultural heritage that is rich in spirit, ideology, literature, and knowledge, and restore hope for the revival of our ancient Aramaic-Syriac language back to life;
7. Of relevance, and in harmony with the prevalent social factors, the existence of a catholic university would act to embrace our youth and would work to discourage them from the idea of immigration that has been gnawing away at the body of our people to the point of extinction from their ancestral land;
8. By and large, the CUE would also solve the problem of our IDP students who were displaced from Mosul and the (PN) who have no opportunity to pursue their higher education and who have lost any hope of ever being able to do that due to the delay in the liberation of their areas under ISIS control. Nor are they able to continue their higher education in the KR for linguistic reasons. This has made them opt for immigration, which means more reduction in the population of our Christian community at home.

Three: Economically

1. Our university will provide hundreds of job opportunities based on competence, for staff, managers, employees and laborers in different professions and jobs;
2. In its educational policy, our university will work to focus on those specializations that are closely related to the current market, especially in the field of international relations, business administration, language, translation, media, energy, renewable tourism, computer network engineering and information security, oil engineering, architecture, and rare medical specializations;
3. The establishment of a new university in Erbil will contribute to creating a business boom that would revive the economic cycle in the area.

Four: Socially

1. The university will strive to train and prepare ethically, consciously, and administratively competent leaders to sever the community and common interest;

2. The university will seek to achieve a balanced growth of mind, body and soul for all the members of its community;
3. It will train students to be life-long responsible individuals towards themselves and the community. And it will aim at finding truth and convey it through excellence in provision and research to serve the interests of both home and the world in an atmosphere of freedom and academic competence;
4. In a platform of diversity and openness to various ideologies, the university will receive students, staff and employees from different traditions and religious backgrounds. And in an atmosphere of trust, security, and mutual interaction and respect, the university will work to create a community that is characterized by a rich excellence, multiplicity, and diversity in people, ideas, and doctrines;
5. Through its systems, curricula, codes, and modern and developed teaching methodologies, the CUE will strive to prepare leaders who are ethically, consciously and professionally ready to form their own local, regional, and national world that is more just, integrated, humane and dignified;
6. It will seek to inculcate community values, joint work, and the spirit of cooperation through helping both the students and staff to get access to competencies such as knowledge, expertise, skills, and attitudes provided through team work and group work.

***+ Bashar WARDA CSsR
Chaldean Archbishop of ERBIL***