

S. Florida Muslims to help rebuild Baghdad churches

■ SERVICE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

and in our countries."

The initiative comes after Edwards wrote a column that was published Nov. 5 in the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*. In it, he said he cried after learning of the church bombings on Oct. 16 and the deaths of 12 people in similar incidents in August.

Edwards wrote that Catholics and Muslims have been at odds for centuries, including the times of the Crusades, when Catholics committed excesses in Muslim nations.

The Catholic Church has apologized and "disavowed any harm done to Muslims by our ancestral brothers and sisters," he said, adding it's appropriate for the Muslim community to denounce persecution of Catholics and support Cath-

olics around the world.

Ali said CAIR officials would ask local Muslims to raise money to help repair the churches. He already met in private with Edwards to express his concerns about the incidents.

Edwards said offerings collected by his congregants at today's service would go toward the rebuilding effort in Iraq.

In Miami, Sofian Abdelaziz, director of the American Muslim Association of North Amer-

ica, said his organization would also help. He said he would try to broadcast in Iraq a recorded message that condemns violence against Catholics and calls for Muslims to help protect places of worship.

"This is a shame to hear about it," he said of the bombings. "By Allah, if I don't condemn it, I will carry the sins."

Ali said he would invite Edwards to address 1,000 participants at an interfaith gathering

in February in Broward County.

"I don't expect to change the world. I just expect to make a difference at St. Katharine," Edwards said. "We're looking to make a positive impact on interreligious relationships in our community."

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"This is a wonderful opportunity for two religious communities to come together, especially on this day of Thanksgiving."

MARY ROSS AGOSTA
ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI