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Muslim leader visits Catholic church



UNITED IN FAITH:

Altaf Ali, center, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Miami, his wife Jameelah and Syed Rahman bow their heads in prayer during Mass in Weston's St. Katharine Drexel Catholic Church. Staff photo/ Angel Valentin

Condemnation of Iraqi attacks draws ovation

BY RUTH MORRIS
STAFF WRITER

WESTON • In a gesture of sympathy and outreach, local Muslim leader Altaf Ali on Thursday stood before the parishioners of St. Katharine Drexel Catholic Church and condemned recent militant attacks on Catholic churches in Baghdad, insisting the violence ran counter to the "true tenet"

of Islam.

The Thanksgiving speech, delivered before a hushed congregation, referred to a string of bombings at churches in Baghdad, including predawn assaults on Oct. 16, the first day of Ramadan, that killed three and injured about 40 civilians.

"Your suffering is my suffering. Your sorrow is my sorrow. Your happiness is my happiness," said Ali, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Miami. "We are brothers and sisters in faith."

Ali's visit came in response to a commentary published last

week in the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* by the church's pastor, the Rev. Paul Edwards. In it, Edwards lamented the assaults on Baghdad churches and parishioners, and noted that after the 9-11 terror attacks the archbishop of Miami had visited a local Islamic center to stand behind Muslims who might be targeted in reactionary violence.

"Would it be overly bold to ask for a show of support and solidarity from the local community?" after the targeting of Iraqi churches, he wrote.

The remark prompted Ali to

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