

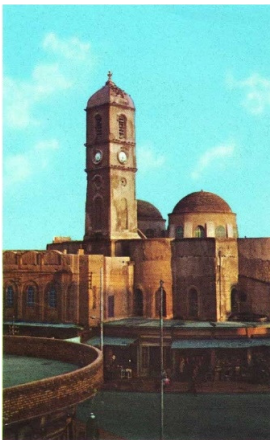
NEWS BRIEFING, *The Tablet*, International Catholic Weekly

13 June 2020

Christians and Muslims hope a project to reconstruct Mosul's iconic places of worship, badly damaged by Islamic State during its three-year occupation of the city, will also help to rebuild trust between Iraq's religious communities.

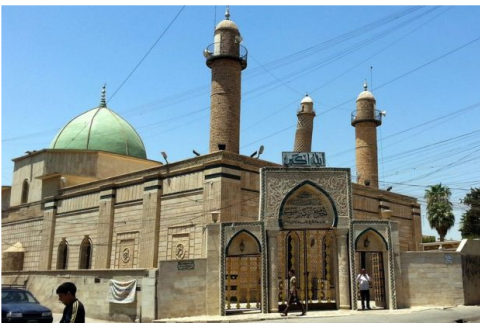
The \$50.4 million Unesco project, funded by the United Arab Emirates, proposes to rebuild not only the Great Mosque of al-Nouri and its minaret, but also the Dominican church of Our Lady of the Hour and the Al-Tahera Syriac Catholic Church.

Dominican Fr Olivier Poquillon says Mosul's Sunni Muslims told Unesco that if they rebuilt the Great Mosque, the old city needed the Dominican church restored, too.



The Dominican church of Our lady of the Hour in 1980s (left) and now

The Great Mosque of al-Nouri was built in 1172-1173 by the Turkman Nur al-Din al-Zanghi of the Seljuk Empire, and destroyed in June 2017 by IS during the Battle for Mosul. It held symbolic importance to the extremists and to its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who used it in 2014 to declare the self-styled "caliphate". According to Mosul's citizens, IS destroyed the mosque in order not to allow any other Imam other than Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to give a sermon there.



The Great Mosque of Al-Nouri