



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

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Catholic Church sends message of good will to the Muslim community to mark the end of Ramadan

The President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Philip Wilson today sent his best wishes to Australia's Islamic community ahead of the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Ramadan will draw to a close early next week with the Feast of *Id al-Fitr*.

Archbishop Wilson joined his best wishes with those of the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Cardinal Paul Poupard, who issued a statement from the Vatican entitled: "*Christians and Muslims: in confident dialogue aimed at solving together the challenges of our world.*"

"I welcome this statement and express on behalf of the Bishops of Australia our best wishes to the Islamic Community and our solidarity with them in seeking to serve the one true God," Archbishop Wilson said.

In his message, Cardinal Poupard wished all Muslims "peace, tranquility and joy in your hearts, your homes and your countries".

He said his good wishes echoed those expressed personally by Pope Benedict XVI at the beginning of Ramadan to representatives of the international Islamic community.

"The particular circumstances that we have recently experienced together demonstrate clearly that, however arduous the path of authentic dialogue may be at times, it is more necessary than ever," the message said.

Cardinal Poupard said Christians and Muslims had a special responsibility to work together to address the many problems facing the world.

"As Christian and Muslim believers, are we not the first to be called to offer our specific contribution to resolve this serious situation and these complex problems? Without doubt, the credibility of religions and also the credibility of our religious leaders and all believers is at stake," he said.

Cardinal Poupard said the two religions of Christianity and Islam give great importance to love, compassion and solidarity.

"Everyday worries together with the more serious problems faced by the world call for our attention and our action. Let us ask God in prayer to help us confront them with courage and determination. In those places where we can work together, let us not labour separately," he said.

"The world has need, and so do we, of Christians and Muslims who respect and value each other and bear witness to their mutual love and co-operation to the glory of God and the good of all humanity."

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