



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

**Media release  
July 21, 2006**

### **Pope Benedict asks Catholics to pray for peace this weekend**

Pope Benedict XVI has asked Catholic Churches across the world to designate this Sunday, July 23 as a special day of prayer and penance for peace in the Middle East.

President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Philip Wilson, has written to bishops across Australia, asking them to encourage parishes in their dioceses to observe the day of prayer.

Archbishop Wilson drew attention to Pope Benedict's address following the praying of the Angelus this week in the field of Les Combes in the Aosta Valley where the Pope is holidaying.

In his address, Pope Benedict said "the news from the Holy Land is a reason for new and grave concern for all".

"But neither terrorist acts nor reprisals, especially when they entail tragic consequences for the civilian population, can be justified," he said. "By such paths, as bitter experience shows, positive results are not achieved."

He concluded his address by inviting local Churches "to raise special prayers for peace in the Holy Land and in the whole of the Middle East".

Contact: Debra Vermeer on 0414 880 475.