



# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

May 2, 2008

## **Apostolic Nuncio tells Bishops he has come to be a companion in their pastoral ministry**

The recently arrived Apostolic Nuncio to Australia, Archbishop Giuseppe Lazzarotto, has thanked the Bishops and the people of the Church in Australia for their warm welcome and said he saw his role here as that of a companion.

In his opening address to the Plenary Meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Lazzarotto also paid tribute to the love and affection given to his predecessor, Archbishop Ambrose De Paoli during his final illness.

“I have come to be your companion on the way and to share with you all that characterises your pastoral ministry,” he told the Bishops.

“In the first place, the patience, the toil and labour of what we may call a ‘discerning reflection’, in order to understand what is happening; and then, I have come to live together with you your commitment to faithfulness to the Church, and also the courage of a faith and a coherent and authentic magisterium that does not easily yield to seasonal and passing fashions.”

Archbishop Lazzarotto said that in this context, he noted with gladness the work being done by the Bishops on a plan to reach out to inactive Catholics and to help parishes to become true communities of Disciples on Mission.

“This gives honour to your pastoral sensitivity and shows the commitment with which you try to open new ways of announcing the Gospel,” he said.

The Archbishop concluded by “anticipating the gratitude of the Holy Father for the extraordinary efforts you are making to prepare, as much as possible, for his visit and for the celebration of the World Youth Day”.

“Surely, it will be a moment of great and intense participation, from which our Church here in Australia will draw new strength and fresh energy for the proclamation of the Kingdom,” he said.

The Bishops’ Plenary Meeting is being held at Mary Mackillop Place, North Sydney and will conclude on Thursday.