



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

**Media Release
February 28, 2005**

Australian Catholic Church Television Launched

The Catholic Church will have an exciting new television presence from March 1, with the launch of Australian Catholic Church Television on a new Foxtel Digital and Austar Digital community channel.

Aurora TV is a new community channel available on the basic package of Foxtel and Austar. It will go out on Channel 183 and provides for faith-based groups, not-for-profit social service companies and non-Government organisations to have a voice on Australian TV.

Dr Richard Leonard SJ, Jesuit priest and director of Catholic Church Television Australia (CCTVA) said the Catholic Church was approached to be involved.

“For many years now the Church has had little direct presence on Australian television and so the Bishops Committee for the Media seized the opportunity to have access to an increasingly important television outlet where we can put to air programmes from which we think the Catholic and wider community will benefit,” Dr Leonard said.

Foxtel will broadcast the Aurora Community channel free of charge, but CCTVA must pay for the acquisition and production of programmes, and the number of hours they are on air.

“Unlike running an entire channel, the costs and the associated risks in this venture are smaller for the Church,” Dr Leonard said.

“The amount of time we are on the air will only be limited by the money we can raise for sponsorship, programming and buying on-air time.”

Aurora has made only two demands on participating organisations: their programmes cannot vilify anyone, and they must be of the highest production values. Other groups taking part in Aurora include the Salvation Army, Anglican Media, Mission Australia, UNICEF, Red Cross, UNHCR, Australian Asian Youth Centre, Plan International, the Australian Film Radio and Television School and Swinburne Film School.

Initially, CCTVA will broadcast Mass three times a week on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday at 10am, as well as putting to air Australian documentary films that focus on the liturgical season, a feast day, or a national observance.

“We want CCTVA to be of service to Catholics throughout Australia, as well as getting our message out to the people who up to this point don’t come near the Church,” Dr Leonard said.

Foxtel and Austar Digital presently reach 750,000 homes, but with the phasing in of an inclusive digital service in the next few years, that number will climb to 2.25 million homes, with a projected reach of nearly 7 million Australians.

“That’s the sort of marketplace where the Church should have a voice,” he said.

For more information or for interview contact Rev Dr Richard Leonard SJ on 03 9342 1834 or 0409 120 928.

Catholic Church Television Australia

**This Week on Aurora – Channel 183
Foxtel and Austar Digital.**

“Mass For you At Home”

Tuesday 1st March 12 Noon

Friday 5th 10.00am and 4.00pm

Saturday 6th March 10.00 pm (Vigil Mass for 4th Sunday of
Lent)

Documentary Film:

“Conflict Resolution”

As part of our Lenten observance we focus on one of the ways to Caritas in Project Compassion is put to long-lasting effect in East Timor and beyond, by helping enemies forgive each other and be reconciled for the common good. It's a very practical application of “loving our neighbour, as we love ourselves”.

Tuesday 1st March 12.30pm

Friday 5th 10.30am and 4.30pm

Saturday 6th March 10.30 pm (Vigil Mass for 4th Sunday of
Lent)