



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

**February 16, 2006**

### **Apostolic Nuncio launches Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Church and the Media today**

The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Ambrose De Paoli, today launched a Pastoral Letter on the Church and the Media from the Catholic Bishops of Australia, in which they urge people to "Be not afraid" of the media but to use it with wisdom and faith.

The launch took place at Notre Dame University's Sydney campus and a panel discussion on 'The Place of the Church in the Public Discourse' followed.

The launch of the document was also be marked with a luncheon for the media featuring the renowned Rome-based Vatican correspondent John Allen Jr as guest speaker.

Entitled "Go Tell Everyone", the pastoral letter draws on the Church's rich teachings in the area of social communications and relates them directly to our own circumstances in Australia at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

"Taking those teachings we can plot a path forward for the church to effectively evangelise through the media and for each one of us to be responsible consumers of the media," the pastoral letter says.

Chairman of the Bishops' Committee for the Media, Archbishop Barry Hickey, said the pastoral letter acknowledges the pervasive influence of the media in our society.

"As Catholics, we wonder how our faith fits into this media culture. How can our faith in Jesus Christ guide us as we navigate the many and varied forms of media which surround us in our daily lives?"

"And how can we take advantage of the opportunities that the media offers to share the Good News of Christ?"

"It is not always an easy path to navigate, but it's a crucial one and this pastoral letter seeks to take up some of those questions and to offer spiritual and practical encouragement and guidance."

Archbishop Hickey said the pastoral letter also celebrates the Church's own media apostolate.

"There is a long and proud tradition of Catholic media in Australia and the Church continues to lead the way into the new media age with wonderful web-based initiatives, including the latest initiative of podcasting daily Bible readings and reflections," he said.

"We can't afford to stand still. We have to continually strive for new ways to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world around us."