



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

**Media Release
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Catholic churches to observe National Day of Mourning in solidarity with those who have suffered

The National Day of Mourning and Reflection would be an opportunity for all Australians to take time out in solidarity with those so badly affected by the Asian tsunami, Archbishop Francis Carroll said today.

Archbishop Carroll, the President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, said Catholic churches across the nation would observe the day by including special prayers and homilies in their weekend Masses.

“Parishes have been asked to observe the day in the way best suited to their circumstances, remembering those who have died and with a focus on prayer for those who have suffered so grievously in this natural disaster,” Archbishop Carroll said.

“This is also an opportunity to give thanks for the outpouring of generosity we have witnessed in recent weeks as donations to aid agency appeals continue to climb.”

Archbishop Carroll said the Catholic relief agency, Caritas Australia, had been overwhelmed with the generosity of donors, both from people in parishes and from the wider community.

“Through its partners on the ground in affected countries, Caritas Australia was able to immediately begin responding to this humanitarian disaster,” he said.

Archbishop Carroll said those partnerships with local organisations would ensure that vital aid got to where it was most needed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Caritas was also committed to helping communities recover in the long term, and its programs would be ongoing, he said.

“At times like this we receive a stark reminder of our common humanity and we understand with greater clarity that the suffering of our brothers and sisters affects us all,” Archbishop Carroll said.

“The Australian response to this disaster has been truly magnificent.

“As the nation pauses to reflect this weekend, let us remember those who have died and stand in solidarity with those who have suffered, praying for them and recommitting ourselves to assisting in their long-term recovery.”