



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

**Media Release
December 31, 2004**

Catholic Church sends prayers, support to tsunami victims

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference President, Archbishop Francis Carroll has expressed his prayerful sympathy to all of those affected by the tsunami disaster across the South East Asian region.

Archbishop Carroll said he is contacting the presidents of the Bishops Conferences of those countries hit by the natural disaster to express the support and solidarity of the Catholic Church in Australia.

“I am assuring them of our prayers and advising them of the support available from the Australian Church and asking for advice as to how best we can assist,” he said.

Caritas Australia, the Church’s overseas aid agency, responded immediately to the disaster and is working with its partners in the affected countries. People who wish to help Caritas assist those in need are able to donate funds to its public appeal.

“I am overwhelmed by the generosity of the Australian people to the call for assistance and thank them wholeheartedly,” Archbishop Carroll said.

“We must continue this support in the months and years ahead as our neighbour countries try to rebuild shattered lives and communities”.

Archbishop Carroll called for all Catholic churches to include in their Masses this weekend prayers for those affected by the tsunami, as a sign of solidarity with suffering brothers and sisters.

Local church communities in Australia will be available to respond to the needs of Australians affected by the loss of loved ones and those traumatised by their experience, he said.

Catholic Counselling Agency, Centacare also has staff available to help those in need.

For more information contact Debra Way at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on 0414 880 475 or Jack de Groot at Caritas on 0411 309 422.