

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

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Pope John Paul II sends prayers, blessing to bushfire victims

Pope John Paul II today sent his prayers to those affected by the Canberra bushfires and invoked upon them blessings of strength and consolation.

In a message conveyed to the Archbishop of Canberra-Goulburn, Francis Carroll through the Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Pope also offered prayers for firefighters and those offering assistance.

"Having learned with sadness of the tragic consequences of the fire which has devastated parts of Canberra and the surrounding countryside, His Holiness Pope John Paul II has asked me to convey to all the assurance of His prayers," the statement said.

"Upon those affected by this disaster He invokes Divine Blessings of strength and consolation.

"His Holiness likewise prays for the firefighters and all involved in providing assistance to those who have been made homeless, encouraging them to continue their efforts to bring relief and support."

For more information contact Debra Way at the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference on (02) 6201 9859 or (0414) 880 475.