



MEDIA RELEASE

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CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN CALLS FOR HOPE AND PEACEMAKING TO REPLACE VIOLENCE THIS CHRISTMAS

The world needs the peace and hope of Christmas more than ever.

2014 has been characterised by so much inhuman violence and brutality. We think particularly of the violence in the Middle East in so many places. Pope Francis describes the situation as a kind of unofficial World War III. So many are grieving the tragic loss of loved ones. So many have fled their homes, but want to return when safe to do so.

For my part, on 14 December, I will be joining a delegation of Bishops traveling to Kurdistan, Iraq and Lebanon to visit refugees to offer spiritual support and humanitarian aid.

At this Christmas time, let us also pray for those lost in the two Malaysian airline crashes, and their families. Also, we think of those battling disease, poverty and hunger, especially victims of the deadly Ebola disease.

In Australia, we think of embattled families. The homeless – especially in Canberra – they too need our help. The lonely and poor are calling for our kindly attention.

Let us do all that we can to replace violence and despair with hope and peace-making this Christmas.

Christians believe that Christmas brings the Good News of peace and hope into full focus. In Jesus Christ, the child born at Bethlehem, God has spoken definitively to all of us and all creation. God's word is: "You are loved deeply by the God of all love and mercy."

In these days of family reunions and prayer, let us receive all that the God of love wishes to offer us: HOPE, PEACE, and FORGIVENESS. Let us then offer this love that gives everything to others.

God bless you and your loved ones this Christmas.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse
Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn