

## **CATHOLIC LAITY RESPONSE TO CRISIS**

(SACBC press release on behalf of the Southern African Council of Catholic Laity – 12/10/86)

Delegates representing the South African Council of Catholic Laity agreed on a wide-ranging list of priorities for action in response to the escalating political crisis in South Africa.

In a list of priorities for Catholic laity passed unanimously at the end of the meeting, the delegates said: “The time has come to take sides by making a clear option for the oppressed. We cannot be neutral”.

Members of Catholic lay organisations had to be informed of what was happening in the country.

Speakers from the townships, rural areas and from the white suburbs would be interchanged for a truer reflection of what was happening in South Africa than what the media published or was allowed to publish.

- ❖ Catholic lay movements throughout the country would be asked to support the initiatives of non-violent protest from the oppressed.
- ❖ Delegates decided unanimously to support the End Conscription Campaign. Catholics would call for the removal of troops from the townships and “support the demilitarisation of the military chaplaincy”.
- ❖ They would promote unity in the Church through action for justice and promote a vision of a new South Africa, by promoting for instance, The Freedom Charter. (See *The Bishops Speak*, volume 4, centre piece.)
- ❖ Delegates pledged themselves to active support for detainees and would call for their release.
- ❖ They would also observe and promote the call of the Catholic bishops for prayer and fasting on the first Friday of each month.