

**DIOCESE OF KROONSTAD PRESS STATEMENT ON THE WELKOM
RACE CRISIS (MAY 25, 1990)**

The bishop and clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in the Orange Free State Goldfields, have witnessed with a great deal of pain and sadness the violence in Thabong and Welkom.

We deeply regret the loss of life which occurred on all the suffering that has arisen as a result of the disturbances. We extend our sincerest condolences to the families of all deceased and we share in their sense of loss. We assure them of the support of our prayers.

To all those in authority and in a position of leadership we urgently appeal that they work together to identify the causes, both remote and immediate, which have led to this angry expression of frustration, and to swiftly seek solutions. We appeal to the police and security forces to act with restraint and sensitivity and to bear in mind that their presence often serves to inflame, rather than defuse, the situation.

We urgently request all organisations and structures in Welkom and Thabong to normalise the situation by maintaining discipline among their members and by avoiding provocative speech and action. Clearly, vigilante action only worsens the tension and should be stopped. It is essential that uncontrolled elements which use the existing tension for their own purposes, be brought under control by community leaders.

As we move towards a new and non-racial South Africa we need to strive for understanding and reconciliation among all the peoples of this country. This can only be achieved by a concerted effort to eradicate all forms of apartheid and racial attitudes, and by a commitment to justice for all.

We humbly place our hope for the future in the hands of the Lord who “is making the whole creation new” (Revelation 21:5).