

## **SACBC SECRETARIAT STATEMENT ON POLICE SEARCH OF CHURCH PREMISES (25/3/91)**

The SACBC was shocked and dismayed to hear that police had carried out a search for weapons inside and around our church in Namahadi Township near Frankfurt in the diocese of Bethlehem last weekend. The Magistrate issued a search warrant on 21 March 1991.

The search for weapons on the premises of a Catholic place of worship is not only absurd; is also in conflict with the ancient tradition in all civilisations that respects the sanctity of sacred buildings.

The Catholic Church in Southern Africa has been engaged in a Crusade of Prayer for Peace in that area since 1985. The Conference of Bishops of the Catholic Church in South Africa representing the single largest Christian denomination in this country, urged Catholics to fully support the process of peaceful negotiations for a new constitutional dispensation in our country, in a pastoral letter which was read in all our churches at the beginning of Lent.

As Christians, we forgive the abuse of power wrought upon us, in accordance with Christ's injunction in Matthew 5:39. However, imitating our Lord's example in the face of unjust treatment an apology is called for.