

## **SACBC SECRETARIAT STATEMENT REGARDING THE BISHOPS' PLENARY SESSION (19/1/93)**

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference will hold one of its two annual Plenary Sessions at John Vianney Seminary, Main Street, Waterkloof, Pretoria, from 26 January – 2 February 1993.

The Plenary Session will start with Holy Mass at 17h30 on Tuesday 26 January 1993. This will be followed by supper. At 19h30 the president of the SACBC, Archbishop Wilfrid Napier OFM of Durban will deliver his annual report. Archbishop Ambrose de Paoli, the Apostolic delegate (representative off the Pope in Southern Africa) will then address the assembly, followed by messages of solidarity by various church representatives.

Five commissions, which operate under the auspices of the SACBC, will report at this Plenary Session. These are: the Commissions for Laity, Justice and Peace, Social Commissions, Priests, Deacons, Religious and Christian Service.

One of the highlights of this Plenary Session will be the presence of representatives of major Catholic funding agencies overseas. A study day will be held with them 'to arrive at some mutually agreed upon understanding of the situation of the region, the needs that exist and the funding priorities'.

The Bishops will discuss the current situation in South Africa and put the final touches to an important pastoral letter on democracy.

On Sunday 31 January 1993 groups of bishops will visit the townships of Thembisa, Soweto, Sebokeng and Katlehong where, amongst other things, they will celebrate the Eucharist.

Also to be presented to the Plenary Session is a draft document formulating guidelines, which address Medico-Moral Ethical issues pertaining to sterilisation, abortion and euthanasia. Another draft document for consideration is entitled 'we are the Church' – a Pastoral Directive on Co-responsibility in the Church.

Time will be given to discussing the restructuring of the Conference to make it a more effective instrument of the Bishops.

The Plenary Session will end at noon on Tuesday 2 February 1993 and will be followed by a meeting of the Administrative Board of the SACBC. A Press Conference will be held at 10h00 on Wednesday 3 February 1993 at St John Vianney Seminary.