

## **SACBC STATEMENT**

### **ON**

### **PAPAL VISIT (2/2/89)**

Speculation about the possibility of the Pope visiting South Africa requires that the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference clarify certain points:

“On 11/8/88 we said in a statement that the Holy Father had been invited. This invitation was first issued in 1982 and renewed in 1988. On the eve of the Holy Father's departure from Rome for his last African visit, the Vatican announced that the Holy Father would be visiting South Africa, but no formal communication has been received as yet. When it arrives we shall take the steps required by the protocol governing papal visits.

“The visits of the Holy Father are always pastoral in character, and he has shown this both by the range of countries he has visited and the kinds of situation he has entered. He does this in his capacity as the chief pastor of a universal church. We will be holding a series of dialogues so that this position may be more clearly understood and so that our country as a whole may benefit, as others have, by the expected visit of the Holy Father.”