

**SACBC STATEMENT ON THE RELEASE OF MR NELSON MANDELA  
(12/2/90)**

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference welcomes the release from prison of Mr Nelson Mandela.

The Conference has long held that Mr Mandela's release is vital for a negotiated and peaceful political settlement in South Africa.

The Conference rejoices with Mr Mandela, his family and friends, many millions of South Africans and the world community that at long last he is a free man, able once again to exercise his rights and undertake his responsibilities within his family and in society.

Along with many others, but in a special way nonetheless because of his leadership role, he has suffered imprisonment and vilification in his struggle to work for a South Africa in which each and every person would be respected and valued regardless of his skin colour.

His release hopefully signals the end to a particularly sad chapter in South African history in which many lost their lives and countless others suffered detention, imprisonment and exile in their struggle for justice.

The Conference wishes Mr Mandela and his family a joyous and lasting reunion and assures him of its prayers and support as he faces the many and daunting challenges expected of him as leader and statesman in the months and years ahead.