

## **SACBC STATEMENT ON TREASON TRIALISTS' ACQUITTAL**

**(9/12/85)**

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference has warmly welcomed the news of the acquittal of the 12 treason trialists in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court.

“At a time when our country is embroiled in civil turmoil, the acquittal of the 12 popular leaders comes as a sign of hope in a dark corner.

“it is now more than ever before that people desperately need such hope and such leaders to instill the necessary guidance, discipline and strength into those struggling for liberation, justice and peace in our land.

“But what price was their innocence? It took many anxious months in detention, tremendous disruption of their lives and work and enormous sums of money for these leaders to be pronounced innocent. How many more must become victims of such a miscarriage of justice before the South African government attempts to create the proper climate for peace by negotiating with – instead of accusing – representative leaders of the people?

“Our call to the government is to release not only the remaining four treason trialists but all political prisoners. Only then can we begin on the road to peace in our land.”