

(SO-CALLED) CATHOLIC DEFENCE LEAGUE DISINFORMATION

Monsignor M Cassari, Charge d'Affaires of the Apostolic Delegation, came under attack from an organisation called South African Catholic Defence League following his sermon at the Italian Prisoner of War commemoration on 6/11/1988.

Monsignor Cassari's comments were characterised as 'political' and inappropriate for a representative of the Holy Father who himself described the South African situation "...of racial segregation (apartheid) as clearly in conflict with the dignity of the human person... The overcoming of discrimination in this field is an integral part of the programme of liberation and self-determination of the African peoples".

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference expressed its support of Monsignor Mario and the bishops found it "necessary to provide some clarification:

"It should be understood that the (so-called) South African Catholic Defence League is not a recognised church organisation. Its support in no way reflects the thinking of the majority of Catholics in the country. The bishops have on a number of occasions dissociated themselves from the views and opinions of this group...

"The bishops are grateful for the support of Monsignor Mario and for the deep concern he has shown for the church and its people. That his concern for the oppressed of South Africa and his sadness at the press restrictions, which, 'silence the voice of truth' is somehow political is to misunderstand completely the role of the Church.