

## **STATEMENT ON FR. K. PAULY, SAC**

12 March 1979

**His Grace, Archbishop J. P. Fitzgerald, OMI, President of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference has issued the following statement:**

Fr. Kuno Pauly was deported on Saturday evening 1<sup>st</sup> December. I was able to meet and speak to him at Jan Smuts Airport before leaving. Unfortunately it was not possible to be with him in the transit lounge until his departure. No reason has been given him or his lawful superior for his untimely and forcible departure, other than that the authorities do not take steps like this without good reason. Surely an effective and silent way in branding a man's good name. Neither his bishop nor his superior, and sure they must know him better than anyone else, can account for this seriously damaging step.

As President of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, I want to express the gravest concern at what appears to me wholly unwarranted step. Father Pauly came to this country to dedicate his life to the Christian welfare of our people. To this end he became proficient in their language and customs. He learned to see their needs and share their anxieties and troubles. He did all this in pursuance of the Christian command to spread the good news of Christ through the Bible. He is well loved and esteemed by our African people. One can well understand their dismay and distress at seeing Fr. Pauly suddenly and without notice taken forcibly from their midst.

Quite understandably, they now ask themselves where all recent official commitment to better relationships is leading too. This deportation appears to them as counter proof of this commitment. They look on Father Pauly as their minister and friend, somebody that cannot be replaced overnight. They feel they are being deprived without cause of someone very close and dear to them and that they are thus being penalised in their Christian beliefs. I want to express to them, to Bishop John P. Murphy of Port Elizabeth and to the religious superior of Fr. Pauly my sympathy and shared concern. At the same time I wish to express to Fr. Pauly deep appreciation for the many years of apostolic service he has given to the Church in Southern Africa and to assure him that his work has not been in vain. The Gospel seeds he has planted must surely continue to grow and to fructify. I also want to express the hope that Bishop John Murphy will manage in some way the gaping gap left by the deportation of Fr. Pauly – especially in these days when those in authority seem to have set their faces so obdurately against allowing much needed overseas Catholic missionaries into the Diocese of Port Elizabeth. One does not improvise a man like Pauly.