Australian Catholic Bishops express deep sympathies for victims of terrorist attacks in Paris

Media Statement
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The Australian Catholic Bishops have expressed their deep sympathies for the hundreds of innocent people killed and maimed in the recent terrorist attacks in Paris.

President of Conference, Archbishop Denis Hart said, “We offer our prayers and condolences to the victims of these horrendous attacks. Like all Australians, we join in solidarity with the people of France and share in the hope that the perpetrators and their networks will be swiftly brought to justice.

“Our shock and sadness draws us close to the victims and their families. As we mourn for them and their loved ones, we must affirm that feelings of grief and compassion are a sign of a fundamental goodness in humanity that cannot be defeated by evil.

“The disregard of terrorists for the sanctity of human life is an abomination. And, as the Holy Father Pope Francis has stated, ‘using the name of God to justify this path is blasphemy’.

“These acts of terrorism can never be allowed to divide communities through fear and hatred. Divisive actions of hate will only serve to help evil organisations like ISIL. Their aim is to divide the world and make Muslims the enemy of the West. Hence, we must resist calls to close our borders to refugees from the Middle East. It is love and not hate that will defeat extremism.

“We pray for the victims of these atrocities in Paris.

“We pray for the millions of Syrian and Iraqi refugees fleeing similar atrocities by Islamic State against Christian and other minorities.

“Here in Australia, we pray for a continued national resolve to assist refugees fleeing this violence and oppression. We pray for unity among all cultures of our diverse Australian community, and call for a special concern to ensure that Australians of Middle Eastern background and Muslims are not subject to intimidation or vilification as a result of these tragic world events.”

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