



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday 20 May 2021

### **CRA calls for prayer, dialogue and understanding in the interests of peace in the Holy Land**

In light of escalating conflict in the Holy Land, Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) calls the Catholic community, and all Christians and people of faith, to unite in prayer this Sunday, the Feast of Pentecost, 23 May at midday, wherever we may be.

CRA grieves the destruction and pain caused by the current violence in the Holy Land.

“Pope Francis has reminded us that we are all sisters and brothers, irrespective of our national, geographic or faith backgrounds. With Pope Francis we emphasise the need for attentive listening, true dialogue and genuine encounter. We pray that all involved in this tragic situation may find the patience and empathy that is so necessary,” said Peter Carroll FMS, CRA President.

“Pentecost celebrates the transformation and renewal that comes into our hearts when we open them to the Spirit. CRA invites people of faith to pray that the fruits of the Spirit may come to this land that is so special to millions of believers.

CRA extends its prayers and support to those Israelis and Palestinians, Christians, Muslims and Jews, who have been engaging in dialogue on the ground for many years, and who continue to do so throughout the present conflict. Their stories of coexistence should be celebrated and shared as a beacon of hope, and we encourage them to continue their courageous peacebuilding.

“We call upon our Catholic community, and all people of faith and goodwill in Australia, to deepen their understanding about this conflict, and for individuals and organisations to be aware of the limits of their knowledge about the situation. Without a thorough understanding of these complexities, narratives easily emerge that are counterproductive to peace,” said CRA National Executive Director, Anne Walker.

“This not only exacerbates tensions in the Holy Land, it also brings the conflict into the diaspora communities around the globe where Palestinians and Israelis, Christians, Muslims and Jews also live” she added.

CRA is committed to respectful dialogue especially about difficult issues and we encourage the interfaith and intercultural ministries of our membership. As Pope Francis has frequently said, by encountering ‘the other’ and sincerely listening to their respective stories, we can come to a deeper understanding and more effectively accompany our brothers and sisters in their pursuit of peace and security for all.

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