



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

PRESIDENT

MEDIA RELEASE

4 MARCH 2026

Call for peace in Middle East

A statement from Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Archbishop of Perth:

In this season of Lent, Pope Leo has encouraged us to pray for peace, to “fast from words and acts of hatred and conflict” and to rediscover the peace Christ offers.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference joins Pope Leo XIV and many world leaders in expressing deep alarm at the escalating violence now engulfing the Middle East.

The loss of life and the fear and uncertainty experienced by ordinary people and the destabilisation of an already fragile region weigh heavily on our hearts.

As Pope Leo warned this week, we stand “faced with the possibility of a tragedy of enormous proportions”.

His appeal is one we wholeheartedly echo: that all parties “assume the moral responsibility to stop the spiral of violence before it becomes an irreparable abyss”.

Violence only multiplies suffering; war is not the answer and is always a defeat for humanity.

The current hostilities have already caused immense harm.

As Pope Leo reminded us: “May diplomacy recover its role and may the good of peoples be promoted, peoples who long for peaceful coexistence founded on justice.”

We are also mindful of the Australians currently in the region, including personnel serving in peacekeeping and humanitarian roles. This is an anxious time for their families, friends and communities. We assure them of our prayers and our pastoral concern.

Above all, we pray for the innocent: for those already killed, for the injured and traumatised, for families separated or displaced and for communities living in fear.

We pray too for leaders at every level: that their decisions be grounded in respect for human dignity, the common good and solidarity with the suffering.

We ask all people of faith and goodwill in Australia to join us in praying for peace and the healing of a region that has suffered too much for too long.