



ARCHBISHOP BARRY HICKEY
CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF PERTH
RE: New Year Message
Date 31st December 2004

West Australians have responded with their traditional generosity to the people of the Indian Ocean rim in their suffering.

Reaching out to people in difficulties is a great Australian tradition to be cherished.

In this New Year I want to draw attention to some areas in which we are not doing very well. They include the basic requirements of stable marriages and respect for human life at all its stages.

Male and female relationships are often trivialised in our society, leading to many short term de facto unions or unstable marriages.

The effects are already noticeable in broken marriages, lonely and confused adults, and psychologically damaged children who are suffering from the loss of the love and security of family life.

For the future of our nation, I urge young men and women to respect the seriousness of close personal relationships.

I also have a New Year wish for all Christian Churches.

A big part of society's problem has been the failure of Christian Churches to speak with one voice on the crucial moral issues about human life.

This disunity creates confusion and undermines the credibility of the Churches. It also saps energy for evangelisation.

Christian Churches will only be united on these issues when they are faithful to the long biblical traditions about morality that they all once subscribed to.

Without objective moral principles, society is at sea on matters of life and death such as abortion, euthanasia, and the humanity of embryos, and is unable to overcome difficulties in personal relationships.

These are matters on which people are entitled to expect proper guidance. The lack of unity forces them to make choices without the benefit of objective moral principles.

It is my New Year wish that all Christian Churches will make the search for unity on moral matters their priority in 2005.

MEDIA CONTACT HUGH RYAN 9223 1350