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AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Media Release
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Australian bishops welcome Cardinals Wilfrid Napier and Oscar Rodriguez

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference yesterday welcomed Cardinal Wilfrid Napier (Archbishop of Durban, South Africa)and Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga (Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, Honduras) to their plenary meeting at Mary MacKillop place.

The two Cardinals were brought to Australia by Marist Brother Mark O'Connor, Director of the Office for Evangelisation in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and addressed the bishops in their afternoon session.

Cardinal Napier delivered St Vincent De Paul's National Gerard Ward Lecture in Canberra on Friday night and spoke on the process of reconciliation forged in part by the Catholic Church in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Cardinal Rodriguez and Cardinal Napier were both invited to give the annual Dom Helder Camara lecture which is held at Newman College. Cardinal Rodriguez, who is president of Caritas Internationalis spoke about the importance of social doctrine of the Church.

"The social doctrine of the Church is the answer to many of the problems that we have now. In my country, 62 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, and all of Central America is affected badly by drugs. There is a lot of migration to the United States, and there are these invisible "walls", but walls cannot stop migration when there is no development", he said.

Caritas Internationalis, which has as its main focus human dignity and development is a federation of 166 nations now which the Cardinal says is a sign of hope, taking the love of God and neighbor to all the nations.

"Haiti is really struggling. Nearly one year after the earthquake, only two per cent of the rubble has been removed. Two million people are living in tents and there is a cholera epidemic. Many have had limbs removed without anesthesia because of gangrene. We want to respond by building 1,000 houses. This is a big project, but there is an organization called "A roof for my country" which is doing this work.

Both of the Cardinals emphasized the importance of solidarity and sharing resources. With this, they said, the Church can continue doing good all around the world.

To see a short video of the two Cardinals, follow this link. http://www.vimeo.com/17143657

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