

President's Message

Message following Bali Bombing, Oct 2002

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Greetings in Christ Jesus!

We have been shocked at the horrific bombings in Bali. Our hearts go out to the many people injured and to the families and friends of those bereaved. This has been the greatest attack on Australian citizens since the time of World War II. We have been moved by the incredible degree of suffering endured by our fellow citizens and others from many parts of the world. We have also been moved by the heroic acts of concern carried out by all of the services and volunteers in our country and in Bali in providing help and support as quickly as possible. We are also most grateful for the most efficient evacuation of the wounded back to Australia. We are also very conscious of the help given by many Balinese people to Australians and others. We are conscious too that many citizens of other nations and many people of other faiths, including Muslims and Hindus, have died or been seriously injured in these attacks.

Since Sunday I have been making sure that all of the services which we have provided, particularly through UnitingCare Australia and the Northern Synod, are available to those in need. We have asked our counselling and family-based care agencies to be available, as they are able, for any who require help. All of our agencies have been most helpful and co-operative.

I have been in touch with the Protestant Church in Bali and with others of our partner churches in Indonesia. The Rev K Sugaya Ayub, Bishop of the Bali Protestant Church, has sent his Church's condolences. A similar message has come to me from the Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa, Sulawesi, Indonesia. Bishop Ayub assured us that members of the Balinese Church had both given blood and also provided pastoral visitation to those injured and to all families. Needless to say, Indonesian Christians feel deeply troubled by what has happened. We need also to remember the Balinese people, and indeed the vast majority of deeply peaceful Indonesian people.

At this time we face again the central issues of Christian existence: the presence in our world of human evil and depravity; our own sense of moral outrage; our sense of our own vulnerability; the grace of God known to us in Jesus Christ; compassion for the bereaved and suffering; our interdependence as Christians, and indeed as a human community; our concern for justice; our discipleship; and our hope and certainty of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This coming Sunday, 20 October 2002, is to be a special Sunday of Mourning for the Bali victims.

I offer you this prayer for your use:

Holy and Loving God, Blessed Trinity,
We know in your Son that nothing in life, in death or beyond death is able to separate us

from your grace and love.

We pray for our fellow Australian citizens and people of all countries affected by the bombings in Bali in recent days.

We pray for those with responsibility in government, both in Australia and in Indonesia.

Give support to those seriously injured and those who face death at this time.

Strengthen those who have lost loved ones or who sit by the beds of those grievously injured.

Give encouragement to the medical, emergency and counseling services.

Console those who despair.

Give new life to the Balinese community.

Open the gate of hope again in all our lives.

Help us to do all that is necessary so that we can participate in creating a new world of security and peace.

In Christ's name we pray,

Amen.

Grace and peace,

Reverend Professor James Haire

President

The Uniting Church in Australia, National Assembly