



Catholic Communications

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

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Media Release

For Immediate Release

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An Easter Message to the community from Catholic Bishop Michael Malone

"As we approach this season of Easter 2011 the words of a hymn, *Easter Expressions* by Kevin Bates come to mind: "Hear the sounds of death turned inside out. Hear dark days carry hope."

In the past three months we have heard the sounds of death and experienced many dark days. The onslaught has been overwhelming: earthquakes in New Zealand, cyclones and floods in northern and central Queensland and Victoria, fires in Western Australia, earthquakes and a tsunami in Japan and the subsequent threat of radioactive fallout. As well as these natural disasters we are confronted with civil unrest in the Middle East and beyond.

The destruction of the earth, the loss of crops, livestock, property and income and the deaths of so many have caused concern across the globe. We wonder if death ever can be turned inside out or if there can ever be signs of hope.

I believe that both are possible.

Recently the ABC screened two programmes: 'Return to Lake Eyre' and 'From the Ashes'. The first of these described the rebirth of Lake Eyre and the Murray River after years of drought while the second, paid tribute to the resilience of nature and the people of Victoria in the aftermath of the Black Saturday bush fires.

According to programme descriptions, flood waters swept through communities in outback Queensland causing havoc. But these same floods brought life to the arid centre of Australia. 'The rivers ran, ...and wildflowers bloomed across a horizon filled with migrating birds.' Finally, long suffering waterways flowed all the way to the mouth of the Murray River in South Australia. 'Return to Lake Eyre' showed nature at work on a grand scale, peppered with very human stories of survival and renewal.'

Similarly in 'From the Ashes' we saw that 'even in the face of overwhelming devastation, plants and animals have an uncanny knack of bouncing back, and the environment an extraordinary capacity for healing.'

Nature gives us a wonderful example of the ability to rise again in the face of annihilation. But human beings have that same ability. We see signs of new life when we pull our lives together in the midst of devastation and when we see so many others generously supporting those in need.

As Christians we know that new life is possible.

At Easter we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus and the belief that Jesus has overcome death. Throughout the Easter liturgy and during the year we proclaim this belief: 'By dying Jesus destroyed our death and by rising he restored our life.'

As Christians we live in the knowledge that we are Easter people! The death and resurrection of Jesus not only promises life after death but in all the dark days we experience through life.

Since this is my last Easter message to you I want to thank you for your support of me shown in so many different ways over the past sixteen years. This support has helped sustain me through many dark days.

May your Easter be filled with hope and signs of new life and together may we:

"Hear the sounds of death turned inside out
Hear dark days carry hope
Hear the song of new creation
Hear the Easter people dance about."

Bishop Michael Malone will be available for interviews, photos and a brief reading of his Easter Message ONLY between 2-4pm on Wednesday 20th April 2011. Please request a time in advance.

For more information, to schedule an interview or photo opportunity with Bishop Michael, please contact Communications Manager for the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, Emma Blackford, on (02) 4979 1136 or 0419 263 901.

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