

PRESS RELEASE

RELEASE IMMEDIATE

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Following the SE Asia disaster, a 'Book of Condolences' has been opened in St John's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Portsmouth. The book is available to the general public 0800-1800 hrs every day for people to register their compassion for all those affected. The facility also exists to make financial contribution towards the work of the international aid agencies.

STARTS

South-East Asia: Condolences

'We have seen with our own eyes the extensive havoc and damage that's been caused by the effects of the recent earthquake in South-East Asia,' reflected Canon David Hopgood of St John's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Portsmouth. 'The Tsunami has brought grief to all nations and touched the hearts of all peoples,' continued Canon David Hopgood speaking to a gathering at the start of the New Year in St John's Cathedral to open a book of condolences.

'Let us hope,' Canon Hopgood continued, 'that, as we designate this corner of our Cathedral for expression of condolences, contemplation, prayer and contribution, we can help bring comfort to those who have suffered. We pray particularly for those who have lost their lives, for those who are bereaved and for those who have lost livelihood and home.'

In a recent statement, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Portsmouth, Crispian Hollis, said that when he forwarded to all parishes details of the CAFOD appeal for help – CAFOD being the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development – he knew that the response would be hugely generous. That has indeed been the case and the people of all parishes have given unstintingly. But the Bishop reminds us that this is just the beginning of a long road and the giving must go on and pressure will need to continue to be brought on the Government to match the generosity of the people in assisting in every way possible the work of all the Aid agencies involved.

The 'Book of Condolences' is available from 0800 to 1800 hrs every day in St John's Cathedral, Edinburgh Road. People of all faiths and convictions are invited to visit the Cathedral to register their condolences and to offer whatever financial help they can. Facilities exist for donations to be gift-aided.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

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