



The Holy See

**LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER
JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BISHOPS OF EAST TIMOR**

Their Excellencies

Bishop Carlos F. Ximenes Belo, SdB, Apostolic Administrator of Dili

Bishop Basilio Do Nascimento, Apostolic Administrator of Baucault is with great sadness that hour by hour I am receiving ever more tragic news from the cherished land of East Timor and I am profoundly saddened that the glimmers of hope born of the recent popular consultation have been transformed into the terror of today, which nothing and no one can justify. In these hours of suffering, I wish to send to both of you, to the clergy, seminarians, religious and faithful of the two Dioceses this expression of my spiritual closeness, while remembering in prayer those who have died, the injured, the refugees, the deportees and all who are in distress. I call on everyone to cling to hope in the victory of the Cross, even as they are living once again the sorrowful experience of the passion. In most firmly condemning the violence, which has also been furiously unleashed against the personnel and property of the Catholic Church, I implore those responsible for so many acts of wickedness to abandon their murderous and destructive intentions. It is also my heartfelt wish that as soon as possible Indonesia and the International Community will put an end to the slaughter and find effective ways to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Timorese population. With such sentiments and fervent wishes, and as a pledge of divine comfort, I impart with all my heart to you and your Christian communities my Apostolic Blessing. *From the Vatican, 9 September 1999.* JOHN PAUL II