



3 rd January, 2011.

The Most Rev Bishop Philip E Wilson,
President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
GPO Box 368
Canberra ACT 2601

Your Excellency,

Please allow me to share, also in the name of the Maltese Bishops' Conference and the Church in Malta and Gozo, the sadness of the Church in Australia, at the untimely death of Bishop Joe Grech. My condolences go especially to the members of the Diocese of Sandhurst, where he has been serving as Bishop for the last ten years. Our prayers for the repose of his soul unite us also in the hope for eternal repose centred around our faith in the Risen Lord.

Bishop Grech always made it a point to visit me when he was in Malta. He was regularly invited for conferences and retreats by the Charismatic Renewal Community. Many members of the Church in these Island have gained a lot from his profound reflections and spirituality and they will certainly miss his presence.

He was a minister who inspired all those with whom he came into contact. The impression that he gave me was that here was a believer who had already turned the Word of God into being the "Good News" which he was keen to share and give to all around him. He was an evangelizer turned into serving the Church through his ordination as a priest and Bishop, rather than the other way round. I still cherish his reflections on the Church, and particularly, on the Church in Malta, every time we met.

I still retain vivid memories of the Mass which I concelebrated with him in the Cathedral of Bendigo during one of the days preceding the World Youth Day in 2008. His inspirational homily, along with the warm hospitality shown by the local Congregation, remained in the heart of all the Maltese pilgrims present.

All of us here are united with you at this moment in prayer.

Fraternally Yours in Christ the Lord,

+ Paul Cremona, O.P.
President,
Maltese Episcopal Conference