

MEDIA RELEASE



50th World Communications Day opportunity for parishes to speak out

4 May 2016

The ACBC World Communications Day initiative to gather 'grassroots' stories of compassion and mercy from around Australia is an opportunity for ordinary Catholics and child abuse survivors to speak directly to the Church leadership.

As part of the 50th World Communications Day, the Australian Catholic Media Council is inviting each diocese to share local stories about 'Communication and Mercy'.

The CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, Mr Francis Sullivan, said the initiative could be of huge benefit to the church leadership as it hears directly from the people in the pews about their reactions to the Royal Commission and what they have seen and heard about the way the church leadership is responding.

'One of the big challenges for us now is to find the language and the way in which we can communicate the very significant changes that have taken place within the Church over the past years to protect children and help survivors.

'We need to be able to do this without being seen to be trying to deflect from the crimes and failures of the past or looking like we are trying to drown out the voices of survivors wanting to tell their stories.

'Nothing could be further from our intentions.

'From the ground up we will need to start talking about these changes and what they mean for abuse survivors, children currently in our institutions and for the broader Catholic community,' Mr Sullivan said.

Bishop Peter Comensoli, Bishops Delegate for Media, said, 'we have learnt from the hearings of the Royal Commission how empowering it is for those who have suffered to tell their stories and for those stories to be heard and believed.

'Perhaps the stories shared will relate to some of the pressing concerns of the community of the Church in Australia such as: listening attentively to survivors of sexual abuse; learning from those who have experienced family violence; awakening to the richness of marriage and family life; facing political challenges; or communicating as a young Catholic in this Year of Mercy'.

The initiative will run from World Communications Day, Sunday 8 May 2016, until the conclusion of the Year of Mercy on Sunday 20 November 2016.

To find out more about sharing your story visit: <https://www.catholic.org.au/wcd2016>

#ThePowerofMercy

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