



# Catholic Diocese of Sale

*Bishop of Sale*

PO Box 1410  
6 Witton Street  
WARRAGUL 3820

Ph: 03 5622 6600  
Fax: 03 5623 3535

20170201:0008:L:POR

**2017**  
***Diocese of Sale***  
***130 Years***

1<sup>st</sup> February 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the Diocese of Sale,

I am writing to you as the final hearing involving the Catholic Church at the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* commences this coming Monday the 6th February, 2017.

For the victims and survivors, for the Catholic community and for many in the wider Australian community, this hearing may be a difficult and even distressing time, as the Royal Commission reviews the evidence it has already received and seeks to understand why and how this tragedy has occurred. The Sale Diocese has had its share of grief and of hope.

I am deeply aware and mindful of the hurt and pain caused by abuse, I once again offer my apology on behalf of the Catholic Church. I am sorry for the damage that has been done to the lives of victims of sexual abuse. As Pope Francis said recently, 'it is a sin that shames us'.

Over the next three weeks, evidence presented during the Royal Commission hearings will be analysed, statistics about the extent of abuse will be made public, and the way forward will be explored. Many of our bishops and other Catholic leaders will appear before the Royal Commission. They will explain what the Church has been doing to change the old culture that allowed abuse to continue and to put in place new policies, structures and protections to safeguard children.

I am grateful to the all the members of the Diocese of Sale who have responded to our Diocesan initiatives in putting into place all the necessary protocols and changes in attitudes and behaviour that seek to ensure that the proper care of our children and vulnerable adults be our highest priority.

Pope Francis has urged the whole Church to, 'find the courage needed to take all necessary measures and to protect in every way the lives of our children, so that such crimes may never be repeated'.

In 2017 the Diocese of Sale celebrates its 130th Anniversary. May the hope and faithfulness we celebrate this year, continue to draw us ever deeper into the mystery of God's love.

Throughout the coming weeks, then, I wish to assure you of my thoughts and prayers. I encourage you to turn in prayer to the one who is always ready to listen: Jesus Christ, who brings healing and hope.

Yours in Christ,

+ Pat O'Regan

Bishop Patrick O'Regan  
Bishop of Sale