



BISHOP GREG'S STATEMENT - ROYAL COMMISSION'S FINAL REPORT 15 DECEMBER 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we approach the joyful season of Christmas this year, we have heavy hearts. The Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse has concluded. The Church with so many other Australian institutions carries the responsibility for so much harm done, and for the failure to have adequately responded to previous crimes. Like you, I am ashamed and distressed. I don't think that I will ever be able to say all that should be said, nevertheless, I will, over the coming months, speak to you as your bishop.

On behalf of the Church in the Diocese of Lismore I apologise to every person who was abused as a child within any of the Church's parishes, schools, and other bodies. This should never have happened, we failed in what happened to you and in the trust which you were entitled to have. We should have cared for you. I will do whatever I can do to support you.

I would like to assure you; the Church in Australia has put in place a stringent safeguarding protocol which, we hope, will ensure that child abuse will never happen again in the Church. I know that no protocol will ever provide the perfect safety net, and so we will continue to scrutinize and improve our safeguarding procedures.

The Church will do its best to comply with the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

As a new bishop, I have, over the last 9 months, visited every parish in the diocese. I have been impressed by the goodness and commitment of each priest.

As I look at our country and indeed the world, I have an intense desire to return to the Monastery from which I came. Why continue to be part of this? However as I stand at the altar and look at you, my brothers and sisters, who I am growing to love, I know that I must stay here with you; praying, supporting and caring. In the present darkness, we must walk together carrying the Church into a new future.

In the past, when I have had to do challenging and difficult things, I would always ask God to help me; I did a deal with Jesus – "I will do my best so long as you bring me through as a better person".

Let's all pray this prayer! Let's focus on what the Church is about: living and preaching the Gospel, and caring for those in need. If we do this, together we will make the Church of the future a better Church.

With my prayers and best wishes for a blessed Christmas,

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Bishop Greg Homeming OCD