



17 MARCH 2019

Additional notices (Part 2)

PRAYER IN RESPONSE TO CARDINAL PELL'S VERDICT

Please find the attached prayer in response to Cardinal Pell's verdict last week. This prayer has been written by a member of our diocese and is offered for your use in private or public worship.

"Jesus said to his disciples: 'Anyone who welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me. But for anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come... See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of my Father in heaven.' Matthew 18:5-7, 10.

Father we thank you for the gift of our children. Beloved, precious, pure. A living reminder to us of the nature of your love. We acknowledge that there is no greater wrong than the abuse of one of these little ones. We acknowledge the magnitude, the gravity, of the responsibility we have to care for them and to protect them.

Lord the events of the last week have shaken us once again. For some they have evoked feelings of grief, for some anger, for some they have reawakened trauma. Sexual abuse within any church casts a long, deep shadow over churches everywhere. It diminishes our capacity to trust. When the messenger is shown to be so flawed, your message of love rings hollow and shrill. When trust is broken, your good news is collateral damage.

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In the face of these realities, we are grateful that you are a God of justice, and that the suffering of people with no voice never, ever goes unnoticed by you. We are grateful that we live in a country where the rule of law prevails. We are grateful that the rule of law is built on and reflects Gospel truths. We pray that as due process is worked through, we might be patient and respectful of the efforts of those working to achieve justice. Give them integrity and strength. Sustain them in their labours we pray.

We especially lift up those who have devoted their lives to ministry, in any Christian denomination. Where people in religious life are often tarred with one brush, we uphold them in love, recognising that the sins of the few are laid at the feet even of those who live lives of faithful and sacrificial service. We pray that those people who serve you in grace and humility, may experience a great sense of fellowship within their church families. In particular, may our own ministry team experience our combined love and solidarity. We thank you for each of them.

As we seek to redefine the place of the institutional church in a secular world, we turn to you and pray for solace and wisdom. Guidance and renewal. Compassion and discernment. Give us ears to hear the cries of those wronged. Give us the courage to fearlessly proclaim your message of love, which transcends all wrongs. We pray that if and where radical change is required, you might lift up leaders of integrity and grace to shepherd our way forward.

Father God as we confront a great crisis in the established church, we acknowledge that your message of love and hope remains as vital as ever. You are, and forever will be, our refuge and strength, our ever-present help in trouble.

Therefore, come what may, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountain fall into the sea. Come what may, we choose to trust in you. Come what may, we put our hand into your hand of strength. That is better to us than light, and safer than a known way.

In your loving name, we pray. Amen.”