



The Most Reverend Roger Herft
Archbishop of Perth



Ref: 1203-0514

2 May 2014

**LETTER TO BE READ AT PARISH SERVICES
AND IN AGENCIES AND SCHOOLS**
Also to be placed on parish websites, notice boards, etc

Dear Friends in Christ

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

The Easter Anthems continue to echo the beauty and terror of Resurrection:

*Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us:
so let us celebrate the feast,
Not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness:
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

In this last week we have witnessed the trauma and anguish of men who suffered the most diabolical abuse while they were in the care of the Christian Brothers at Castledare, Clontarf, Tardun and Bindoon. One marvels at the courage it has taken for the victims of such horrific experiences to place their pain before the Australian community.

A recurring theme has been the conspiracy of silence and denial that effectively protected the perpetrators of violent abuse. The whole community was groomed into a blindness that ignored or was dismissive of abominable behaviour.

The Diocese, through its synodical process, and I have personally expressed our profound regret for the past. We are strongly resolved to do all we can to see that such abusive behaviour is never repeated.

During the Blaxell Inquiry I noted the ongoing need for our faith communities to build awareness and to follow the guidelines of the Professional Standards Committee to protect children, adults and the vulnerable.

We must continue to be vigilant.



The Most Reverend Roger Herft
Archbishop of Perth



The evidence before the Royal Commission in Perth is likely to trigger painful memories of abuse.

- We must with sensitivity encourage those who have suffered abuse to go to the relevant authority, seek counselling, and/or approach the Director of Professional Standards of the Diocese.
- If members of our parishes have any information concerning current or historical matters of child sexual abuse and related matters, including unlawful or improper treatment of children that is, either generally or in any particularly instance, connected or associated with child sexual abuse, they should be encouraged to make contact with Ms Tracie Chambers-Clark, Director of Professional Standards (9325 7455 or tchambers-clark@perth.anglican.org).
- We must pray for those who give evidence of the trauma suffered and for the effect on families and loved ones.
- We pray for the Commission and the staff who find themselves having to listen and process evidence that is extremely confronting.
- We should pray for the institutions and Churches and those who must front up to the Royal Commission knowing the significant good work of the organisation and the damage that has been done to the mission of Christ by the sickening behaviour of a few.

It is not easy to witness to faith in the midst of the public anger, dismay, cynicism and disdain. Understanding the reaction and responding with Christlike patience will enable this time of catharsis to be of benefit to all.

May the promise of the Risen Christ be fulfilled: “Do not fear; I am with you always even to the end of the age”.

In Christ

+ *Roger*

Archbishop