



3 February 2017

Dear friends,

**Re: Royal Commission Case Study 50 – Catholic Church Authorities**

The final hearing involving the Catholic Church at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse commences on 6 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 these tragedies occurred.

Deeply mindful of the hurt and pain caused by abuse, I once again offer my sincerest apology on behalf of the Catholic Church and the Diocese of Parramatta. I am deeply sorry for the damage that has been done to the lives of victims of sexual abuse and their loved ones. 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 - including myself - 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 and vulnerable adults.

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'.

Our Diocese will continue working openly and transparently with the Royal Commission and other authorities in order to ensure our child protection policies and procedures are strengthened.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv STL DD**

Bishop of Parramatta