

# The Anglican Church of Central & Western NSW Diocese of Bathurst



The Right Reverend Ian Palmer  
The Bishop's Registry  
3 Church Street (PO Box 23)  
Bathurst NSW 2795

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017

## **A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and People in the Anglican Church of Central & Western NSW**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I write this knowing that tomorrow the Final Report of *The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* will be published.

I have just come back home from a beautiful service of Remembrance in Holy Trinity Dubbo. There we have remembered and been thankful for those who have died. But my thoughts have been with those whose lives, through abuse, have been robbed of joy, wholeness, light and peace.

During my five years as your Bishop I have listened to many stories of pain from people abused by clergy and lay people in our Diocese. I am sickened by what I have heard.

Please hear me, when I say that I am deeply sorry that you have been sexually, physically, emotionally and spiritually abused by men and women who should have loved you; not injured you.

Many of you were children when you were abused and I am so sorry that within the Church, which I love – for Christ loves it too – you have been damaged.

Please also hear me when I say that the healing love of God is stronger than the pain you have endured. This year, three people who have been shamefully abused, have told me in different words, how the light of God's love has brought them healing – and I am in awe of their response.

I pledge that our Diocese will continue to meet with those who have been abused, we will listen, say with sincere words and deeds how sorry we are, and we will offer Pastoral Care and Assistance, even though this is costly for us.

We commit ourselves to shining the light of Christ's compassion into the darkness of such terrible wrong-doing.

May God be with you and grant you his peace.

The Rt Rev'd Ian Palmer  
Bishop of Bathurst