



STATEMENT

Re: Case Study 50 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

It is with deep and profound sadness that we acknowledge the findings of the Royal Commission into child sexual abuse relating to our community.

The information we provided to the Royal Commission regarding historical cases of sexual abuse in the period between the 1950s and the 1970s is disturbing and a great source of sorrow and shame.

While it is a painful process for all involved, especially the victims, the Royal Commission provides the whole Church, and indeed all institutions, with the opportunity to publically acknowledge the truth of this evil, and to now work towards assuring that our children are honoured and protected in the future.

For our part, we have in recent years attempted to respond to the victims of these atrocities through the *Towards Healing* process. Limited though it may be, we have listened to each complainant, assured them that we believe what they have told us, offered a sincere apology, and attempted to respond to their particular needs.

While this has been a good development for some, we are aware that for others this response is deemed inadequate, so we look forward to considering the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission in order to explore ways in which we may be able to offer further redress.

In the meantime, our efforts are also directed towards assuring the prevention of this abuse now and in the future. These include:

- Present zero tolerance regarding the sexual abuse of children
- All monks and relevant staff are checked and have a Working with Children Card
- Provision of Child Protection training to monks and relevant staff
- We have begun the process of registering all monks on the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR)
- Psychological screening and on-going psychological formation of candidates
- On-going study of the professional standards code of conduct documents *Integrity in Ministry* (for monks) and *Integrity in the Service of the Church* (for staff and volunteers)
- Development of a clear risk management framework aligned to governance structures
- Participation in archdiocesan professional standards formation programmes
- Appointment of two lay Safeguarding Officers (one parishioner, one member of staff) as part of the archdiocesan Safeguarding Programme
- Participation in the new initiatives of the wider Catholic Church e.g. Catholic Professional Standards (CPS)

We take this opportunity to again acknowledge our failures, to again sincerely apologise to anyone who has been abused by a past member of our community, to pledge that we will make every effort to achieve some kind of healing for them and to strive tirelessly towards developing processes and procedures that will protect all children who pass our way.