

MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY FISHER OP, SYDNEY

February 16, 2017

My dear friends,

This week the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Sexual Abuse released details of the money paid to survivors of sexual abuse by the Church in Australia. In the case of the Archdiocese of Sydney, between 1980 and 2015 we provided financial assistance or compensation in the order of \$17.16 million.

It is important for everyone in the Archdiocese to know these payments did not come from money collected in the parishes. The Archdiocese made these payments by drawing down its assets and investments. All money collected in parishes goes to support the living costs of the clergy, and the needs of the parish where the money is collected.

Parishioners need to be assured their generosity, week after week, is not contributing to Archdiocesan payments to meet our responsibilities towards victims or survivors.

I want to thank all parishioners for your support, friendship and prayers during these difficult and often frustrating times.

We should be grateful that the work of the Royal Commission will help us understand more clearly what happened in our Church and what the contributing factors were, how and why we failed to respond as we should have, and the changes we must still put in place to ensure we are never again faced with such a horrific situation.

The Commission has also heard this week about the safeguarding policies and protocols we have developed in the Archdiocese. They are extensive and comprehensive and they are continually being improved. I want to thank our Safeguarding Office which has led this work, and all clergy, parish leaders and volunteers for their willingness to implement the new policies and practices required to ensure the safety of children and other vulnerable people.

Next week I will join other Archbishops on a panel at the Royal Commission to discuss the key issues of this current hearing.

Above all let us pray for all survivors and their families, both inside and outside the church, that they will experience God's healing grace.

Our Lady, Help of Christians, Comforter of the Afflicted, pray for us.

+Anthony Fisher, OP