



Nicole Mangelsdorf
Principal
Kilbreda College

1 March 2019

Dear Nicole

The news that Cardinal George Pell has been convicted of sexual abuse of two thirteen-year-old boys has been met with shock, disbelief and bewilderment in some quarters and anger and confusion in others.

We write not to pass judgement on George Pell but to offer our support to you as leaders in your community. We are aware that some of you have already made statements and we thank you most sincerely for the support and comfort you are offering your community. Equally, we offer you our support and acknowledge that you are, and have been for the last five years, walking a difficult road; and yet, courageously you lead and hold together a community despite what many might be feeling.

It is important to remember that for many whose lives have been affected by abuse it is horrible.

If there is any hope in this story, it might be that the time for the Church remaining silent in the face of such atrocities is over. The determination to avoid scandal by denying it has become the biggest scandal of them all. At the same time, we acknowledge the many good men of the priesthood and religious orders who are tarred with the brush of suspicion. It is a difficult time for them too, and we offer them our support. Ultimately, we hope that justice will prevail.

Let us not lose sight of the good, kind and generous work that is carried out in the name of Jesus in our schools and our community works. We urge you to continue this very visible expression of the sacredness of our fellow human beings. It may be the only face of the Church that others now see.

As a new ecclesial community ourselves, we face the same emotions, confusion and grief over the many cases that the Royal Commission has revealed. Indeed, there have been times when it has been difficult to remain hopeful. When one feels connected to the faith community, whether it be a parish or our Kildare Ministries community, it is natural to have a personal reaction to revelation about a church which once stood on solid ground, and that is now tarnished with the evil of sexual abuse committed by so many priests, religious and others associated with the church. We too feel betrayed.

As we help our communities navigate this confusing, upsetting and bewildering space, we hope that we can turn to each other for support and comfort; that our feelings are acknowledged and we hold gently our humanness, with all its strength and with its many faults and try to heal from this hurt ourselves and extend a hand of comfort and an ear for listening to each other.

What we need now is honest dialogue, open and transparent processes and we need people like you to be working within your community to make it so. As Trustees, we recognise how powerful this could be and while not dismissing the current turmoil, we encourage you to keep talking with each other and with us so that together we can manage this time of intense suffering, discouragement and loss of hope that many are experiencing. Let us courageously and compassionately move forward.

With our warmest wishes



Rosemary Copeland
Co-Chair Trustees



Maree Marsh (csb)
Co-Chair Trustees

