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14 November 2022



**Pastoral Message**  
from His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos,  
Papal Legate to The Diocese of Sydney and its Affiliated Regions



My dear fathers, sisters and brothers, children in the Lord.

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Out of a sense of deep concern for the wellbeing of everyone involved, I address this letter to members of the Diocese of Sydney and its Affiliated Regions for individual and collective reflection, in the hope and prayer that hearts and minds are opened to the gracious love of God in the shared life of the diocese.

It is undeniable that this has been a period of significant change for your diocese. We have been blessed by the dedication and commitment of so many who are working tirelessly to ensure that the diocese is a vibrant and healthy home for those seeking the love of God both now and in the future, and I offer thanks to God for the tireless efforts of so many who are giving so generously of themselves.

Alongside the ongoing pastoral work at the parish level, in recent months, you will be aware that, on the administrative front, we have implemented a new constitution and new structures to ensure that operational and financial decisions are taken by a newly-formed Board of Trustees. The Board has undertaken lengthy reviews of the financial health and status of the entire diocese, and a number of significant and positive changes have been implemented to ensure the diocese is safeguarded and accountable. While there may be queries about how this is being done, I encourage all those who desire to, to find ways to have healthy, open discussions, or even disagreement, but to disagree well.

As some of you may be aware, there has been online hostility directed at some of those serving in the diocese, both clergy and laity. This cannot be justified and should not be accepted by any means. This form of communication speaks to the wider issue of how we live our Christianity on a daily basis at a time when much of our interaction occurs in cyberspace, and where boundaries and rules of engagement that allow for healthy and respectful communication are often ignored at a cost.

We teach our children that they should neither be party to bullying, nor should they ever accept being bullied. We must hold ourselves to the same standards, not only because it impacts those on the receiving end, but also those who are the source of this behaviour. It therefore deeply saddens me to see members of our community resorting to name-calling and insult because we believe in the genuine goodness of every person and that this behaviour is in itself a corruption of that goodness. We must always remember that words have meaning and have a very real impact, not only upon those at whom they are directed, but also upon those who may read or hear them,

and so I pray that the energy expended on attack and insult may be redirected to building and rebuilding.

With respect in particular to the members of the Board of Trustees and the hostility directed at them, it is important to take into account that they, along with their various advisory committees, are all faithful members of the Church, who volunteer their time and expertise to serve. These members have been appointed through a widely publicised and transparent process, and since that appointment have carried out their function faithfully. I am grateful to them for carrying such a responsibility on a daily basis.

There is never a justification for moving away from that which was directed in Ephesians 4:15 with respect to 'speaking the truth in love'. Our Lord Jesus Christ had many opportunities throughout His ministry to comment to and about those around Him, but never did He choose to do so using insult, mockery or public slur. His is the example we must follow if and when we too feel compelled to speak.

We are all serving together for the glory of God and the edification of the Body of Christ, and so "Let all that you do be done with love". (1 Cor 16:14).

Praying wholeheartedly for peace, healing, and a oneness of heart, I leave you all in the love and care of our gracious Lord.



**+Angaelos**

Servant of the See of London

Papal Legate to the United Kingdom

Papal Legate to the Diocese of Sydney and its Affiliated Regions