

STATEMENT RE CARDINAL PELL FROM THE MOST REV TIMOTHY COSTELLO SDB

Following Cardinal Pell's unsuccessful appeal against his conviction on charges of historic sexual abuse of minors, reactions will be varied. Those who have been convinced of his guilt will believe that justice has been served. Those who have always accepted Cardinal Pell's constant insistence of his innocence of all charges will be dismayed that his appeal has been rejected. Many people have commented on the conduct of the investigation, trial and conviction of Cardinal Pell. I will not do so. Rather, I would appeal to everyone to remain calm, measured and compassionate in our reactions and responses. I would also plead with everyone in our society to join in a common effort to eradicate the scourge of sexual abuse from our communities and our institutions. This is what our children and young people need from us at this time.

The new Centre for Life, Marriage and Family (formerly known as The Marriage and Fertility Centre and The Respect Life Office) have developed two resources, one to assist people dealing with grief, and the other to assist those helping people through grief. Please feel free to contact the Centre on 9241 5000 for details of these resources. The Archdiocese has also established a 24-hour contact number for those struggling with grief and who may need professional assistance. Please pass this number to those who are helping with grief support and those whom you believe might benefit from additional professional assistance. The number is 0432 541 588. Agencies such as Centrecare Inc and the Centre for Life, Marriage and Family have also offered the support of their counsellors at this time.

When we are struggling with our own grief and confusion, it can be difficult to know how best to respond to others who are grieving, especially when there are so many people in this situation. As a community of faith it is good for us to remember that now, as always, the Lord invites us, when we are labouring and overburdened, to come to him (Matthew 11:28). He is the one who can bring us peace and who can give us the wisdom, the compassion and the courage to reach out to others and support them at this difficult time. Please know that my prayers are with you as together we try to be the living signs of Christ's presence among us through our strength and support.

Thank you, and may the Lord of peace bless us all.



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