

Particular prayers are being asked at this time as The Royal Commission holds a public hearing in Newcastle to inquire into the experiences of survivors of child sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy and lay people involved in or associated with the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle. The Commission began hearing submissions on Tuesday, and has already received distressing and harrowing accounts from those who were abused in that Diocese. Such accounts were foreshadowed last week on the ABC, and the Primate issued the following public statement following the airing of that story. I include his statement below, as I ask you to join with me in praying for those who will give testimony at the Royal Commission, as well as all who have been abused by those involved with the church.

*The allegations on ABC TV's 7.30 last night of clergy sexual abuse and predatory behaviour in the Anglican Church in Newcastle, going right up to a former bishop, are shocking and distressing.*

*As Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, I welcome the very complete examination these matters – and others to do with the diocese – will receive at the public hearing of the Royal Commission, due in a fortnight. It is important to bring such matters into the open.*

*The Anglican Church and its officers will give their full cooperation to this inquiry.*

*No system can ever guarantee to keep out all predators, but the Church has worked hard to improve its protocols and practices in the past few years, and we are very open to advice from the Royal Commission.*

*In Victoria, the Church responded immediately to recommendations by the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into how the churches responded to abuse. One measure was incorporating the dioceses so that they could be responsible under law.*

*We express our solidarity with and prayers for Newcastle Bishop Greg Thompson and his officers who have worked diligently to end the culture of abuse and silence within the diocese.*

It was a wonderful experience to be in attendance at the historic occasion at St. Paul's Cathedral during the week. At Evensong on Wednesday, the Girls' Voices of the Cathedral Choir led worship, marking the first Cathedral in the Southern hemisphere to have girls' voices included in worship. Well done to all involved – it was a wonderful service.

May Dominic, Mary Sumner, Laurence, Clare of Assisi, John Henry Newman, Jeremy Taylor, and all the Saints walk with you this week... *Sam*