



Dear Friends

In Child Protection Week, our whole nation is invited to 'put children first'. In fact, that is the theme in 2020, which marks thirty years of Child Protection Week in Australia.

Although the Pandemic has changed the way we are all living and working, it doesn't change what is most important. For Christians, the Lord Jesus shows us that at all times, the most vulnerable among us are those requiring our greatest care. In particular, the safety and the protection of children is one of our most important priorities.

The Professional Standards Office of our Archdiocese along with our Mission Team have developed some resources to be of help for all in our communities. These are designed to support children and young people's right to be safe and feel safe.

My heart breaks for those who were not cared for and protected in the past. When a child is neglected or abused, the pain and suffering endures throughout their whole life. I am sad and angered that the Church has not always been a place that has put children first. We continue to address the horror of abuse, to walk with those in need, and to build a culture of safety and protection for our most vulnerable. Personally, I will continue to meet with survivors of abuse; listening to them, hearing them and trusting them, and helping our Church be continually converted.

Please pray with me that we would put children first always, and protect their safety.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli  
Archbishop of Melbourne



# CHILD PROTECTION SUNDAY 2020

## *Prayer*

Gracious God,  
you love and care for all of your  
children,  
especially the smallest and most  
vulnerable.  
We entrust to you the lives of children  
and adults at risk  
who have been sexually abused,  
and whose trust and innocence have  
been destroyed.

Help us to hear their cries of pain  
and to take responsibility for those  
whose lives have been broken.  
Help us to recognise the hurt felt by  
those wounded by abuse,  
and the failure to be heard.

We pray that with the help of your grace  
communities and families will find  
understanding and support,  
so that now and in the future  
their wounds may be healed  
and they may find lasting peace.

Let your grace and love fall gently now  
upon our children,  
giving them the inner strength, peace  
and resilience  
to seek out assistance when required.

We ask this prayer through our Lord  
Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God  
forever and ever.

Amen