

**The Partnered Catholic Parishes of:
Sacred Heart Diamond Creek, St. Mary's Greensborough &
St. Thomas the Apostle Greensborough North**



3 June 2022

Archbishop Peter A Comensoli

PO Box 146
East Melbourne VIC 8002

Proposal for a statue at St Patrick's Cathedral, the Heart of the
Melbourne Diocese.

Your Grace,

We, the Partnered Parishes Plenary Council Facilitators Group representing the Parishes of St. Mary's Greensborough, Sacred Heart Diamond Creek and St Thomas the Apostle Greensborough North come to you with a proposal relating to the sexual abuse scandal and other sufferings from acts and omissions committed by some members of the clergy, religious and others engaged in the Catholic Church. This became the predominant concern that was raised by our parishioners during the Listening and Dialogue and Discernment processes of the Plenary Council.

When Covid caused a lengthy delay to the progress of the Plenary Council, our facilitators resolved to form this group with the involvement of the Parish Priest, Fr. Steven Rigo, in order to provide a form of continued interest and activity for parishioners in matters that were raised during the Listening and Dialogue and Discernment phases of the Council and which were seen to be relevant to our parishes. The sexual abuse scandal referred to was overwhelmingly one of them.

There have been many words written and spoken, deploring these actions and the accompanying failure of the Church to deal with them during those times. Areas such as Safeguarding, Governance and Accountability policies, and Canon Law Book VI Penal Sanctions in the Church have been introduced or strengthened. It is not so much the purpose of this approach to you to add to these specific sentiments or actions, but to move to another level that is one of atonement in a physical, visual way.

The purpose of this proposal is to present to you a way by which people in our Archdiocese, our country, and perhaps even the world, can see that the Church, its people, are professing

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their profound and lasting grief for the local and global devastation of human lives caused by the abuse of children and other people, by members of our clergy and others engaged in Church works. We believe that a statue, located in the grounds of St Patrick's Cathedral, the heart of our archdiocese, should be raised as an act of sorrow and reparation for those betrayed and hurt by this abuse.

As expressed in the detail of the proposal attached, the symbolic nature of the gesture is central to the sentiment behind it. Our group has spent much time discerning the value and efficacy of this proposal and have come to the conclusion that it fills a place that is not yet completely filled. Many people from our parish communities no longer attend Mass and other sacraments and talk about their trust in the Church being totally lost. We believe that this proposal may provide one way of contributing to the acknowledgement of wrongdoing and the important work of rebuilding trust and the sense of belonging and community within the Church.

We have announced to our parishioners through constant dialogue our intention to explore this path and to date have received only one objection.

We know that, in your own words "we have a common cause working towards healing and to build our faith communities as communities of trust and safety and care". We also understand that you share "... the anger ... at the failure of church leaders to believe victims and to respond to them with justice and compassion". We therefore offer the attached proposal to you for your consideration with prayerful and hopeful hearts.

We respectfully request a meeting with you, Your Grace, in order to discuss this proposal. Fr Steven is willing to act as contact for any relevant arrangements that would be needed in this regard.

Yours in Christ,

Ted Jenkins

Jasna Bruce

Margaret Sapsford – Pastoral Associate

Jacinta Bright – Pastoral Associate

Megan Mitchem

Michael Bates

Joe Barker

Cathy O'Brien

Father Steven Rigo – Parish Priest of Sacred Heart, St Mary's and St Thomas the Apostle

The Partnered Parishes Plenary Council Facilitators Group