



THE ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE

A WORD TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

These last few weeks have been bruising for the Catholic Church in Australia. It seems that everywhere we turn we see stories about the Church and its failures with child sexual abuse.

We have to accept that. The Church will never walk away from its responsibilities in this area. We will continue to do all we can to help and heal those who have been abused and their families. We have much to atone for. We have much to do and much to continue learning.

But today I want to say a word about the Church that's almost never mentioned in mainstream media. It's the Church that you're part of every day and, often enough, through the night as well. Because of what you do, the Church changes lives for the better, and it does so through the power of the Gospel. Yes, we face serious challenges now, but there is a whole dimension of the Church that should never be forgotten.

It's the Church that works every day with refugees who have come to Australia seeking a better life. You help them to find accommodation, to fight for a permanent stay and to reunite with loved ones.

It's the Church that works on the frontline with domestic violence victims. You help them and their children in the toughest moments that they will face. You walk with them at every step, especially when they feel helpless.

It's the Church that works with Australians with a disability. You help create a society that welcomes, includes and respects people with a disability as people first – and you support them to follow their dreams.

It's the Church that works with people on the poverty line. You provide them with accommodation, meals and support when they have nowhere else to turn.

It's the Church that works with the homeless. You bring a friendly smile, food and warmth to them. Most of all, you help by spending time with them.

It's the Church that works with people living with dementia. You brighten their lives, you relate to the real person and you provide support for their families.

It's the Church that provides pastoral support to prisoners. You sit with them, listen to their stories and provide counselling.

The Most Reverend Mark Coleridge

GPO Box 282, Brisbane Qld 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3324 3415 aomail@bne.catholic.net.au



THE ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE

It's the Church that works to protect our environment. You help raise awareness of our common home, the earth on which we live and the need to preserve it for those who come after us.

Of course, it's **the Church that has educated millions of Australian children over generations.** Your work in that area continues to have a major impact on our young people and the future of our country.

And it's **the Church that has provided first-class medical treatment in our hospitals for generations.** You have literally saved lives and continue to save lives. You have also accompanied the dying with tender care.

Thank you for all this and more – because that's not an exhaustive list of what you do from day to day in the Catholic Church. At this difficult time, I wanted you to know that your work is priceless and that it does not go unrecognised.

Thank you for your work in parishes, schools, hospitals and on the frontline wherever it may be.

It's work that should make you both proud and humble – proud for what has been achieved and humble before the God whose gifts make it all possible and who is as close to us now as ever before.

✘ Mark Coleridge
1 March 2019