



Congregational Leaders'
Conference Aotearoa
New Zealand



**Te Huinga o ngā Pihopa
Katorika o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

21 July 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Final Report of the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care

This coming Wednesday 24 July marks the end of over six years work for the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care. The Royal Commission has been holding hearings and investigating events from 1950 to today. Starting early in the year 2018 with a consultation process, the Inquiry was required to make various reports and provide a final report with findings and recommendations. That report was delivered to the Governor General on 25 June 2024.

On Wednesday, the Minister of Internal Affairs will table the report in Parliament. The Catholic bishops and congregational leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand will read and review it carefully. As we have done throughout the length of the Inquiry, we will ensure that action follows our review of the Inquiry's findings.

There is work for the government to do and work to be undertaken by many other people. We understand that within the community, some of us - including leaders in the Catholic Church - have a special role to play to ensure that the findings and recommendations of this significant Inquiry are not lost or confined to words in a report. We commit to that role.

At the same time, everyone must play their part in responding to the Inquiry's report to the extent that they can. There are things that all of us can and must do to eliminate abuse of any kind in whatever context we live and work in. We hope this report and the work that flows from it will result in a better society and a safer environment for all people.

Abuse is not only historical, nor confined to one part of society or another. The Inquiry's report and the material that we heard from victims and survivors make that crystal clear. As we said in our letter of 10 January 2023:

We acknowledge that the abuse of people in the care of the Church is real and the failures of Church leaders in responding to reports are real. The impacts of these are present today; for survivors, their whānau, for faith communities, and for society. This is not just an exercise in looking backwards. We look forwards. We will continue to improve safeguarding in all aspects of church life. There is not, and will not be, any tolerance for abuse in the Church.

We thank the Inquiry's Commissioners for the work they have done. There is much to consider, and the extent of the report shows that there is much to do.

Over the past 30 years, the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand has made significant progress in responding to reports of abuse and safeguarding. We must continue to work to ensure that progress continues and that our church communities are places where people are safe.

We ask you, the Catholic people in Aotearoa New Zealand to join with us, as we continue this journey.

Bishop Steve Lowe
NZCBC President

Father Thomas Rouse
CLCANZ President