

Dear Families and Friends,

You would be very aware of the news of the conviction of Cardinal George Pell last week on child abuse charges. In years past George Pell has been Archbishop of Melbourne, Cardinal of the Archdiocese of Sydney and head of the Secretariat of the Economy in the Vatican. While the Cardinal's actions have no direct line of contact with our local parish community, we believe that his being found guilty does have a very direct impact on us as a faith community. Understandably, questions are being asked of the church in many areas of governance, accountability and transparency, not to mention the very fundamental work of caring for the spiritual needs of its faithful, especially the most vulnerable.

People are reacting to the news of George Pell's conviction in many ways, however, it is important at this time to be respectful of all points of view and let the legal process take its course. While there are still some things yet to play out in the courts regarding an appeal, the reality we face currently as a Catholic community is that one of our own, a most senior church leader has been found guilty of an act of betrayal of the very young people who should be held safe. It goes against every tenant of our faith. What is not open to interpretation is the care for and welfare of victims of sexual abuse, the abuse survivors themselves, their families and their circle of friends.

If this has raised any issues for you, or for someone you know, you are encouraged to seek help. (Lifeline 13 11 14)

We wish to reassure you that the Mother of God School, St Theresa's School and the broader St Theresa's Parish community hold the safety and wellbeing of your child, your children and all young people as being paramount to us.

We thank you for the trust you place in us to care for your young people. We hold that trust as sacred.

Sincerely,

Gerard Broadfoot

Principal

Mother of God School

Barry Hughes

Parish Priest

Robert Macklin

Principal

St Theresa's School