



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

media release

Date: 20 August 2012

EMBARGOED UNTIL TUESDAY 21 AUGUST 2012

CATHOLIC CHURCH ISSUES PASTORAL LETTER ON PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

The Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Denis Hart, today announced that the leaders of the Catholic Church in Victoria are sending a pastoral letter to all parishes and churches this weekend on the Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations.

“In our letter we acknowledge the suffering and trauma endured by children who have been in the Church’s care, and the effect on their families.

“The letter also explains the approach of the Church to the Inquiry, speaks of the challenging and difficult period ahead for victims and their families, and the need to learn from past failures to ensure we do everything in our power to protect children,” Archbishop Hart said.

“Mistakes were made and we apologise to victims and their families for these failures.

“The Church has learnt from these failures and our response has changed. We are focused on the needs of those who have been abused and have taken action to prevent future abuse. We have also changed how we deal with offenders.

“Since 1996, we have introduced procedures to protect children and vulnerable persons against sexual abuse. These have been refined as we have learned how to support victims better, and we will consider further changes in the light of recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry,” he said.

A copy of the Pastoral Letter is attached.

MEDIA INQUIRIES: JAMES O’FARRELL 0437 661 030 (no sms please)