



For all things give thanks.

1 THESS 5:18

Pastoral statement by Bishop Brian Mascord on Cardinal George Pell's High Court appeal

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ

On Tuesday 7 April 2020, the High Court announced its decision regarding Cardinal George Pell's appeal. The court has ordered that the convictions be quashed and that verdicts of acquittal be entered in their place. In a statement, the court said:

"Today, the High Court granted special leave to appeal against a decision of the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Victoria and unanimously allowed the appeal. The High Court found that the jury, acting rationally on the whole of the evidence, ought to have entertained a doubt as to the applicant's guilt with respect to each of the offences for which he was convicted, and ordered that the convictions be quashed and that verdicts of acquittal be entered in their place."

The last several years have been a time of deep distress, hurt and confusion for many. With that in mind, I encourage you to enter any conversations about this matter with an attitude of charity, to acknowledge the varied emotions people may be feeling, and to consider the powerful effect our words can have on others. It is also important that we respect the decision of the High Court of Australia and the legal process that has been made available to all involved in this matter.

I want to take this opportunity to reinforce the Diocese of Wollongong's commitment to the safety and protection of all children and vulnerable adults. If you would like to speak to someone and access support, I encourage you to contact our diocesan Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding on **(02) 4222 2428** or via email at **safeguarding@dow.org.au**. A range of external support options are also provided on our diocesan website.

Now is the time to come together, as sisters and brothers in Christ, to pray for healing and unity—in our Church and in our communities—as we strive to ensure our Catholic parishes, schools and agencies are places of compassion and safety for all. Please be assured of my deep and continuing commitment to this goal.

Yours in Christ

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD
BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

7 April 2020

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