



For all things give thanks.

1 THESS 5:18

Pastoral letter from Bishop Brian Mascord

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ

I write to you with information regarding Fr Ron Peters.

On Friday 16 December 2022, in a judgement handed down in Sutherland Local Court, all charges against Fr Ron Peters were dismissed.

As Australians, we believe in the justice system and the underpinning principles of the rule of law, including the presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial. We respect the decision of the judicial and legal processes that have been made available to all involved in this matter.

We are conscious of the ongoing impact this matter has had on Fr Ron and for those directly involved or who have worked or worshipped alongside him during his time in the parish of Lumen Christi, including St Francis Xavier Cathedral Wollongong, St Brigid's Gwynneville, St John Vianney Co-Cathedral Fairy Meadow, and Mater Dolorosa Balgownie.

This has been a long process and has affected many people in different ways. In light of this, we are offering counselling and support services to parishioners, and we encourage anyone who needs care or guidance to access these services by contacting the diocesan Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding at safeguarding@dow.org.au or 0439 274 893. A list of independent organisations that can provide counselling and support is also available on our website at safeguarding.dow.org.au.

The Diocese of Wollongong continues to review and revise its practices to ensure the safeguarding of the most vulnerable. Along with Catholic dioceses across Australia, the Diocese of Wollongong has extensive measures and safeguards in place to protect and support all people who engage in any way with diocesan personnel, to ensure that we learn from the lessons of the past and safeguard the future.

I would like to acknowledge the difficulty and pain of this long process, and thank you for your continuing resilience and outward expression of your faithfulness as parishioners of the Lumen Christi Parish.

I invite you to join me in praying for all those impacted by this matter.

Yours in Christ

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD

BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

16 December 2022

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