



Archbishop of Wellington

PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

4 October 2019

Dear Friends

Earlier this year a complaint of unacceptable behaviour was made about Bishop Charles Drennan by a young woman.

In accord with Pope Francis' document *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, as Metropolitan Archbishop I oversaw an investigation by the National Office for Professional Standards into the complaint. This has taken some time. Support has been provided to both Bishop Charles and the young woman, and both participated in the investigation.

As a result of the investigation Pope Francis has accepted Bishop Charles' resignation as Bishop of Palmerston North, which took effect yesterday.

The young woman does not want to be identified to the media, nor does she want the details of the situation shared widely or publicly. I implore you to respect her wishes.

The Holy Father has appointed me as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Palmerston North until another bishop is appointed. While Bishop Charles has been on leave Bishop Peter Cullinane has been carrying out some of the bishop's public duties. Fr Brian Walsh, Vicar-General, will be involved in the administration of the Diocese and with Tony Murphy, Diocesan Manager, they will continue to manage the administration and pastoral care of the Diocese as they have been doing for some months now.

I ask for your prayers for the people and priests of the Diocese of Palmerston North, and all affected by this difficult situation, especially the young woman concerned.

Guidelines for responding to enquiries that may result from public interest are provided with this letter. Information about how to respond should someone make a complaint to you of unacceptable behaviour or harm are also included. We are serious about having a safeguarding culture in which people are able to speak up about complaints or concerns.

The full media statement is also included. You are welcome to direct any questions to the NZCBC Communications Adviser, David McLoughlin communications@nzbc.org.nz

My thoughts and prayers here in Rome are with you in the Archdiocese, as there are many links between Palmerston North and Wellington and I know many of you will also be affected by this situation.

On his visit to Chile and Peru earlier this year Pope Francis spoke words which we reflect on as we go forward together:

“The soul of a community is measured by how it manages to come together to face times of difficulty and adversity, in order to keep hope alive. By doing so, they give the greatest witness to the Gospel. The Lord tells us: ‘By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another’ (Jn 13:35).”

With prayers and blessings

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'JD' followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to the right.

✠ John A Cardinal Dew
Archbishop of Wellington