



Friday 18 August 2023

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I write to you about the Perpetual Day of Remembrance only a few days after returning from our Diocesan World Youth Day (WYD) pilgrimage. The experience of WYD is a gift that I will continue to reflect on over the coming weeks. Primary amongst the gifts I am receiving is an awareness of the blessing young people are and bring to our Church, and a renewed hope for all we can become as we continue to journey together, building the Kingdom of God here and now.

Coming to reflect on the importance of the Perpetual Day of Remembrance immediately following my experience of WYD has sharpened my sense of the imperative for us to remember and pray to ensure that the abuse that devastated the lives of so many children and young people and their families never happens again.

Being new to the diocese I am looking towards my first experience of the Perpetual Day of Remembrance, established throughout the diocese by my predecessor Bishop Bill Wright. This day holds before us our history of child sexual abuse and the reality of its continual unfolding in the lives of those directly and indirectly affected. To further embed our remembrance in the life and prayer of the church, in 2020 Bishop Bill Wright decreed *Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday* as a feast inscribed in the diocesan liturgical calendar. This was explained in the [letter](#) accompanying the [decree](#).

It is my desire that we continue to mark the Perpetual Day of Remembrance in our parishes – particularly on Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday – our schools, our agencies, our communities, and households.

Some may find this remembering uncomfortable. Some may even prefer that we stop remembering. We are, however, the faithful people of God, and when one of us suffers, we all suffer. This means that we are called to stand with and pray for our brothers and sisters who are often unable to pray themselves. This is a necessary part of who we claim ourselves to be as the Church.

Remembering also helps to reignite hope. As Fr Richard Lennan, one of our own, reminded us in one of his recent presentations in the Diocese:

- Hope builds faith, acknowledging that God holds us,
- Hope expresses itself in love, that nurtures the hope of others,
- Hope enables us to name reality, it is neither avoidance nor wishful thinking, and
- Hope enables us to face what is broken and engage with change.

In the spirit of that understanding of Christian hope, I urge us all to embrace our marking of the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*.

Yours in that same hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the name 'Michael Kennedy' in a cursive script.

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

NB: Resources are available as usual on the diocesan website at the following link:
[Perpetual Day of Remembrance - Resources](#)