

NSW Ecumenical Council's Theological Reflection Commission
Conference, Saturday, 27 October 2018
What Now? Responding to the Findings of the Royal Commission

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All: *Amen.*

As we come together in humble prayer to our compassionate and forgiving God, our hearts sing in unison:

All: *Glory to you, our God, glory to you.*

We are unworthy of our Father's mercy. We have sinned. We have stained the temple of our hearts and so have we become unable to host the Holy Spirit whom our Lord Jesus Christ sends from the Father. Repenting for our failure to uphold the Gospel, to live as children of light, and to protect the children, let us, together, call on the Comforter to wash us clean of all impurity. Let us say:

All: *Heavenly king, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, present everywhere and filling all things, the treasury of good and giver of life, come and dwell in us and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, gracious one.*

Being cleansed of our sins and restored through grace, we must renew our commitment to Christ's Gospel and deepen our faith by walking in the ways of the Lord. Only when we are led by hand from above as children of our Father we realise the faults of the membership of God's household—our failure to live as children of light and to protect the children. Thus do we approach the sacred wisdom of the Gospel and pray:

Make the pure light of your divine knowledge shine within our hearts, loving Master, and open the eyes of our mind to understand the message of your Gospel. Instil in us also the fear of your blessed commandments, so that having trampled down all desires of the flesh, we may pursue a spiritual way of life, thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to you. For you are the illumination of our souls and bodies, Christ our God, and to you we offer glory, with your eternal Father and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages.

All: *Amen.*

Let us open our minds, hearts, and lives to the Gospel of the Lord!

Reader: *(Jesus) called a child, whom he put among them, and said, Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If any of you*

put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:2-6) Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs. And he laid his hands on them and went on his way. (Matthew 19:13-15) (But) to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God. (John 1:12)

All: *Glory to you, Lord, glory to you.*

[Reflection]

It is because of our failures and wrongs that once again we turn to God, asking for mercy, forgiveness, and healing. Let us therefore say:

All: *All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, be merciful to our sins. Master, forgive our transgressions. Holy One, visit us and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake.*

We have failed to protect the children.

All: *All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us.*

We minded our own business when tragedy unfolded in the lives of the most vulnerable, God's children.

All: *Lord, be merciful to our sins.*

We failed to intervene when the children suffered abuse.

All: *Master, forgive our transgressions.*

As a result, together with those most affected by this tragedy, we all are sick and wounded.

All: *Holy One, visit us and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake.*

Repentant, reformed, renewed—thus let us walk in the ways of the Lord as God's children.

May the Lord our God send comfort and healing to his wounded children.

All: *Amen.*