



# National Council of Priests of Australia

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## Media Release

The NCP executive would like to express its sadness at the forced early retirement of Bishop William Morris of Toowoomba.

We are appalled at the lack of transparency and due process that led to this decision by Church authorities.

We are embarrassed about the shabby treatment meted out to an outstanding Pastor of this diocese who has faithfully ministered in the Church in Queensland and throughout Australia since his priestly ordination in 1969.

We are concerned about an element within the Church whose restorationist ideology wants to repress freedom of expression within the Roman Catholic Church and who deny the legitimate magisterial authority of the local Bishop within the Church. Jesus rightly condemned the righteous scribes and Pharisees of his time for adhering to their interpretation of the Mosaic law at the expense of God's ultimate commandment of love.

Many of the people influencing these decisions have limited pastoral experience and appear to show little concern for the *sensus fidelium*.

We appeal to the Bishop of Rome in his acknowledged role as first among equals and the source of *communio* within the Church to listen and build bridges of trust, faith and love with those who have been hurt by this decision.

We stand in prayerful solidarity with the priests and people of Toowoomba who are justifiably aggrieved by this pronouncement.

We pray for Bishop Morris who has undergone an extraordinary period of trial over the last few years of his Episcopal ministry and trust that history will accurately record the benefit of his ministry as a faithful, human servant of the Gospel of Jesus. We wish him well in his retirement and have appreciated his support for his priests and the work of the NCP.

To the Catholics of the Toowoomba we pray for a worthy successor to Bishop Morris.

**Ian McGinnity, NCP Chairman**

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