



DIOCESE *of* PARRAMATTA

14 September 2016

Ann D Clark Lecture

My Ann D Clark Lecture entitled 'Pope Francis and the challenges of the church today' delivered on August 18th 2016, has caused considerable debate and discussion, not only within the Diocese of Parramatta but also beyond.

I would like to thank everyone who has read the text of the lecture and responded with their considered comments.

To avoid any misunderstanding as a result of misrepresentations of the lecture, especially in the secular media, I offer the following clarifications:

- The lecture was an effort on my part to articulate an understanding of the vision of Pope Francis of what the church is and our response to this vision in the light of the challenges we face today.
- Part of that vision as I understand it, is about being inclusive. It is the ability to create and nurture a welcoming space for all people, including those who have been alienated such as our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters.
- The lecture appealed for respectful language and pastoral engagement with them, based on the fundamental dignity of every person and the teaching and example of Jesus.
- It is a misrepresentation of my lecture to equate the sexual identity of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters with their lifestyle or behaviour. (As in the case of the article by *The Australian* - 'Catholic bishop calls on church to accept homosexuality' 07/09/2016 and *The Australian* - 'Cut & Paste' 14/09/2016).

To accept a person's sexual identity does not mean to condone his or her behaviour which are contrary to moral norms and the church's teaching.

- Thus, my lecture can in no way be construed as a challenge the teaching of the Catholic Church, which as a bishop I wish to maintain in union with Pope Francis and my fellow bishops in communion with him.

Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv

Bishop of Parramatta

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