



We proclaim a crucified Christ

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19 August 2026

PRAYER SERVICE of LAMENT
15 September 2026
St Patrick's Cathedral Grounds, East Melbourne: 4.00pm

Dear Fathers, Deacons, and Parish Communities,

The Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows invites us to stand with Mary at the foot of the Cross. There we see a mother who remains close to her Son in His suffering, steadfast in faith and open to the hope that God alone can bring. In Mary, the Church learns not to turn away from suffering, but to remain present with compassion, humility and prayer.

In 2026, on this memorial we will gather as the Church in Melbourne for our annual Service of Lament for survivors of abuse.

I invite you, your parish leaders, and representatives of your parish community to join me on **Tuesday 15 September 2026 at 4.00pm in the grounds of St Patrick's Cathedral** as we come before the Lord in prayer and lament.

This Service is an occasion to humbly stand alongside those who have suffered abuse, and all who continue to carry its lasting effects. It is for us, as the Body of Christ, to acknowledge and lament sincerely and with humility the failures that have caused such profound harm, and to place before the Lord our prayer for healing, justice and the ongoing conversion of His Church.

Survivors and their loved ones remain at the heart of this gathering. Through the proclamation of God's Word, silence, music and symbolic ritual, we will commend to the Lord all who have been harmed by abuse, asking that His healing mercy bring light where there has been darkness, hope where there has been despair, and renewed trust where trust has been broken.

In the days leading to the Service, I invite our Parish communities to unite in prayer across the Archdiocese. Resources will be made available to assist parishes in remembering survivors and all those affected by abuse within parish liturgies and personal prayer. I encourage you to share

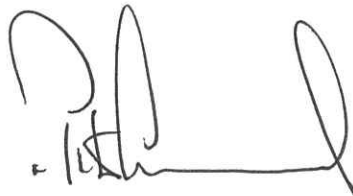
this invitation with your community so that those who wish to participate, either in person or online, may do so.

Mindful that this gathering is first and foremost a place of prayer for survivors and their families, and wishing to preserve a quiet and respectful atmosphere, I ask each Parish to nominate a few representatives to attend on behalf of the parish community. The Service will also be livestreamed, enabling many others to join us in prayer from across the Archdiocese.

As we stand with Mary at the foot of the Cross, may we allow the Lord to deepen within us hearts that listen with compassion, seek the truth with humility, and remain steadfast in the ongoing work of healing and reconciliation. May this shared act of lament become another step in our ongoing journey of conversion, as together we entrust ourselves and our Church to the mercy of Christ.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter A Comensoli', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne