

Letter from Monsignor Brian Walsh to the people of the Diocese of Palmerston North

Dear parishioners

Earlier this year a complaint of unacceptable behaviour of a sexual nature was made against Bishop Charles Drennan by a young woman. Pope Francis' Motu Proprio *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (*You are the Light of the World*), published in May this year, requires the Metropolitan Archbishop to oversee the investigation into a complaint against a bishop. Cardinal John asked that the investigation be carried out by the National Office for Professional Standards. The investigation has taken some months.

The interviews were carried out by an independent licensed investigator, and I am confident, based on the information provided to me, that everything has been done appropriately. Support was provided to both the young woman and Bishop Charles, who have both participated in the investigation.

Following the investigation, Bishop Charles has offered his resignation as Bishop of Palmerston North.

This resignation has been accepted by Pope Francis effective from 11pm Friday 4 October 2019.

This is a difficult time for the young woman and her family, and for those who worked with and knew the parties concerned. I ask that you pray for all involved. Please be mindful that the young woman does not want to be identified to the media, nor does she want the details of the situation to be provided or shared. I implore you to respect her wishes.

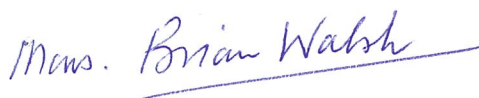
This has all come about due to the saddest and most unfortunate of situations which Bishop Charles has apologised for and deeply regrets.

Bishop Charles has been on leave for some months and I, as Vicar General, and Tony Murphy, Diocesan Manager, have worked to keep the administration and pastoral care in the Diocese operating smoothly. I especially thank Tony for the work he has done and continues to do.

I know that some of you will be very affected by this news. It brings forth many emotions. I ask you to help each other as we all move into a new stage in the life of the Diocese.

The Holy Father has appointed Cardinal John Dew as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Palmerston North until another bishop is appointed. I will be involved locally in the administration of the Diocese, supported by Tony Murphy, Diocesan Manager.

I ask that each of you keep the Diocese and its people in your prayers.



Monsignor Brian Walsh