

## **Pope Francis - bringing hope to people in despair**

It is now just over 100 days since 'the man from the other side of the world', Pope Francis, became the 266<sup>th</sup> Pope of the Catholic Church.

From the outset Pope Francis showed his humble and pastoral style by refusing much of the garb and the traditions that come along with the job. He immediately engaged Catholics and non-Catholics throughout the world rejuvenating interest in the Church.

I admire Pope Francis' choice to lead a simpler life and I am inspired and impressed by what he is preaching to the world. His word speaks to me about our approach, and our whole disposition, leading up to and during the Royal Commission.

Pope Francis exhorts us as Catholics to reach out, to be a Church for the poor. To be a Church that is prepared to get out into the streets and to embrace the mess of life, with all its risks. He urges us not to be a 'standoffish Church', but one that is actively involved in the lives of vulnerable, suffering people, just like people who have been damaged by Clerical sex abuse. Pope Francis urges us to build bridges not walls. He wants us to be brave and to go to the frontiers and support people when they are most in need.

We must be a Church that journeys with these people, not apart from them. We need to be prepared to go the distance, whatever that involves and whatever it takes.

Some people, and some organisations, feel their attempts to apologize to the people damaged by Clerical sex abuse have not always been accepted. According to Pope Francis, this is not the time to shrug shoulders and simply forget about it. It is a time to try harder, to be more committed and more attentive and to never give up the desire to see how good life can be for everyone. It is a very engaged spirituality and a very involved disposition.

Pope Francis and his humble messages give me great heart and importantly a vision and a guide on how we will embrace the Royal Commission and everything that is revealed from it.

Francis Sullivan