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## MEDIA STATEMENT

Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB, Archbishop of Perth

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**Date:** Tuesday, 7 April 2020

**Subject:** Cardinal Pell

Today the High Court of Australia granted Cardinal George Pell special leave to appeal against a decision of the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Victoria and unanimously allowed the appeal. The High Court ordered that Cardinal Pell's convictions relating to the sexual abuse of minors be quashed and that verdicts of acquittal be entered in their place. The High Court has ordered that Cardinal Pell be released from prison.

Those who have been convinced of Cardinal Pell's innocence will believe that justice has been served. Today's decision by the High Court will be devastating for others. Many have suffered greatly through this process, which has now reached its conclusion.

The sexual abuse of minors is a serious crime with devastating effects on the abused person and their families. Anyone guilty of such a crime must be punished according to the law.

The Catholic Church remains fully committed to the safety of children and young people. Any person with allegations of sexual abuse by Church personnel should go to the police. Our Catholic Professional Standards Office stands ready to assist people to do so.

Irrespective of people's views on today's decision of the High Court, I would appeal to everyone to remain calm, measured and compassionate in our reactions and responses. I would also plead with everyone in our society to join in a common effort to eradicate the scourge of sexual abuse from our communities and our institutions. This is what our children and young people need from us.

+Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB

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