



THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON

The Right Reverend Dr. Murray Harvey
Bishop of Grafton

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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Following Friday's tragic events in Christchurch NZ I write to assure you of my prayers as you minister in your communities.

This is particularly poignant for us given that the alleged attacker was born and raised in Grafton. For the past couple of days journalists from all around the world have been all over the city. A newspaper report today states about Grafton:

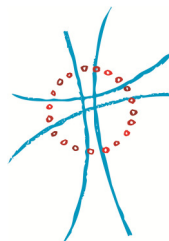
The city is known for its annual Jacaranda festival. Now different notoriety has descended. It has gained the dubious recognition as the birthplace of what may prove to be Australia's most notorious mass murderer.

It is a testament to Dean Greg's ministry that the focal point for community grief and prayer is Christ Church Cathedral. He has responded articulately and in a timely way to the media's incredible interest and has also reached out to other denominations and faith communities, including the Muslim community.

I was present at the cathedral yesterday morning for the 9am Eucharist. There were several TV News crews outside before and after the service and some were present inside as well to film parts of the service with Dean Greg's permission. As the service was a Eucharist with Baptism and Confirmation we ended with my sending out the newly confirmed with a reminder to "acknowledge Christ's authority over human society" and to "defend the weak and seek peace and justice".

This was a reminder to all of us of our call as Christians to care for the vulnerable members of our society and do all we can to create communities where all can live in dignity and peace.

Let's hope that politicians and media can see the consequences of rhetoric, especially surrounding immigration, that normalises a fear of difference and that makes racial hatred seem acceptable. I hope this incident challenges a government that seems to be increasingly complacent about, and even tolerant of, right wing extremism.



Can I urge you to reach out to the local Muslim community in your area in some appropriate way, at the very least to assure them of your prayers and support?

A vigil in the Cathedral will be held tonight (Monday 18 March) at 6pm and you are very welcome to attend.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Murray".

Dr Murray Harvey
Bishop of Grafton

