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Wednesday, 2 March 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

### **Pastoral Letter – 2022 Floods**

As I write this letter we are experiencing a devastating flood event which in many places has exceeded previously known levels.

In Casino and Ballina, Rectories have been evacuated and water has caused devastation in many towns and cities across the region. Until the water has receded we won't know the full extent of the damage but some Churches, Rectories, Halls and other structures either have been, or are likely to have been, inundated.

The human cost was brought home to me by Bishop Greg Homeming (the Bishop of Lismore whose Cathedral, St Carthage's in Lismore, has been flooded) when he told me that "Lismore is awash with displaced people ... there is so much to be done to help them".

My thoughts have been drawn to Psalm 107:29-30 regarding the Israelites in safety after the storm: ... *the waves of the sea were stilled. Then they were glad because they were quiet: and he brought them to the haven they longed for.*

Once the water has receded then the clean-up begins. This carries its own grief and sense of loss. Coming as it does after the 2021 Floods, the 2019/2020 Bushfires and of course the COVID-19 Pandemic, most of us are close to the end of our emotional resources and of whatever resilience we had left. In such cases we are reminded even more of our utter reliance on God and his strength. We are to remember that *the one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this* (1 Thess 5:24). Yesterday I received a phone call from the Archbishop of Sydney, Kanishka Raffel, who wanted me to pass on an assurance of his prayers at this time. Knowing that we are upheld in the prayers of so many is an encouragement in itself.

The Archdeacons and I have been trying to keep in touch with affected parishes and schools throughout and yet communication has been difficult and travel mostly impossible. So please let us know of any needs that you have. The Zoom meeting this Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 2.00pm (regarding our flood response and disaster recovery, see email sent 1 March) with Dr Leon Ankersmit (ANC CEO) and me is one opportunity to be properly informed and to raise any questions. Anglicare North Coast volunteers and staff are once again working hard across the region at numerous Evacuation Centres. The ANC [Flood Appeal](#) will provide much needed funds to assist affected households.

While writing this letter I received an email from Archbishop Phillip Aspinall of Brisbane who has pledged a generous donation of \$20,000 towards the ANC Flood Appeal from his Emergency Relief Fund.



Please be assured of my prayers for you and your Ministry Unit as you not only respond to the needs around you but also take care of yourself and your family.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross-like symbol at the beginning.

Dr Murray Harvey  
**Bishop of Grafton**

