



Most Rev Anthony Randazzo  
*Bishop of Broken Bay*

Message for BBNeighbourhoods  
14 September 2021

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Like many of you, I watched the news last week with great interest about the disappearance, search and rescue of "AJ", the three-year-old boy who was lost for several days in rugged NSW bushland. This amazing little boy survived three nights in the bush in freezing temperatures without food or water, sustaining minor injuries before being reunited with his family. It was a heart-wrenching story of initial despair and anguish, progressing to the mobilisation of the community and finally, to hope and elation once AJ was found safe and sound.

My interest was also captured because of the way that the community responded and took action. From many reports, people from across the whole community participated in the desperate search which lasted over 72 hours. They provided support for family and friends in their time of need. All this in the midst of a global pandemic. I am confident that had this incident occurred in our own community, many of us would not have hesitated instinctively to participate in the search for a lost person as well as offer support to the family.

This led me to reflect on the importance of communal safety. It is incumbent on us, as individuals and as a community, to be aware and to take action in situations where the safety of the vulnerable is in jeopardy. We are never merely individuals, isolated or alone. We find ourselves belonging to multiple groups and communities within the one human family. As such, one eye is constantly on the higher goal of the common good. As sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ, our vocation is to care for and cultivate the communion we share in Christ and with each other. Central to our vocation is the need to foster communities of safety and care for all people.

As Safeguarding is a Diocesan focus this month, we seek to ensure children and vulnerable people are provided with the fundamental right to be kept safe and respected. This right is held sacred because Jesus himself showed us how to do so in the Gospels. It is the Gospel that sets the standard for us as a community of the Church. The Good News of Jesus has the power to convert, renew, and reform us as individuals and as a community. In Broken Bay, our awareness is heightened by the commitment and energy required to ensure that everyone is educated and focused on their obligations and responsibilities for the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.



My thoughts are also very much with you at this time that our Church buildings are closed. I have previously indicated that our compliance with the government health orders is to minimise the risk of infection during our gatherings. I understand the pain and anguish that this is causing all of us, myself included, however, I ask you once again to pray fervently for an end to this pandemic. The knowledge that vulnerable people are being protected and cared for must outweigh the inconvenience and distress that many are feeling.

It is my hope and desire that as we prepare for the re-opening of our churches, that our community of the Church will respond with the spirit of cheerfulness required to gather to celebrate the Mass and the Sacraments. In the meantime, let us encourage one another, especially those who are troubled or restless. Let us never lose sight of our life in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

My continued prayers for our communal well-being and safety during these challenging times.

+Anthony