



The Right Reverend Mark Calder

The Bishop's Registry
11 Church Street (PO Box 23)
Bathurst NSW 2795

15 December 2025

A pastoral note re Bondi shooting

Dear friends across Diocese,

What we've been hearing about has disturbed our hearts deeply.

Many of us don't even know how to process it. I know for myself that I turned the TV off last night — not out of denial, but as an act of self-protection.

What has happened is not only tragic; it is outrageous. Anger is an appropriate response when something like this occurs on our shores — reflecting ancient conflicts between peoples whose origins are far away from here. We don't want this here. We don't want it anywhere, of course. And yet we find ourselves asking: why bring it here? Don't people come to Australia to escape such things?

In moments like this, we are reminded of the radically upside-down nature of the Christian faith.

Our leader — our King — urges us to love our enemies, not to kill them.

Our Lord laid down his life for his enemies.

Our Lord forgave those who drove in the nails.

And our Lord will one day return to bring justice, and his righteous rule will last forever.

This is what Advent is about. It is designed to lift our eyes from the muck of this world to the coming — the Advent — of our King, who will right all wrongs and rid the world of evil and death. *Come, Lord Jesus.*

But what are we meant to do about this today?

Teachers and children still have to get up and go to school. Retailers will open their stores. Accountants will pore over the books. Farmers will be out and about — some still finishing harvest.

Life goes on, even when our hearts are heavy.

The only way we can deal with this is:

- to cast all our cares on him who cares for us
- to admit that there is much in this world we will never understand
- to turn to the Lord who is close to the broken-hearted, who saves those who are crushed in spirit (Psalm 34)
- and to pray.

We pray for those being treated in hospital — for healing and comfort.

We pray for the families of those who have died — for comfort in their distress.

We pray for the many witnesses to what has happened, who may be traumatised for a long time to come, and for police and paramedics who are stretched and under great strain — that they may receive the care and help they need.

We pray for members of the Jewish community, who may be living on edge — for protection, reassurance, and hope.

And yes, we pray even for the perpetrators and those who stand with them — that they may bow the knee to Jesus, who loves his enemies.

Above all, we turn our eyes to Jesus — the true light of the world — who alone can bring light into this darkness.

The message of Advent, and then of Christmas, is the message of Jesus coming to deal with evil and to bring righteousness. That is the only reason that, even in the midst of today's darkness, we can still be people of hope and expectation.

God bless and comfort you today.

May God draw you to himself and remind you of his love.

May the Lord grant you that peace which passes understanding.



Mark Calder, Bishop