

Mr <sup>BYF</sup>  
REDACTED  
6210

13 March 2002

Dear <sup>BYF</sup>

It was good to speak with you after such a long time on Thursday before last and again yesterday, although I wish the circumstances were very different.

As I said, I was shocked and quite distressed to hear the story of abuse you related and the enormous damage and pain you have experienced as a result. I am truly sorry that this has happened. I want to do whatever I can to help you get the assistance you need survive these ghastly experiences and then to thrive and enjoy life to the full in the years ahead.

I'm pleased that following our first conversation you wrote to Bishop John Harrower and reported the incidents of abuse to him. Though it's not easy to do, that was a great step to take. Well done. I'm thrilled that he has responded so quickly and so supportively, that you now have the offer of counselling and support as you need it and a telephone number you can ring at any time of the day or night. That's great. I don't know if you recall that I also suggested that the Diocese of Tasmania might also be prepared to assist you with costs for counselling and therapy that you have already incurred. Did you also raise that possibility with Bishop John? If you haven't yet I'm sure it's not too late to do so.

I was also pleased to hear that you contacted Tasmania Police and reported the matters to them. That they regard what occurred as serious criminal matters underlines the significance of what you've endured. I understand that, at this stage, you've decided not to proceed with making a statement to local police and not to proceed with a formal complaint. Your lawyer could be right that that could lead to a protracted and anxiety-producing legal battle. It may not, of course. Who can tell? Of course that option remains open to you in the future should you decide to exercise it in the future. One question occurs to me to suggest to you. That is, did you check with either the police or your lawyer to see whether there is any limit on the time within which you must take legal action should you decide to? If there is a limit it would be as well for you to know what that is so you have all the information before you as you make your decisions. You are the person in charge of all this of course. I fully respect your decision at present to proceed down the path of assessors appointed by the Diocese of Tasmania to investigate, and see where that leads.

Another option that you may wish to consider now or at some future stage is the possibility of civil legal action to seek compensation for the harm done to you. Again the choice is yours and your lawyer could advise you I'm sure.

There's one other formal church mechanism I can think of that should be open to you. Each Diocese in Australia has what's called a tribunal. The processes vary a bit from place to place but tribunals are where formal charges can be brought against clergy and some others. If found guilty there are various actions that can be taken by the church including removing a person from their office, removing their licence and authority to function and also deposing

the person from holy orders, so they would no longer actually be a priest. I haven't checked any details but I think you could probably lay a charge against Hawkins in Tasmania. The process that Bishop Harrower has set in train may lead to that any way. You could check with him. If you wanted to lay a formal charge against Daniels I think that would probably have to be done through the Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn now because that's where he lives. Although he isn't functioning as a priest as I understand that he has never been deposed from orders. A tribunal could lead to that.

As I say, I don't want to try to persuade you to do anything you don't want to. The decisions are yours and you can do what you want when you want. I did want you to know, though, what options were open to you. I also want to repeat what I said on the telephone that I would want to support you to take whatever action you choose to take. If I can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thank you for your permission to speak with Bishop Harrower about these matters. I plan to catch up with him during the bishops' conference next week, to assure him of my support for you and to offer him any assistance I can as he investigates these matters in Tasmania.

BYF

it grieves me greatly to think that my ignorance or insensitivity or ineptness over 20 years ago may have added in some way to the harm done to you. Perhaps if I knew then, what I know now your story might have been different. In any case be assured that I will do anything I now can to assist you.

I do hope we will be able to catch up when I'm in Perth later this week.

You and REDACTED and your children are in my prayers.

Yours sincerely,

+PB

The Most Rev'd Dr Phillip Aspinall  
Archbishop of Brisbane