



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

Bishop's Office

MEDIA STATEMENT

12 January 2004

Bishop Brian Heenan

The Catholic Church will continue to address the tragedy of sexual abuse and will do all possible to support victims of such abuse, and their families.

Protection of children and indeed all people, is a priority in our pastoral care throughout our Diocese. The Church will continue to refine its protocol and procedure in the light of experience.

The issue of the confidentiality of Confession has been raised in a weekend media report. The Catholic Church upholds, to this day, the absolute inviolability of the seal of Confession and no priest has the authority to reveal what he hears in Confession. The sanctity of the confessional is a longstanding practice that enables a person to lay themselves open before God through the ministry of the priest and that person must have complete assurance that whatever they reveal will not be passed on. Through that encounter an opportunity exists to encourage the penitent to seek help or alert the appropriate authorities to their action.

I have no wish to comment upon the case which has been referred to, beyond the above statement that Confession, in the Catholic Church, has been and always will be, enshrined in absolute confidentiality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Heenan".

Brian Heenan
Bishop of Rockhampton

