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30<sup>th</sup> Oct 96

Dear AYB,

Thank you for your letters which I received after my return from holidays. Yes, I do feel much refreshed I am grateful for that. I am sorry I was not here when you called which was just after my PASTORAL letter was published.

I can appreciate your being upset about it and I would like to offer some explanation. At the time I wrote, there had been much hurtful and I thought damaging press centring on Neekol. I am not sure whether you saw it all but it was directly attacking the whole reputation of Neekol and I sought to speak on behalf of the sisters and the former residents who were contacting me. I am still receiving letters from people who were residents or children and are angered by the general slur against the orphanage. They do not pretend that there were not harsh treatments and deprived times but they resented it being called a "hell hole a place of dungeons and bear pits and abuse"

In my letter, I acknowledge that allegation have to be investigated and that we would assist the appropriate authorities.

In your letter you say 'I never believed a word you said to me' AYB, the fact that I accepted your statements on your first visit to my office, that I was partly responsible for and strongly encouraging of your meeting with Myolene. Reg and Noel Hughes surely indicates that I accepted what you shared with me.

It is true that in writing the Pastoral I was thinking of earlier times that were the focus of the more recent Neerkol allegation and when I thought of you suffering, I saw it as of different time, tho no less distressing. I guess also I saw you trauma as part of a family relationship as you were not as resident of Neerkol. Please do not see this as minimising the experience but somewhat separating it from the TV and press focus on Neerkol.

Your detailing of the abuse is devastating and the circumstance associated with it. You speak of the memories that haunt you every day and I would renew my offer for any support I can give by way of counselling to assist you. I know that can never take away the memories. You are blessed with such a supportive partner and obvious personal faith. Which you have held onto through all of this suffering. I do try to understand the difficult situation you are in with respect to your parents and I can only accept whatever decision you make as to whether you make them fully aware.

The article you enclose I did find helpful and shedding more light on the confused and developing understanding of church leaders. It is something which Bishops and others are honestly trying to deal with, given that mistakes were made in handling these crimes as they were revealed.

AYB, you are not a thorn in my side and I certainly was not intending the word scurrilous to describe what you have shared with me. I appreciate your patience as you work through this suffering.

Yours sincerely

Bishop Heenan