



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

Bishop's Office



16 September 2011

Mrs Mary Adams

REDACTED

Dear Mary

Firstly let me thank you for the meeting we shared on Monday 22nd August at the rooms of Pat Mullins, Solicitors. It was a pleasure to meet REDA and to have Anne Czekanski with us.

I hope you found the discussion fruitful. I certainly did and I appreciated your open sharing of your story and the pain that has been ongoing, following your distressing time at Neerkol Orphanage.

With regard to the priest from whom you suffered sexual abuse, "Fr John" or "Fr Johns", I have made further inquiries and have not been able to identify the priest. I have no doubt that you encountered him, but there were very limited records kept at that time and as such there are no records, either in the Sisters of Mercy Archives, or in our Diocesan records, of such a priest being at Neerkol. Mary, I am very sorry that I have not been able to identify this priest as I realize it has always been important to you to try and find out who he was and therefore try and obtain some justice.

Mary, as you know some twelve years ago the Diocese joined with the Sisters of Mercy in making out of court payments to a number of ex-residents of Neerkol. Although this legal process was formalized and finalized at that time, I understand that the pain of your experience does not go away with a payment of money. If there is any other way that I could offer you practical support, or pastoral care, to assist you with the on-going challenges that come your way, please let me know or discuss it with Anne who would share it with me.

Anne has also shared with me some of your current anxieties about REDAC. I enclose the promised letter to help with identification. Furthermore, if there is any practical support or assistance I can provide REDAC, please let me know. I believe the Sisters of Mercy, through Anne would also be happy to assist REDAC.

Mary, no matter how much I would wish it otherwise, I cannot change the past or take away the hurt and pain you experienced during your time under the care of the Neerkol Orphanage. However, I hope that I can assist you in some way with your life today so I would encourage you to contact Anne or myself if you believe that my offer of support or practical care can be of help to you.

... 2 /

-2-

I am aware Mary, that you have been a tremendous support to many residents of Neerkol who suffered abuse of one kind or another. In speaking with you, I know there is still a strong place in your heart, to be there for others, especially when there is injustice or unrelieved pain. I hope you realise that your generous support to others has been a tremendous gift to them, and should be affording you a deep sense of satisfaction. Anne has described you to me as a 'person for others, or a carer' and I can concur with that.

Thank you once again for the meeting we had. We will never find solutions to all of our challenges but I hope we can keep moving to new horizons. You will always have my deep respect and I offer again my heartfelt apology for the abuse you suffered at Neerkol.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BH', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian Heenan
Bishop of Rockhampton