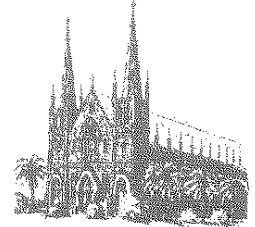


CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

Bishop's Office



St. Joseph's Cathedral

**TO THE PARISHIONERS OF COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE  
DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON**

(A story that was published in the Courier Mail on Saturday 15 June 2002 reveals.....).

A story that <sup>was</sup> ~~will be~~ published in the Courier Mail <sup>which</sup> ~~shortly~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~will make known~~ that a former priest of the Rockhampton Diocese who has left the priesthood, engaged in sexual abuse of children when he was serving as a priest. The former priest worked in various parts of the Diocese. This abuse occurred prior to his retirement in 1988.

Michael McArdle

As the Bishop of the Diocese, I offer to victims and their families and to parish communities an unreserved apology for this betrayal of trust.

I offer my support and prayer to all who have been affected by this tragedy and invite any person, or family member, affected by sexual abuse, to make it known through the Toward's Healing Hotline – 1800 337 928.

I express my profound sadness to all who are suffering through the reality of sexual abuse and its being revealed.

I want to affirm the vast majority of our priests and religious whose integrity is beyond question and ask that our whole Diocesan family turn to our loving God for support and for strength to continue to live and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our Church is divine and human and I know that God will always be with those who love and serve the Church.

Brian Heenan  
Bishop of Rockhampton