



BISHOP'S OFFICE

168 William Street

PO Box 611

Rockhampton Q 4700

Telephone: (079) 22 1149

Facsimile: (079) 22 1224

26 February 1997

Private and Confidential

Dear Father

I write with the sad news that one of our brothers has been charged with serious sexual offences. Reg Durham appeared briefly in Court today, having previously been summoned. He was committed for trial on Saturday 23 June. Reg has entered no plea.

Some of you may be aware, others may not. I write for the one reason that we can be supportive of Reg and hold him in our prayers. This information has not been made public in any way. The Court listened favourably to a request for sensitive handling of this information and I ask you to be utterly discreet in sharing it. I believe that you have the right to know.

Reg will continue to reside at Neerkol for the immediate future, but he has resigned from all ministry and will no longer be responsible for public ministry in the Neerkol parish. Apart from the difficulty he faces, age and poor health would demand a stepping down from pastoral responsibilities. If you wish to contact him, I suggest you write, care of Neerkol. The people of Neerkol will be cared for by visiting priests; Fr John Grace will announce Reg's resignation this Saturday.

As a diocese, we have difficult times to face. We will do so with honesty, humility and complete trust in God.

Mass of the Oils: Prior to the Mass of the Oils on March 19, we will gather for our two days together for spiritual renewal, prior to Easter. John Daly has written to you with the details and I ask each of you to be there, for personal growth and brotherly support for all. Our greatest strength, after the grace of God, is the hope we can give to each other.

I believe the change of venue to "*The Haven*" is timely. A different venue, with an ocean view and sea breeze will be welcome relief to the humidity of Rockhampton and surrounds. I have the greatest regard for Frank Devoy, a diocesan priest from Lismore, who will lead us.

-2-

Would you do all you can to have your parishioners and friends join us for the Mass of the Oils which takes on extra significance as a diocesan gathering in the year of Jesus, Baptism and Partnership, as we prepare for the Year of Jubilee.

Please include this notice among your spoken or written messages.

Mass of the Oils - Invitation to Renewal

The laity, religious and priests of the Diocese of Rockhampton, are invited to gather with their bishop, Brian Heenan, to celebrate the *Mass of the Holy Oils* on Wednesday 19 March at St Joseph's Cathedral at 7.30pm.

In addition to the blessing of the Oils, the whole diocese will be invited to renew personal commitment to Jesus Christ. With Pope John Paul II we are joining in, this first year of preparation for the Year of Jubilee 2000. It is to be hoped that every parish and community can be represented in this truly diocesan gathering. Supper together will follow the Mass.

Wednesday 19 March - St Joseph's Cathedral - 7.30pm

Yours sincerely



Brian Heenan
Bishop of Rockhampton