

15 February 1999

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

Bishop's Office



CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Father

I write, with much sadness, to let you know that Reg Durham, after acknowledging responsibility for some of the prior charges laid against him, has received a prison sentence of eighteen months, with parole offered after four months.

The Judge strongly recommended that the proceedings of the Court not be made public, with the possibility of other matters relating to Neerkol being affected by this knowledge. While certain sections of the media in Rockhampton found a way around the Judge's request, it remains important that we not comment in any public way about the proceedings of the court. It is a very sensitive matter and I ask you to hold it in confidence.

I do not know any details of the future for Reg and I will let you know later. Just pray earnestly for strength for him and for Martin and indeed for our whole diocesan family.

I enclose a Lenten Pastoral which I ask you to read at all Masses next weekend, February 20th and 21st. It is an opportunity for me to communicate with everyone after the Synod in Rome and also to join you in inviting your people on the journey of faith from Lent to Easter. This issue of our Review carries more of my reflections on the Synod.

On Monday 22nd March from 10.00am to 4.30pm there will be a day designed for new or recently appointed Parish Priests, and also for any priest who may be interested. Often we assume that knowledge is passed on when it is not. John Grace and John Daly will lead the day and I will be present.

Our meeting for all priests will begin on Monday evening 22nd March and continues until Wednesday 24th March and it will be more important than ever. I would like to begin on the Monday evening with an informal discussion so if you can join us that evening, it will be appreciated. John Daly will shortly supply the program, but I am asking your generous involvement in these precious days. I need your advice and support. The Mass of the Oils on Wednesday night 24th is a strong gathering point for our Diocese, I ask you to once again encourage your parish community to be represented if at all possible.

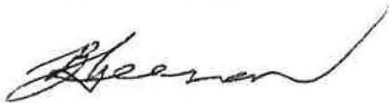
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Our three first year students, Peter, Andrew and Matthew, have begun their course at Lanigan House. I have been able to visit them and they are settling in well. Darren Davies is happily ministering in Bundaberg.

I pray that your year has begun well. We will have ceremonies of installation for our new Parish Priests, Kevin Phillips on Friday 19th February, Terry Stallard on Saturday 20th at St Mary's, and Sunday 21st at St Patrick's, Stephen Hanly on Monday 22nd February, Don White on Tuesday 23rd February, and John Daly on March 1st.

Thank you for your own priestly ministry; this Lent will have its own special sorrow, may Easter renew our trust in the Lord.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Heenan', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Brian Heenan
Bishop of Rockhampton