

PRESS RELEASE REVISED 27/9/1995

For over ninety years the Sisters of Mercy at St. Joseph's Home (Neerkol) cared for children who were orphaned, abandoned, or otherwise unable to live in their families. For thousands the home provided an opportunity to make something of a life that was otherwise deprived. Conditions were difficult and resources were scarce. Strict discipline reflected the thinking of the day. The Sisters did their best to care for the children who had nowhere else to go. Several Sisters regard their years at Neerkol as particularly happy ones even though the work was hard and the circumstances demanding. While being saddened by a knowledge of the tragic life histories of some of the former children, they rejoice in the achievements of many others.

The Sisters of Mercy can well understand that for some children their time in the Home was distressing and unhappy. This is hardly surprising since they were deprived of a normal home life. It is only natural that a legacy of parental deprivation would leave some former residents bitter and resentful. Where the actions of a Sister or any other responsible person associated with Neerkol has caused harm to the children, there is particularly deep regret on the part of the Sisters. The Sisters' ministry of care did not stop when children left the home and they continue to do all that is reasonably possible to help such people now or at any stage in the future.

Allegations have been made of abuse at the hands of a Priest who was appointed to the Neerkol Parish, and also of neglect by those in authority to afford protection to children. The Sisters of Mercy are aware of their duty and responsibility when the actions of members of the Institute are challenged. They will do all they can to ensure justice to all concerned.

For further information contact Sister Berneice Loch, Congregational Leader, on 079-271866.