

REDACTED

Doveton,

Vic. 3177.

22nd March, 1991

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Monsignor,

This is a very difficult letter to write and has required much reflection before communicating with you.

I am a mother and a member of Holy Family Parish, Doveton. After several years of attending this Church, I found, last year, I could no longer be happy about supporting the Parish with the present Priest, and rather than complain, have gone to Mass outside the Parish. I feel I have to write now, and make several points.

I am concerned that, instead of setting a Christian example of love and compassion, this particular Priest is widely disliked and has created divisions in the community.

Three years ago when my daughter was in Grade 6 at Holy Family, she was continually complaining about the way Father treated the children. One particular day several children were worried about a baby bird that was stuck in a down-pipe on the school building. They summoned a teacher who managed to rescue the bird, to the childrens' relief. Father then appeared on the scene holding a screwdriver, demanded the bird, and then proceeded to stab it to death with a screwdriver in front of the children. Several children, including my daughter were very upset, especially as these were the actions of a priest. This is an example of his lack of feeling where children (and animals) are concerned.

Due to this and other events, when Father forced children into religious practices, I did not wish to support this Priest, and, as many other people in the Parish have done, decided to go elsewhere to Mass.

Earlier this year I had to fill in an Application Form for my son to attend Holy Family School as a Prep, and the Form had to be signed by Father. He was very irate that I did not go to his Church and would not sign the Form. He told me I had until 9.0 p.m. that night to 'phone him and tell him I would pay into the Thanksgiving Campaign, then he would sign the Form. As I could not, in conscience, go to the Church, I was very upset and felt as if I was being blackmailed. Later, on hearing of the Priest's actions, the Headmistress signed the Form.

I am concerned how Father can abuse his position in the Parish to co-erce children and the weaker and poorer members of the Parish into doing his will. I am also a member of the St. Vincent de Paul conference in Doveton and we have not found Father to be honest in his dealings with us.

- 2 -

I now ask if it would be possible for you to look into this matter as soon as possible. Please could you arrange for a "saintly, compassionate" priest to come to this Parish to try and heal the divisions this Priest has caused, and restore peoples' (especially childrens') confidence in the priesthood of the Catholic Church.

I do not enjoy writing this letter, but I know there are many people in the Parish who would agree with the foregoing sentiments.

Yours faithfully,

REDACTED



Monsignor Hilton Deakin,
Vicar General,
Diocesan Centre,
383 Albert Street,
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