



DIOCESAN OFFICE

P.O. Box 2005

Bunbury W.A. 6231

Telephone: 08 9721 0500

Facsimile: 08 9721 3216

Free Call: 1800 016 702

E-mail: bishop@bunburycatholic.org.au

Dear Parishioners

I wish to make the following statement in relation to the ABC website article about Fr Gerald Tan's feeling that I did not fulfil my duty of care to him after he attempted to take his life on 21 December 2019 published last Wednesday. This article was the basis for a national ABC article last Thursday.

1. As the journalist knew, the claims made by Fr Gerald Tan were investigated by the national professional standards body in 2020 in response to complaints by Fr Tan. They were found to be without foundation. I informed her of this myself.

Had Fr Tan been dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he had the option of an appeal.

I am disappointed that the journalist withheld this information for her own reasons. I would have preferred her readers to know the whole story.

Media stories over the past two weeks have contributed to a great deal of hurt within the Catholic community by giving apparent credence to claims that already had been investigated and found to be groundless. My heart goes out to all who have been suffering because of this.

2. I informed the journalist that there is much more to this situation than Fr Tan has revealed. I informed her too that I would not be revealing further private information about Fr Tan, even to defend myself. This is a principle that I will not violate even now.

However, I accept fully that situations are never even when one side is bound by confidentiality and the other is not. And who can compete with the power of print and social media exploits this?

3. At all times I have done my best to care for Fr Tan as recommended by his psychiatrist. I have followed advice scrupulously.

There was a period in which I could not contact him because of the national professional standards investigation he instigated. This failure to see him was not by choice.

4. After his attempt on his life, I sought to help Fr Tan to make a fresh start to his ministry under the care of his psychiatrist. This included encouraging him to say no more about his attempt on his life.

This was the spirit also of my quoted comment that he 'move on', which included cooperating with his psychiatrist and looking to a mentally healthy future.

5. I have written to Fr Tan three times asking that we meet so that I can learn what is behind his recent statements. I am hopeful that he will agree. I have offered to engage a professional mediator if needed.

In conclusion, as Christians, our focus needs to be forgiveness and reconciliation. It is to this that I am committed fully. Please pray that this be possible.

Bishop Gerard Holohan

14th October 2022