

FILE NOTEMAITLAND - NEWCASTLE DIOCESE

AH

AH aged 27 years, has reported to the Police that he was sexually abused by a Father Jim Fletcher of the Diocese over a period of time from age 13yrs to 18yrs.

Father Fletcher was arrested and charged. He denies all charges. He says the events did not occur and nothing untoward happened between him and AH. He admits to giving AH a lift home in his car from time to time but insists that others were always present. He asks why, if the abuse took place would AH ask Father Fletcher to officiate at his wedding in Tasmania some time later. He did not in fact do so for reasons of ill health. We might not then be certain he was so asked.

Father Fletcher appeared before the court on 23rd May and on that occasion the matter was set down for a hearing on 25th July. The police indicated they had not completed their brief, which would imply they do not yet have authority from the DPP to proceed. It has been said to Father Jim Saunders, who is managing the matter for the Bishop, that the matter may well be for mention only again on 25th July.

The diocese has had no formal contact from AH himself and therefore there is difficulty about implementing the "Towards Healing" process. It is understood the police have arranged some counselling for AH. I have warned Father Saunders that no attempt should be made to engage AH in any other counselling process without permission of the Police, he being their chief witness.

Having regard for AH's present age it would appear the events took place over the period 1989 to 1994.

LMR
20.06.03