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5 Jan, 1988

Dear Morrie,

I thank you most sincerely for your letter of 29/10/87, and for the kind and encouraging support you so well expressed.

As you would remember, this time after New Year is very dull, so I am taking full advantage of it, as is my annual custom, to reply to Xmas cards and outstanding correspondence. It's a wonderful feeling to be sitting at my old desk once again, and to be surrounded by my things. Although I was placed on "hold" after the changes were made, and although I was asked to vacate the place, I still return here regularly to visit friends, which I find both necessary and valuable, and also to attend to my mail etc. Gerry Hanna doesn't like me being around, as people see me, and then ask him, "how is John", "what is he going to do?" etc etc. However, what Gerry Hanna wants or does not want is not a criteria by which I live, so I very much come and go as I please. In my situation mere survival is to be interpreted as 'a brilliant success', so I employ everything possible to ~~aid~~ aid me in my survival. Moving around, has been my main technique, so far.

Every man and his dog has an opinion on what I should or should not be doing. However, most of these opinions have not been "tested", so basically they are so much bull, by people who obviously have not been

2

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in a difficult situation during their priestly careers. The best support I have received comes from the older men, who have either "been there and done that" or seen others "been there and done that", and, reflecting on the experience, and weighing up all that is involved, have formed a sound opinion.

Like Jesus in the Synagogue, 'with all eyes on him', all eyes are now on the outcome of the court hearing planned for next month. All I can say, is that I have survived so far, (just!!) so the final judgement on these wretched 6 months, given the parameters already set, should be BRILLIANT SUCCESS, but at what cost?

Needless to say, the little man in Armadale has been of no use, but what is more importantly, he hasn't been a problem. Thankfully, from observing his style over the years, most people now have his measure, and know how to use his weakness to their best advantage. He has only spoken to me once ~ he was being ear-bashed by Gerry Hanna, to ship me out, but I arrived at the interview with a supporter, knowing he can't handle one-to-one, let alone a delegation. Therefore, I stopped him from getting his way, and we got ours, praise the Lord.

Gerry Hanna is the real enemy. Sadly he combines both antagonism and condescending care. If he was an outright curst, I could better combat him,

3.

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but he means well, and tries hard, and in many ways has been both supportive and encouraging. I must therefore be on my guard lest he gradually wins me round to accepting decisions which I would not be happy with. One lesson I learnt early, is that if I do not look after myself, no one else is going to look after me. I am not a cynic, but it seems to me that when people offer to be of assistance they generally bring about situations beneficial to themselves, but not necessarily the best for the other person. The long and the short of what I am saying, is that I am sufficiently experienced in the ways of this diocese, not to let the bastards grind me down.

The real problem is that no one, including me, knows what I should do after the court hearing. There are pros and cons in all opinions. Some say I should just disappear, but it is impossible to disappear - wherever I go, sooner or later the story of the allegations will reach its ugly head. Others say I should move to West Tamworth, and be the Adm. for Johnny & Conno - which is my own preference - but the question is asked: How will that go over with the people? And, so the debate continues. I just don't know what to do, Morrie.

Lunch is ready, must end here. Keep in touch, & thanks again for your uplifting letter! John Farrell