

HOLY TRINITY
MISSION SEMINARY

9001 New Hampshire Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20903

6th April 78

My Lord Bishops.

This is a follow up to my last letter of January - Brian Fenegan told me last night that there has been a mail strike in Sydney, so I hope there is not a reply stuck in all that pile up of mails.

As I reported last December re my accounts etc I mentioned I would be out of funds by the end of December. When you sent me that cheque in the Christmas break I know you said it was to be for my personal use and not for Board, closter etc. However I've had to use \$840 to pay Sr Kinnare for Jan-March. That's OK by me except I'm wondering if you did forward a replenishment and it's been lost or on the wrong bank??

As I mentioned in January my course work ends in May. After that I have comprehensive exams in mid July - private preparation. The results of the comps will be delayed until late August because the examiner Fr Austin will be in Australia at Byron for Senn. My hopes before were to do summer supply in a parish at Virginia Beach and at the same time prepare for comps. and await the results. Knowing that I am to be in the States until approx March 79, The Pastor has invited me to stay and help or direct ~~the~~ the liturgy renewal he wants to undertake in a major way in the Parish. You come to know Paul well from odd visits and he is a fine priest whom I've learnt a lot from. As I said to you before it would be a good opportunity for me on many accounts.

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- 1/ Firstly I would have somewhere to be and something positive to do whilst being able to remain in regular spiritual direction with Fr Harvey whose help has been so important and whom I feel has a lot still to offer me in helping build a spiritual life on which not only to correct me in my past mistakes, but for the now and future.
- 2/ Being able to exercise my priestly ministry - i.e. over a longer period than simple summer supply - would, I feel, help me not only see the priesthood (and Church) / my priesthood as a life dedicated to others etc ~~to~~ not myself; but assist me in discovering self acceptance and self respect. I realize this is not the only way of course, but I so much want to get a hold of my feelings, to my ability to love unselfishly, my dignity and move forward as a human being. My past has so battered these concepts they had become moribund - to say the least. I want to be responsible for my part regardless of what fate parents or whoever drew up for me, and consequently I want to be and need to be responsible in the future as a man committed in faith personally and as a priest. I think this past 12 months of exploration has revealed a lot to me and with insights I have grown but have also become 'greedy' for more growth - with no illusions about having fallen and that my salvation lies in a deeply committed faith and realization that God loves me - regardless whether others have or do.
- 3/ I have no idea what you have in mind for me and I don't expect you to commit yourself to any course of action. I do feel that you have been good in your support and in giving me the time to rebuild my ability to function as a full person. I would see my proposal as helping me not only to continue growth processes (eg spiritual direction) but allowing me to concurrently start to be a functioning person with all the chances to do so. I suppose there are many ways to skin a rabbit - I hope I can do this this way.

4/ The human operation is not when I speak therapy in my forehead
 return home. One and above that I feel I need to continue speaking
 formation further with the therapy. He has asked me in a process when
 I'm starting to really discuss people - an meaningful but also enjoyable -
 and not so an escape or illusion. All that I mean I am now the perfect
 process, but I feel - what - really keen to continue to speak hard
 of this really so that I want to do it. And you know, I want that
 suggestion of whatever happens to me. If you find you have to be
 and 'of this middleman present' or whatever - I have a glimpse, or really
 vision, of what it means to have a relationship with God that can make
 me to live with myself & others and I'm not going to lose that for
 anything. In my life I know I can't now afford to take risks
 or go along in a mediocre or half-hearted way. I have to go fully
 one way or the other - and that not because I feel I'm such a great
 guy - rather I mean I can only go to one end or the other - never
 in between having my cake & eating it. And my choice as a person
 can only be in a relationship with God. I know without it I shall
 be destroyed and never be true to myself. I want nothing less than that
 and I want to be able to achieve that. I don't want to be sorry. My goal will
 be and in my personal cross - which is a yoke I hope I can growingly
 offer up, and make bear fruit. There will be few moments when
 it will hurt me or cause me to suffer, but I can accept that - even
 gladly so - because it can & will help me to be what I see as me
 having a person of dignity, self-worth and proud committed.

5/ My goal I would appreciate your thoughts on these matters as soon
 as you can manage to write. I have discussed all this quite
 thoroughly with the therapy over the last few months and he will be
 wanting next week with his ideas.

(4)

As far as my visits to Virginia Beach have been irregular and for summer as will be the summer stint. However if you feel I should stay here in the States longer - at least till you come here - and that it would be alright to work in the parish then my status would have to be regularized naturally, because I would have no reason to be free to accept the job.

I have developed a good relationship with the Pastor and though I haven't been able to tell him all the reasons why I came to the States, I have indicated to him that I needed to come ~~here~~ here for a lot of personal growth reasons which have had to be sorted out apart from or alongside study. He is a very understanding man and sometime I think I would like to talk more with him, but yet I have some hesitations in that sometimes we can take things out of context so I worry about that. I met his bishop for a few minutes at Exeter and he said that ~~it~~ it is OK ~~to~~ with him if I come there temporarily, but if its longer than summer supply he feels its a courtesy to you that I obtain your permission in writing so that you know when I am etc.

My Lord how much do you feel you have to reveal? My intention or hope is that one day I will be home and I don't have any intentions of staying here permanently. I have made a lot of friends in the parish, apart from the Pastor, and who have helped, unknown to them, me become a functioning feeling person. I surely would hate to lose all that - its too high a price, and if full revelation was necessary, then I would rather you deny permission and I would withdraw, and keep my self respect and not be crushed by my past. I know that would mean I would lose the chance of working in the parish and gaining the advantages mentioned above, but also revelation could mean I'd lose that chance anyway so then I'd lose doubly. I also feel it would not tell the whole story of my life which certainly paints a different picture although it is still one I have to exercise equal care with.

I'm seeing Fr Hawley later this morning and will show him

(5)

His letter preparatory to him writing his recommendations. Perhaps one way to solve this is to give a non-descriptive permission and state that I am here in the States for personal formation and help in spiritual direction and to study.

I'm really worried about this and my heart just aches out for a chance. I cannot forget the cross of my part, but I don't want that to be made heavier by external revelations. I want my part to remain absolutely confidential and whilst I believe this is a great chance for ^{me} and which I can handle, yet if you feel only on condition of full disclosure please just deny me permission ~~and~~ instead so that the confidential remains intact.

I had a long talk with Brian Fennegan the other night. He is going well and preparing for his comps. Lucky, here he's a much easier than mine. I was glad I could talk to him about things. As you told me you had mentioned to him why I was here. He has been good in not pressuring me - not that I expected he would. He has let me go or, so it was good to then be able to discuss the last 17 months with him.

As I mentioned before, if it helps please feel free to discuss this with Fr Peckery - even if you want to show him my letters. I respect his advice as I know you do, and, I have asked him for his advice.

Do you have an approximate date yet? I'm really looking forward to your visit here, apart from being able to have a really good chat I'd like to show you off to my friends and take you around a bit.

Also if you can, could you transfer or send a cheque so I can pay some board & whatever else there is for Fr Kennane.

Wed 11 April. I didn't finish this off last Friday as I wanted to get Fr Peckery's reaction & I also had a session scheduled last night

(7)

Get better finish off now or you'll go cross eyed. I'm just worried and starting to wobble on. I've been open with my feelings and that's what I wanted to convey. I.E., I want confidentiality to remain even if it means refusal of permission to go there for the project until Mar 79.

Could you let me know to go ahead or not as soon as possible. I realize you won't have time to answer my letter straight away - that's not necessary. But could you give me a yes or no so that I can at least let the Pastor know whether I'll be there. And then I'll know where I stand & he can pre-plan - but it must be based on the above. My lord, for my own sake.

Hoping this makes sense & is not too much of a burden. And if you could get Adrian to send me some \$ for board & K and books etc - bills I have to pay.

Thanking you - hope you aren't too run off your feet. Take Care.

Paul Ryan.

P.S. It's spring here now - the trees are just starting to bud - one can really understand spring as the season of new growth, and the cherry blossoms & magnolias are really something.