



STAR OF THE SEA CHURCH

Most Rev. R.A. Mulkearns
 Bishop of Ballarat
 Ballarat Victoria

26 June 78

My Lord Bishop,

Many thanks for your letter of the 25th. I have been trying to answer it for the last 2½ weeks but I have just been so busy - which is good.

No worries about the check - answer OK. Likewise re your visit with Archbishop Little. I'm glad you and his grace can stay at Holy Trinity - I've arranged it so that if you do get there earlier than the 25th it will be OK.

I shall be in D.C. for exams on 9th - 15th July (comprehensives) and whilst there will make enquiries re your visit to the Bishops Conference Secretariate. Would you like to visit

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I.C.E.L. - on the same block - They have new offices there etc. That can be arranged quite easily.

I'm happy with your arrangements re leaving everything until September. I've told the pastor here that and so we will play it by ear. I know in my heart you aren't trying to dump me - you have been very supportive and a real friend for which I'll always be grateful. God works in strange ways and in the long run for me this is all for the best. However I must admit to you that I can't really see how I'll be able to come back and work in Ballarat as much as it has been my desire. Please don't misunderstand me when I say this. Why I say this - and partly I'm reacting between the lines of your letter so I may be wrong -

- (1) I want you to feel free when you make your decisions re myself & not feel obligated to me.
- (2) Nothing happened in Ballarat for incidents to be spoken about - if that is the case then it's wrong and somebody has broken confidence about what ~~was~~ happened in Melbourne. I can think of no real reason why Ballarat incidents should be mentioned - except possibly

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one — and that was nothing to do with my problem — there was no accident and no intention of it. I can't say anymore because I consider the matter in confidence — but anything can be twisted to meet a situation. If that is the way it is — then I shall just have to be the loser — rightly or wrongly. Good Lord given the muck up I let myself in for — freely or otherwise — I have no reason to hide

(3) Given that situation & my inclinations are that the diocese would be better off without me and ~~the~~ the people and the priests of our diocese are more important than me. I think the Church is too important for me to have it tarnished anymore — with truth or rumour.

(4) Perhaps such a situation has been exacerbated by the fact that there has been no satisfying reason for my absence — e.g. away doing liturgical studies.

(5) I write this ~~and~~ without having any real plans beyond September of this year. I have no intention or desire to apply to the diocese of Richmond on a permanent basis. The furthest I've thought was the previously discussed plan of staying till next Easter. I really don't think I'd like to live on the East Coast of the US. anyway.

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I'm not making any decisions until I see you - but let's face it - for all concerned it looks as if I shall have to leave the diocese at least - so that no more hurt can be inflicted.

Whatever of the worst comes to the worst and I have to even leave the priesthood (which isn't my trend of thought at the moment) I should like to leave happily, and, having given something to the Church for its care for me - unhappily it doesn't look like I can give it directly to Ballarat - but even if it's here - for the months that God chooses I may be here - it is still the same Church. - you know, being a foreigner, one is very conscious of the universal Church. In my heart I'm happy and know where I'm growing & developing & changing. For the good of my soul I cannot in conscience, anymore either delude myself or put myself in a position where the burden ~~is~~ would cause retrogression. Actually I see the challenge of the future as exciting and no matter what I'm sure God will be with me.

Even if I have to withdraw from here after your Sept visit I shall have left some contribution here - apart from giving the bones of a major liturgical structure - I have redesigned the whole sanctuary for the parish church - this alone has saved the parish quite a few \$000 dollars. And that's satisfying as it is creative. e.g. I designed an 8 foot modern cross which if an artist had designed & executed would cost

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between \$3000 & \$5000. To have it made to my design will only cost \$1500

Whatever - these are all things that we can talk about come September. I shall still gather more information re Europe because I need a viable explanation for my absence and also something constructive to do. This I can bring to our meeting. If you want information earlier just drop me a quick line & and I shall be happy to respond. However I don't expect you to answer ~~to~~ this letter though as the least 2 weeks here have made me realize how busy you must get & therefore how difficult it is to get a letter written.

I passed all my exams in May - As & Bs - even later!! I hope I can get ready for comps in Mid July - otherwise I have another chance in November.

30th I never got this finished last week - I had a thrombosis that really laid me low & I could hardly move - with constant pain. However its 90% gone now

I shall close - please take care of yourself & don't overdo it!

I shall look forward to September - if you can spare the time I'll bring you down here to meet Fr Gaughan (and see my art work!)

Many Thanks

Yours in Christ
Paul R