



S. JAMES' CATHOLIC RECTORY

26th March 1991.

My Lord and dear Bishop Mulkearns,

de aliquo - Sacerdote

A trifle distressed as I was, I quite forgot to tell how the above was mildly disposed to someone's suggestion, possibly yours, to be seconded by His Bishop to work somewhere on the African mission for a while.

But then, of course, the question arises whether he has the necessary strengths to survive and enough spiritual resources to contribute to the life of the church there.

In proposing a period of leave of say a year, I meant a purposeful not aimless or self accomodating furlough. I wish I could proffer a positive plan for the good and growth of this priest of enormous potential. It grieves me a lot to note his acquired narcissistic disposition caused, no doubt, by past traumas, mistakes and misfortunes. If only we could send him some place where or to someone who - for the kindling of that love that would not let him go. Is there nowhere these days for an extended course of Ignatian exercises ? The Hofbauer Centre offers remedial studies with a strong psychology core and a strong spiritual component. But I have my doubts about its value for our friend.

He should be reminded, my Lord, and I say so with respect to you, of his obligations to pray the divine office, give time to spiritual reading and to study each day, and make regular examens and more frequent confession. He should seek out a spiritual director nearer home. To send him elsewhere before he has attended to these basic duties and necessary aids would prove futile, I suggest.

Our brother priest must, himself, break out of that spiritual malaise and sloth to which he admits. He must show some initiative. All of my pleadings on his behalf have consistently emphasised a concern for his deprivations and for any strategy that might enliven a generous response to God's love for him, and then, the use of his personal giftedness for God's purposes.

With fraternal affection and respectful regard.

James Van Smeedy
Patrick Dineen
 Priest & friend