



J. W. Baker

St. Patrick's Cathedral
Melbourne Vic 3002

CONFIDENTIAL

21st December, 1991.

Rev. Peter CANTWELL, O.F.M.,
La Verna Retreat House
39 Sackville Street
KEW VIC 3101

Dear Peter,

Thank you very much indeed for your confidential letter of 17th December, 1991, in which you kindly convey to me your comments and recommendations following your two assessment sessions with Father Bill Baker, parish priest of Eltham.

I fully realise that the opportunity to take on a new client may not be the most welcome at this madly intense period of the year. I appreciate your readiness to assist a brother priest; it must also give you some consolation to know that we both have great esteem for the contribution you can make.

It comes as no surprise that you have identified burn-out. It has been quite a surprise that the usually effervescent Bill has not been able to spark in normal fashion in recent times.

I appreciate that a break is the normal procedure in such cases. One of the difficulties for a diocesan priest is to identify feasible ways of providing a suitable ambiance. Bill is looking at this.

On the practical side I have indicated to Bill that I would not wish to receive his letter of resignation from his parish while he is at this stage of recuperation. I have always wished to be happy within myself that the person offering such a document should be fully himself. So, I would think in terms of delaying that offer for a while, but it looks like a necessary outcome. I read your first recommendation as offering that alternative. At this stage I would see myself appointing someone to administer the parish. This matter will be discussed at a meeting of the Personnel Advisory Board in early January. I will be pleased to follow through your other recommendations.

At this mad period I have only spoken to Bill on the phone. I did ask him if he had raised with you the allegation sometimes raised with me that there could be a growing chemical dependence. Bill was surprised to hear it. I shall send him a copy of this letter.

Renewed thanks for all the help. May the Christ-child smile your way always; He always seemed closer to Francis and his followers.

J