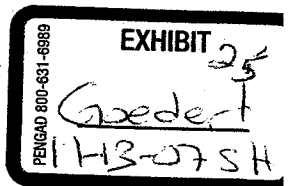


My dear brother Joseph, ^{sent a St. Mark Parish}
^{personal response} CRAIG
5/30/98 308
I came away to the retreat house for a
few days to rest awhile in the Lord - and
try to get the priorities straight again.

I was reading your letter on the Church
(finally!) and thinking of you on the
news lately and all the things going
on, so I decided to write to share some
of my feelings. I know you have many
with whom to consult and share your
feelings with - but I think - sometimes,
you must wonder what the "average guy"
thinks - one who's not so important.

I may as well get the bad news out
first. I was at Quigley South's final
graduation. I know you don't agree, but
I think you made a mistake. I've been
involved with a lot of high schools in
my own little way of vocation work,
but I always felt the Quigley faculty
was a little more in touch and interested
in their students. I also felt confident
in recommending the school to Hispanics.
They had such a nice mixture of ethnic
groups - and did a lot for the future
of the Church and its leadership -



even if not many chose the ministerial priesthood.

What's done is done! I will miss it! Unlike other priests, it has nothing to do with my trust in you. It bothers me when I hear people say "He listens to this one or that one." I don't pretend to understand the politics of the Church - although I'm not naive enough to believe they don't exist.

I feel very thankful that the retreat house is here. I know this property is valuable. I come here and walk and hear the birds and see the animals and breathe deeply of God's life-giving Spirit. I'd be a lot happier than I am if I didn't have this place. It's such a contrast from Division & Western. Everyone here from Bob Ferrigan (we'll miss him) to the sisters to the staff - is so gracious and accomodating. Please try to keep this place (or find me a cabin in the woods, if we must sell.)

I hope you don't mind me writing like this. I've never done this before - It just seemed like you could use an honest, friendly note. All this headache with Churches closing - or joining together.

I never want to be a pastor, especially with all these headaches. And you get all the complaints. People need a larger view of Church, like you present in your letter. The Church isn't a building - no matter how pretty it is. God doesn't mind where we worship Him - ~~and~~ only how - and that we do worship. If we could all think bigger, we wouldn't have so many problems. We all like to think that we think bigger (especially we priests) until the problems strike closer to home (not my church!)

So many poor pastors have so many more worries with the cutbacks (and more time-consuming paperwork).

The bottom line and my main reason for writing this letter is, whether I agree or not, (and that could make life pretty boring - if we agreed all the time) you have my support and my prayers - for a couple of reasons.

First, you're the boss. I take that obedience promise pretty seriously. I still believe in God and His shepherds. My role is a lot smaller.

Second, and even more importantly,
I admire you as a man of action.
You do things that are not easy to do.
You come across as sincere and
honest, worthy of trust. You also
are a man of prayer. You don't know
how refreshing that is to see and ~~feel~~
feel in a leader (and also, to say -
in my opinion - ~~usual~~ unusual)
You still come across so warm and
genuine - so human, so humble.

And so, my brother, with trust, with
respect, with the desire that God keep
you strong in your convictions, I ask
you not to be too discouraged ever. With
all the offices and people and priests -
you have to deal with - you're doing just
fine -
and, from one of your brothers out there,
know that I feel comfortable in putting
my life in your hands.

P.S. you needn't feel
obliged to reply - but from
time to time I might drop
a little note - if you don't
mind!

with love in Christ,

Bob Craig
St. Mark.