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3930 N. 92nd Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222
February 11, 1980

The Most Rev. Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B., D.D.
802 North Jackson Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Your Excellency:

I am writing to you on the advice of Fr. Joseph Hornacek regarding the matter I presented to him last Monday and which has been brought to your attention. I sincerely regret having to write this letter which is in the nature of an apology for my actions which are an embarrassment not only to me but to the priesthood in general.

You have been most kind to me since my return to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and I am most grateful for your compassion and benevolence. When I spoke to you last year regarding the military chaplaincy, you were most cooperative even though that decision may not have been in my best interests. I accepted the assignment to St. Margaret Mary Parish knowing that there were some problems, not only with the pastor, but I was uncertain how I would get along with my classmate, Fr. Tom Wittliff. As the months wore on the problems became more apparent. The lack of communication with Father Vint was certainly a contributing cause to my discontent, but perhaps equally disturbing was the lifestyle of Fr. Tom. With my orientation the frequent presence of teenage boys in the house at night was tantalizing to say the least. It was during that time that I met the boy with whom I became involved. There is much more that I could say about those evening sessions, but I do not wish to incriminate F.T., as the boys refer to him at this time. I feel that he has his own problem to deal with.

I have been in communication with the mother of the boy involved and she is sympathetic and does not intend to press any charges. My concern is for the boy who has not dealt with the situation as I had hoped. Since he has chosen to share the incident with some of his friends, I have been cast in a bad light and the decision that I leave the parish seems to be a prudent one. I would be willing to stay on until June if that were deemed advisable. I have not discussed the matter with Fr. Vint, but will do so as soon as he returns from Florida.

I am grateful for the opportunity to meet with Dr. Dale Olen. I have set up an appointment with him for this coming Thursday. I have also been in dialog with several other priests who have been supportive. I really see the need for a support group among priests of my orientation and have discussed the matter with Fr. Jim Arimond.

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As to my future I see several possibilities. Since last December I have been thinking about a return to California and have been in communication with two Franciscan communities--the Capuchins in La Canada and the Franciscans in Oakland. I have long been attracted to the Franciscan way of life and have been inspired by my patron saint, Francis of Assisi. Periodically I consider joining a religious community. I hope this is not an unrealistic escape.

I have also spoken to Fr. Jerry Lanzer about the Albuquerque Villa and he referred me to Fr. Michael Foley. I spoke to Fr. Foley on the phone as Jerry had mentioned the possibility of an opening in campus ministry at the University of Albuquerque. He thought that perhaps in the event that I chose that option I could be in touch with the Servants of the Paraclete and their program while serving the campus community. I do not feel that I need to go through the six month program with them, but would find their support group beneficial.

The other option I would like to explore is the possibility of campus ministry in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Since 1975 I have applied for a position in that area. In view of my background I believe I am qualified having attended Chaplains' School at Niagara University, two years as Catholic Chaplain at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia and a short time at St. Louis University. I have attended conventions and seminars dealing with Young Adult Ministry in Florida, Ohio, and California so I have kept in touch. I find this type of ministry far more fulfilling than general parish work and for this reason I am questioning my role as a pastor for the 80's in Wisconsin. I understand that there will be an opening at UWM and at Parkside and I have indicated my interest to Fr. Roy Mateljan.

For the present I plan to remain at St. Margaret Mary Parish until the end of this month. I am willing to remain into March, if Fr. Vint wants me to cover for Fr. Dick Miersberger who is going to Florida for a vacation. On the 10th of March I plan to fly to Hawaii with Fr. "Bruno" Henke and Fr. John Richetta to spend some time with Fr. Richard Beck. Since lodging will be provided, my expenses beyond airfare will be minimal. Originally Fr. Dominic Roscioli was going to accompany them but due to the illness of his father I will be going in his place. Right now I need a vacation and time to sort out my feelings.

I will be in need of a residence when I return from Hawaii. Several possibilities have been suggested. I had opted for an east side parish--where I could be close to the University to spend some time at the Newman Center with Fr. Larry Dulek. I have known Larry for some time and have also discussed my interest in campus ministry with him. Holy Rosary Parish has been suggested as a possibility. I have also been in touch with Fr. Ron Crewe at

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St. Hedwig's. A residency there also seems a possibility, particularly during the time he plans to be in Rome. He indicated that he will be away over Holy Week and Easter and has made a request for someone to cover for him. If he has not made other arrangements I would be willing to supply for him at that time.

I would also feel comfortable living with Fr. Jim Arimond and Fr. Richard Liska at Sacred Heart. I feel that Jim could be a real support to me. An added reason would be that I would be close to St. Francis School of Pastoral Ministry and the Albert Cardinal Meyer Institute. If I have the time I would like to take advantage of the programs that are offered there.

As a last resort I would be grateful if you could put me in touch with a benevolent bishop in California where I might serve. Periodically I get nostalgic for California--Wisconsin winters last too long--though this has been a mild one. I place this request in last place because while my mother is alive I believe I should remain close to her. As you may recall she spoke to you at the Naim Conference luncheon here at St. Margaret Mary's. She and I were most edified by your homily and your references to your mother. She was widowed when I was five years old and is a great lady. She has been the organist at St. Mary's, Woodland since 1930. The parish will honor her this April. I do not wish to dishonor her any more so than I have already done. She is aware of my orientation.

This has been a long letter. I did not wish to bore you. I hope you can sort it out and that we can come to a decision which is best for me and for the Archdiocese. I do not enjoy being a "problem priest". I am grateful for a "benevolent bishop".

If you would like to meet with me at your convenience I would be happy to do so. I guess this is the "Bottom Line".

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Franklyn W. Becker

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