



St. Dominic's Rectory

1504 FRANKFORD AVENUE
PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19130

June 13, 1988

Rev. Joseph A. Pepe, J.C.D.
Vice Chancellor
222 N. 17th Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103

Dear Father Pepe:

On Monday Morning, June 13th, at 8:30 A.M., Msgr. Joseph G. Sikora said he wanted to talk to me and asked me to come up to his room. Once inside, he said: "Since you have been in this Parish you have done nothing, and I am writing to the Chancery to have you changed immediately!"...I was shocked, disgusted, and positively disheartened with such a remark. In Eighteen (18) years of Priesthood I have never heard anything but the opposite. Take a random sampling of the Parishioners from any parish where I have been stationed to prove my point: St. Bernadette, Immaculate Heart, St. Philip Neri, St. Agatha-St. James, St. Ignatius, or even St. Dominic. It upsets me very much to be forced to make the following request (demand):

"I would like to be changed from St. Dominic's Parish
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE."

Why? Because I want to be really ready to begin work in the new parish in the Fall and a change of appointment in late August or early September is really unfair to the parishioners because too much time is wasted by the priest learning names of streets, organizations, and persons active in the parish, etc. This can be done far more effectively during the Summer months.

Just a word about my activities here in the Parish - call it a rebuttle to Msgr. Sikora's very uninformed statement that I have done nothing in the Parish. I arrived here in September, 1986 and over the past twenty (20) months I have celebrated 64 Weddings in Church, and 4 in alternate settings, after a Dispensation from the Form, with either a Rabbi or Minister; I did the prep and paperwork for 12 other couples who were married by visiting priests - a total of 80 Weddings to date. I have Baptized 111 children and assisted in 5 others for visiting priests. I gave weekly instructions to 16 adults who converted to Catholicism in 1987. I have had 37 sick calls of the emergency type which included Viaticum and the Sacrament of the Sick; I visit 65 Shut-ins each month and bring them Communion; On the average I celebrate about 1 funeral per week.

Among the parish activities and organizations which are my responsibility I am the Spiritual Director of the Grammar and High School C.Y.O. which is quite active in all five (5) phases. I work with the Cub Scouts and the Boy Scouts. I am the Priest in charge of the Grammar School (1,000 Children in 32 classrooms with a large lay and religious faculty) I have taught in the school on a weekly basis until scheduling of funerals and daily Masses made it too difficult for the teachers. I am responsible for Riverview.

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In terms of the future: From last years "Block Collection" I have recruited 17 adults including 2 whole families who want to take instructions. (R.C.I.A. Program) and also I unearthed five (5) couples who wish to have their marriages Convalidated. I visit parishioners when they are in our local hospitals.

So much for the Parish which really doesn't even come close to the work I do with and for the H'Mong people on a regular basis and have been doing since 1978, even though I have never received an "official" Chancery appointment to do so. I celebrate Mass every Sunday -52 weeks a year in the H'Mong language - even from so-called vacations I return for Mass. My trip to the Holy Land this year was the first time I missed celebrating the Mass for them on a Sunday in over five (5) years. I rarely take a full day off and I sleep at the rectory every night. I really do not have time for overnights. My so-called vacations over the past several years have been spent helping H'Mong families relocate in Ohio, Wisconsin, & Minneapolis. Any expense incurred in my work - travel expenses, furnishing necessary instructional and liturgical materials, fees for tutors and interpreters, workshops, conferences and conventions, etc. - has always been personal. I receive no federal, state, city or church funds to help me in my work.

I'm tired of blowing my own horn - I don't like to brag but the present situation has forced me to so you'll be aware that I do "something" in the parish. I always wear clerical garb because I'm no ashamed, in fact, I'm proud of where I go, who I visit, and the work I do.

For St. Dominic's Parish, I feel two (2) Assistant Pastors are adequate. I do not need to be replaced. Fr. McCloskey is like a full-time Curate. He takes care of the two (2) senior citizens groups (over 600 people) and the Charismatic Prayer Group. He celebrates daily and Sunday Mass and does plenty else besides. - 5 Priests are not needed here.

What about me?.....I have never asked for anything and do not intend to. As you know I prefer Parish work and would like to be closer to home (Our Mother of Good Counsel in Bryn Mawr) since my mother is in failing health. I enjoy working with the Refugees but perhaps the time has come for someone else to take over. Only one thing - Please change my appointment from St. Dominic's Parish AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Sincerely Yours,


Fr. Edward V. Avery

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