



Diocesan Pastoral Center

Diocese of San Bernardino

January 20, 1987

Reverend Peadar Brennan
St. Francis of Assisi
Post Office Box 1503
La Quinta, California 92253

Dear Father Brennan:

I sincerely wish to thank you and your parishioners for the very cordial and warm welcome that I received on the occasion of my recent Parish Visitation. I am also most grateful for the lovely statue of St. Francis of Assisi that was presented to me at the close of the meeting.

Since my last Parish Visitation, when Mass was being held at Simon Motors, many good things have taken place at St. Francis. I wish to emphasize my satisfaction with what has taken place since those early days, but also wish to stress the areas where I feel there is still a need for further growth.

One area that must be given immediate attention is the development of a Parish Council, which should begin with the formation of a steering committee. The parish should be educated as to the nature and purpose of a Parish Council before the actual formation of the council can take place. The steering committee could serve as a temporary council until the actual Parish Council is established. However the formation of the Parish Council must be given top priority.

The second advisory body that is required in a parish is the Finance Committee. Although you already have a building committee, which partially serves as the finance committee, I recommend that this one body also be responsible for all finances. I also recommend that the parish audit be used to prepare a financial

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statement and an annual financial report be given to the parish, so that parishioners will know what monies are coming in and what is being spent. This is most important since there is a large parish debt and this is one way to encourage people to take the responsibility of paying off the debt.

I commend you for the scripture program that you are presently offering, however, there is a need for ongoing education and, in particular, for future parish leaders. I would like to see candidates in the Straling Leadership Institute or the Escuela de Ministerios. I also note that many of the CCD teachers do not have their certification nor are they working toward it. I am certain that someone in the valley with a Master's Certificate could be found who could assist in training your teachers.

After reviewing the Self-Study Guide evaluation, as well as listening to people at the public meeting, and those I met outside the church after the Masses, there seems to be a need for different parish services and programs, such as greater Youth Ministry, Ministry to the divorced, widowed, single people, and programs for families, etc. There seems to be a readiness on the part of the parishioners to become involved and active. One of the tasks of the Parish Council would be to determine which programs and ministries need to be initiated at this time.

There is also a need for some type of Renewal Program in the parish. I was pleased to note that you have a RCIA and that you have had fourteen people go through the program this past year. I was surprised, however, that there have not been more people in the parish to take advantage of Marriage Encounter, Cursillo, Charismatic Renewal or some of the other movements as these can be great renewal program for your parishioners.

I feel that the Parish Finance Council should discuss the matter of the rectory to see what arrangements can be made, to either purchase the building that you and your sister own, or find another facility that could be

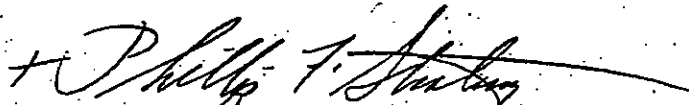
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used as a rectory. At least, there should be some definite plan and cost determination for this matter.

As I mentioned to you and at the general meeting, there must be a freeze on all future development and spending, other than the essentials needed to operate the parish. Two exceptions that we noted, one was the side altar which would complete that phase of the church construction, and to place the plaques on the back wall in honor of the donors. However, the sliding panels that were planned, or any other projects, should be suspended until the parish debt is reduced. A great step forward would be to sell the property on Washington, if we could get \$450,000.00 for it, this would still leave a debt of approximately \$550,000.00. I was pleased to hear that you are planning another pledge drive to obtain funds, as well as making an effort to encourage the "Snow Birds" who occasionally attend one or two Sundays to give a donation to the parish. As I suggested, perhaps one of the members of the parish could give a little pitch for support before the Masses.

Again, I wish to commend you and your people for the progress that has been made at St. Francis Parish. Hopefully, the above will give some direction toward growth, so the parish will continue to flourish and prosper. With thanks to you and your people and asking God's continued blessings and graces upon you and your ministry, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Phillip F. Straling
Bishop, Diocese of San Bernardino

PFS/jm