

in Pro Christo Sacerdotie

Pboe Jemez Springs Number 5

Via Coeli

MONASTERY OF THE SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE

OFFICE OF THE TREASURER GENERAL

Jemez Springs, New Mexico

December 29, 1966

THIS IS THE VIA COELI PROGRAM to date and nearing, we believe, completion - excepting in some of its important material aspects, e.g., the finishing and activating of the New Infirmary Building.

The PROGRAM is based upon and adheres without exception to Father Gerald's original methods but simply implemented with scientific helps in accord with the Mandate of the S. Cong. of Religions as given to Fr. D. Temple. This letter has called for more careful structuring of the Program to make it more effective. But, and this we stress, the Guest Father is still and will always be treated with complete deference to the dignity of his priesthood and fullest respect for his human person and the sacredness of his own conscience.

Absolutely no individual is forced to accept any part of the Program, spiritual, physical or scientific. He is perfectly free to refuse to comply. This, however, is made very clear to him: namely, if he cannot or will not bring himself freely to comply with at least a substantial part of our Program, we shall have to recommend that he seek help elsewhere than at Via Coeli. In other words, we do not feel justified in accepting the requested fee from a Bishop or Superior, if the Father is not going to avail himself of the helps our Program offers him. There is not, and never has been, any forcing of a Guest Father to submit, since it has always been the feeling and actual policy, that only with the good will and free consent of the Guest can our rebuilding of his priestly life become effective.

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Four distinct units are in operation here in the Canyon; at present, with two other Houses - one at Albuquerque and one at Santa Fe - forming now an integral part of the New Mexico or, better known, Via Coeli operation. Each unit has a quite distinct purpose or purposes of its own.

The original "Mountain Inn", where Father Gerald began his monumental effort just 20 years ago, is still referred to more specifically as "Via Coeli". The other subsidiary Houses have their individual names, as: Regina Mundi, Lourdes Retreat, Voluntas Dei. This facilitates reference to the various units. The Albuquerque House is called Pius XII Villa and the one in Santa Fe is known as Villa Madre de Dios.

Via Coeli (Main House) still houses the administrative offices. The Father Servant here is Superior of all the New Mexico Houses, each subsidiary House have its Local Superior and an Assistant, either one or both a professed Paraclete. Here at Via Coeli functions also, besides the Fr. Servant and His Assistant, the Treasurer, the Secretary in charge of the files and important correspondence, and an Assistant in charge of Maintenance. Also, one of our four special Paraclete Counsellors resides here at the Main House. Besides the Paraclete Staff of this Via Coeli, Main House, there are some twenty Guest priests in residence, most of whom are those whose cases are just being initiated at Rome, or with their Ordinary or Religious Superior, also such as call for more immediate or regular attention. Other few have been here in residence for some time and offer very valuable services, as hearing occasional confessions, meeting the many visitors and showing them around, etc. But everyone, Superior, Staff and all join in performing, not only the needed duties and chores, but especially the all-important Spiritual Program of the day. This Program does not differ in the slightest from Father Gerald's original daily regime: Rising at 6, Morning Prayers with short Meditation at 6:30, private Masses, then Breakfast at 7:35.

Each day a High Mass at 9 a.m. (either a full Solemn or Concelebrated Mass on Sundays and Feast Days), followed immediately by daily Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, to continue through the Day, always with one or more of the Fathers (Guests or Paracletes) in voluntary Adoration, until Reposition, with Rosary and prayers and Benediction at 5:30. There are always evening prayers at 7:30: Litany of the Sacred Heart, a brief period of spiritual reading and Compline in common. A priestly guard of honor continues in Adoration around the clock in this one large House of Via Coeli. Over and above all this, private visits to the Blessed Sacrament and Divine Office read in the Eucharistic Presence are counselled.

One can easily imagine the many useful services our Guest Fathers can volunteer to perform for the mutual helpfulness of their fellow-priests and to their own great benefit, such as the care of sacrifices and the many altars required, the daily mails, the cooking which three or four will share, the little store for smaller needs, the library, the gardening, etc., etc. All this besides the numerous forms of organized intellectual, physical, recreational and similar types of therapy.

Now, to consider the distinct purposes and activities of the other units - more or less in the progressive order in which each one enters into the Program, though their purposes obviously overlap:

At our beautiful Lourdes Retreat, up the Canyon a mile or so, there is a nucleus of some 8 or 10 Guest Fathers with their Paraclete Servants, who have indicated or humbly admitted their inability to function in the regular ministry outside, or have simply expressed their preference for spending their remaining years in dedication to prayer and some useful service, in order to bring more abundant blessings on the Paraclete Apostolate. This is shaping, we very earnestly hope, in the direction of what Father Gerald has long proposed as something the Holy Ghost definitely wants for the furtherance of our care for priests - as he calls it: "a mitigated monastic regime". This, we hope, is in the making at Lourdes Retreat.

Dr. Salazar (our invaluable attending Psychologist, who has stated emphatically more than once, that he would not even consider working with us Paraclete Fathers had we not the "basic spiritual program we have) is delighted with this positive, constructive and practical program of "spiritual fulfillment of their priesthood". At Lourdes, as an alternative to going back to "active duty" for those who cannot or prefer not, the spiritual program is identical with that at Via Coeli, except that the hours of Exposition are limited due to the smaller number of Fathers.

The quiet, happy nucleus at Lourdes Retreat provides admirable environment into which our newly-arrived Guests are introduced for a week or ten days of orientation, rest and reassurance, or for "drying out", if needed, under the supervision of our doctor and nursing Sisters. The only trouble is, the newcomer invariably does not want to leave the place. However, after our Registered Nurses have checked their condition and medication and our Staff Doctors have made initial observations we have to invite them to go in to one of our excellent Catholic Hospitals for a complete physical and neurological checkup, or, if they object, to move to one of our other units.

We have found a very great advantage in the above mentioned checkup at the hospital, especially as a means of ruling out even minor and sometimes serious contributing and aggravating factors of the main problem. It occasionally results in relieving the problem almost entirely. Of course, the approval of the priest's Ordinary or Superior is first asked. We find them most consistently in fullest agreement.

We ask the Doctors who perform these checkups to make recommendations to us as to the possible need or advisability of psychological or psychiatric tests later. But only after the priest has returned from the Hospital do we propose consultation with our Staff Psychologist or a Psychiatrist of their own choice, if the above "recommendation" advises it. Again, there is absolutely no forcing or undue urging.

Even our Staff Psychologist is opposed to any such pressure, SERVANTS -6786
the individual conscience is fully respected. Fortunately,

a very exceptional selections of excellent doctors and especially psychiatrists in Albuquerque, should the Father wish to follow recommendations.

A short distance from Lourdes Retreat is our provisional infirmary, called "Voluntas Dei". The Paraclete Father in residence there has had exceptional training in the various standard forms of therapy. While this Paraclete Father supervises the general care of the priests in the Infirmary, our invaluable Handmaids of the Precious Blood, several of them registered nurses and technicians are in residence as well and leave nothing to be desired in the way of nursing, dieting and all-around care of the sick, together with the truly dedicated Paraclete Assistant who gives personal help and attention as needed. The Infirmary, though Temporary, is a pleasant, congenial and efficient little unit. It is from the dispensary here that the nurses provide what attention the new arrivals may require at nearby Lourdes Retreat during their initial stay there.

The Father Servant in charge of the Infirmary, as can easily be seen, is quite free to make all hospital arrangements, and outpatient appointments, involving trips to the City, etc. At the same time, he is able to organize, supervise and perhaps conduct the numerous types of therapy: there are the evening card parties or occasional bingo, a weekly movie, the two recreation halls newly equipped with pool tables, pingpong and card tables, dart boards, etc. A local gym is available twice a week. In suitable weather soft-ball games with a local team is a favorite; finally there is the attractive 9-hole pitch and putt golf course. Of course, there are the perennial hikes into the mountains, picnics and leisurely hours of fishing. Through the winter months, mainly, seminars on Conciliar and other activities are well attended, as well as Spanish, French and other language courses.. Hand crafts are privately sponsored. These activities center more around Regina Mundi, where some fifteen of the more fully rehabilitated are resident and will soon be moving out of the Canyon to Albuquerque or Santa Fe or back to duty.

But, mostly, the Father-Therapist is concerned with the different group therapies. There is the rather frequent general dialogue meeting of all interested in attending: Guest-Fathers, Paracletes, doctors, everybody. Sometimes a special area of general interest is opened for discussion; at other times the field is wide open for comments, complaints, suggestions - what have you. These we find most helpful in more ways than one would imagine - it especially relieves tension and misunderstanding.

There are the more specialized groups, known as RECOVERY, INC., and the well known AA Group. The general methods of AA are better known and will be considered later. But a comparison here will help to understand the nature of Recovery, Inc., which originated with the late Dr. Lowe, of Illinois Univ. Medical School. His is a method of mutual helpfulness arrived at through exchange of helpful experiences and experiments within a closed group of persons who suffer from similar emotional, nervous or even slight mental disorders. There are plans to follow in the discussions; but the emphasis is on openness and mutual helpfulness in telling of their failures and successes. This group which meets weekly has been found most helpful for several and is very highly recommended by our Staff Psychologist for his own patients and in general for others.

Only one or two of the Bishops at our Washington meeting were aware of Recovery, Inc., when Bishop Leven spoke very highly of it as a part of Via Coeli's program. However, all were fully cognizant of AA, and almost to a man, not only endorsed our initial efforts to incorporate it in our Via Coeli program, as Father Gerald approved we do repeatedly within the past couple of years, but they practically demanded that we bring the AA program to its fullest possible effectiveness at Via Coeli, insisting upon attendance at at least two weekly meetings with lay people in the city. They asserted that these are good people and our priests in order to profit by AA after leaving us must meet with such people for the most part. Fully convinced by Father Gerald's own words to me that he now approved of AA at Via Coeli, I readily promised the Bishops it would be done. And I assured them I felt no restrictions in the matter, so long as it was kept under Paraclete supervision. The Bishops were g SERVANTS -6788

relieved and gratified. Bishop McCarty seemed particularly proud in stating that the Fathers go out from Sturgis twice every week to AA meeting some "30 miles away".

On our return from Washington our Paraclete Staff here at Via Coeli held at least three intensive discussion meetings on how to bring our AA program to the fullest possible effectiveness. We had before our minds a confirmed alcoholic who had been here at Via Coeli at least ten years and growing continually worse, until in desperation some months before these meetings we had sent him to Turquoise Lodge (a State Alcoholic Commission drying out and indoctrination center in Albuquerque) for their two-weeks intensive treatment. He came back convinced of AA, attends now a weekly meeting regularly, and has not taken a drink these past 3 or 4 months, during which time he took a vacation trip of three weeks.

We decided to approach the State Commission Authorities at Turquoise Lodge, which is in the near vicinity of our Pius XIII Villa. We did so - the Father Paraclete we have in charge of AA and excellently informed on the matter, another recovered AA and myself. The Officials were most kind and informative. We asked their advise as to setting up a comparable unit under our own supervision at Pius XIII Villa. They thought it an excellent idea and said they would help us in every way possible, even letting a few representing us attend their lectures and meetings until we caught on and could operate independently of them. Dr. Salazar was on the Board that originally instituted the New Mexico Commission and so, is in fine relations with them.

The authorities readily stated that we would have much more to offer toward a successful AA plan than they have. Their budget limits their "course" to two weeks when often more time is needed for individuals. They cannot provide for complete physical checkup as we do. They have no facility for psychological or psychiatric treatment, if needed. And, besides, they know nothing about the greatest help of all, namely, our spiritual program. This seemed a tremendous opportunity which no one in the country can begin to duplicate. SERVANTS -6789

At a meeting with Archbishop Davis, attended by Dr. Salazar, Father Mulcahy and myself, we discussed and agreed upon these two points of our program for the future:

(1) Dr. Salazar wishes to take those Fathers under his charge for psychological difficulties and after a few weeks of counselling here at Via Coeli he will conduct them through a structured, graded program at Pius XIII Villa for a period of six weeks or more. These priests will be given the opportunity to do week end supply work also. The Archbishop will then instruct one of his reliable pastors to take the Father into residence at his parish for from two to six months of full parish duties. Then we feel that we can recommend the priest to his Ordinary or Superior with much more assurance, and also recommend a more successful kind of treatment for the first year or so.

(2) There was also complete agreement for the establishment of the AA program at Pius XIII Villa.

We have just completed a two week intensive treatment course for two of our Fathers at Pius XIII Villa with fine cooperation from the Turquoise Lodge people as well as from Fr. Mulcahy, the Superior, and Fr. Harry Kenny, s.P., who is in immediate charge of the program. The two Fathers are now back at Via Coeli for the continuance of the educational program which will last approximately 90 days. They will attend an AA meeting on Mondays at Via Coeli, a Wednesday evening closed meeting in Albuquerque and another closed meeting on Friday at Turquoise Lodge. At present ten priests are active in AA.

Yet another phase of our Paraclete activity in the Canyon is one of paramount importance to the smooth operation that has characterized our work for the past year or more. This is the custom of gathering at the Via Coeli office every evening after supper of the heads of the different Houses plus those who are heads of departments such as the Treasurer, the Secret

have a general get together of all the Paracletes. At these meetings the events of the day and the plans ahead are discussed and evaluated in the light of personal knowledge and past experience and the like. These meetings we regard as essential to a smooth, effective dealing with the Guests and the best business operation of the Houses.

Finally, the prayer-life of the Community is the true source of the effectiveness of every human effort put forth in the Program.

"THE WORK OF THE PARACLETES IS THE REBUILDING OF PRIESTLY LIVES."
(Fr. Gerald, s.p.)

THE PARACLETE PROGRAM AT VIA COELI - aims at the WHOLE man and ALL his needs.

SPIRITUAL

Community living
morning prayer
evening prayer
meditation
Mass
holy hour
rosary
benediction
spiritual reading

MENTAL

library
music library
theology seminars
Language classes

EMOTIONAL

A.A. program
Recovery Group
Dr. John Salazar
Albuquerque M.D.s
Jacobson
Hovda
McCullough
McCarthy

PHYSICAL MEANS

Physical check up after arrival
services of Dr. Rowe
SERVICES of the Handmaids
clinic
dispensary } infirmary daily

SPORTS

golf
softball
basketball
swimming
biking
fishing

REC CENTER

ping pong
pool
darts
cards
bingo
WORK
ROLES OF
SERVICE
WITHIN THE
COMMUNITY:
cooking,
sacristy,
lawn,
dishes etc.

THIS IS THE EXISTING PROGRAM AT VIA COELI. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING (Wedn., Jan. 25, 1967) IS TO INSURE THE GREATEST POSSIBLE CONTINUITY IN THE TREATMENT OF GUEST-PRIESTS PASSING FROM VIA COELI MONASTERY TO VILLA PIUS XII, ALBQ.