

September 27, 1948

Dear Father:

Your request for help poses a very serious problem for me. Naturally there is no priest whom I would more like to help than yourself. But the present situation runs up thus. First of all I am crowded beyond the doors. Every room in the house, patios, and the cabins are now occupied except one patio room; and I have three priests enroute to Via Coeli whom I must fit in somehow.

Secondly, while you were here you were on active duty, and I think you know how completely our good, simple, lovable parishoners took you to their hearts. They would never understand why Father was not coming down to the church to say Mass for them, and the boys and girls would be flocking to the monastery looking for you. It would never do in view of your problem to have you here, and yet not on active duty. Besides, as their pastor, I have the solemn duty to guard them which cannot be measured in terms of their numbers, but rather in view of what we know to be true, that one soul is valued by Divine Love as precious as the Heart's Blood of the Savior.

Thirdly, in view of the present development, even though you have not stated ( and I think wisely so ) in your letter just what your problem is that has brought you into this most embarrassing position, I think I can tell you with simplicity that it was with fear and trembling of such a development that I observed, while you were here, your intimacies with youth, and as I then confided to a saintly spiritual counsellor, my conclusion was that you were either an angel of innocence or a sinful priest. I always wanted to believe the former, for it is not pleasant mentally to think of anyone, not to say a priest who was and is a brother to one, as having so deeply forgotten the apostolate of edification that is identical with the life of a good priest.

Most of the padres here, as you know, are here by reason of alcohol. It is now a fixed policy of our house to refuse problem cases that involve abnormalities of sex. I do not dare make an exception; and the more so because it will be quite obvious to the house that alcohol is not your problem.

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In view of those three reasons I must, dear father  
refuse with real regret your request to come to Via Coelli.  
Somehow I hope in the not too distant future to have an island  
or mountain refuge far apart from civilization where, under the  
direction of a couple of saintly priests, the particular problem  
I envisage you as facing can be dealt with in a manner which is  
not possible here in a house of this nature. When that day comes  
I shall be only too glad to receive you. Who knows but that  
I shall have made a heroic comeback, you would be of particular value  
in dealing with this terrible type of moral disease. For surely  
it is a terrible disease for the priestly hands that have had the  
unique privilege of holding one's Incarnate God should turn from  
this life-giving, all holy embracement to satisfactions that are  
considered aberrations of right reason, even by purely rational-  
istic observers.

Shall I tell you, my brother, why all this has come upon you?  
I will. It is not lust but pride that is the fundamental root  
of your difficulty. Because you were a proud priest, God permit-  
ted you to learn the bitter way the truth of your own nothingness.  
Having learned this lesson out of the abyss of your humiliation,  
lift those hands that, for weal or for woe, will always be the  
hands of a priest, and ask of Divine Mercy the pardon that the  
Blood of Christ and the tears of our Blessed Mother assure us  
is always waiting for us.

I want to receive you, but at the present moment  
I can't. Besides I am quite certain that Archbishop Byrne, who  
would have to be told of your case, would veto your presence in  
this little parish where everyone loved and admired you and could  
never understand why Father Gerald could not let you function as  
a kindly, gracious shepherd of the Kingdom of God. I am sending  
a copy of this letter as a confidential rescript to Father General.  
I shall not cease to pray for you, and all I can suggest for you  
would be to go somewhere you will not be known, and there achieve  
By God's grace your salvation, in the humble honest labor of a  
man of the world. While eternity impinges upon us all, the time  
for you is shorter than you deem it to be. While there is time  
achieve your salvation. That is actually the big job of a priest  
who has once fallen under the spell of abnormal relations.

Sorrowfully in Spiritu Christi,

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