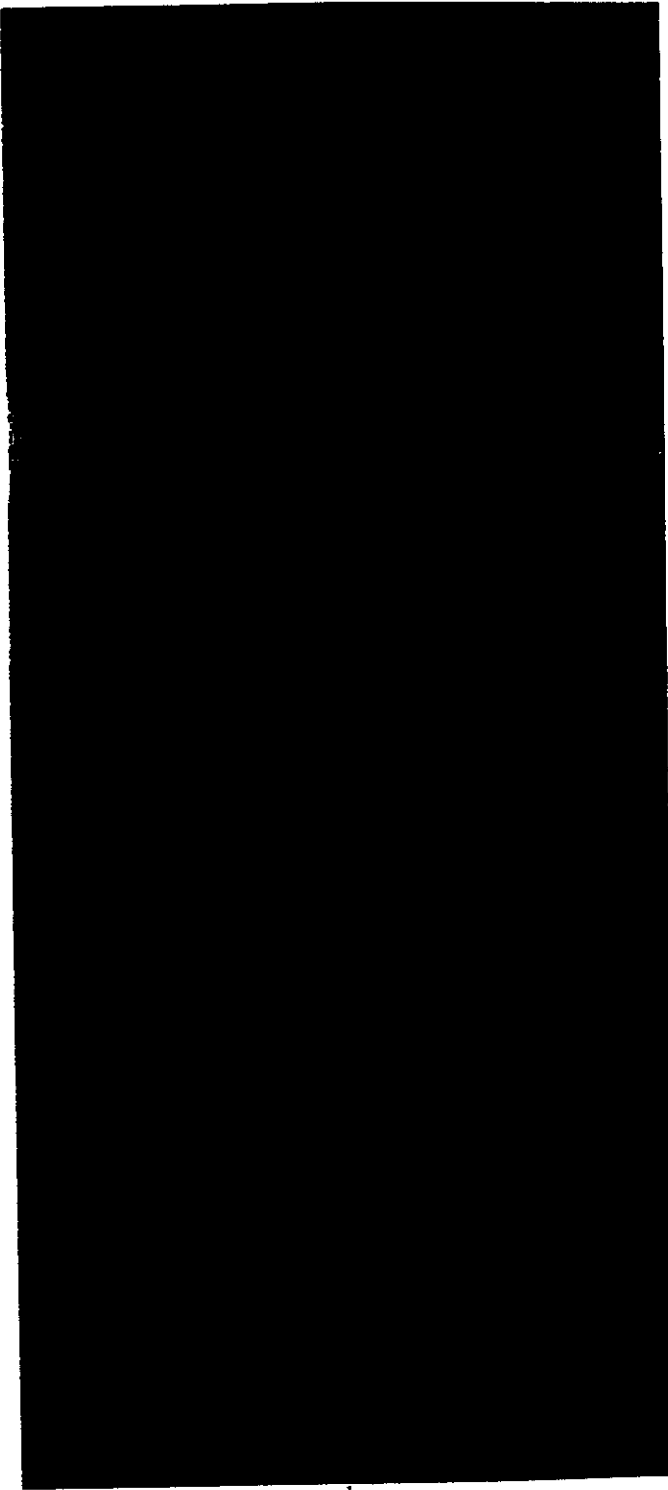


# House of Affirmation

International Humanistic Center  
for Groups and Religion

1977-1978 7.100 100.000



*Everyone agrees there is a crisis in the priesthood and in the religious life. Not everyone, however, realizes that this crisis, more frequently than not, is an expression of emotional underdevelopment or emotional illness — severe in some and moderate to slight in others. It is more than a state of present or future shock, yet not a hopeless one. However, not everyone knows how to give an affirming hand — but we do!*

It is our purpose at the *House of Affirmation* to provide an opportunity for self-discovery, emotional growth and cure through the contemporary approaches of psychology/psychiatry in dialogue with recent theological developments. Such is realized through a three-fold program: Service, Education and Research. It is our hope at the *House of Affirmation* to help the individual to become a fully human, consistently free person within the context of the ecclesial calling and in relationship to society.

At the *House of Affirmation* we are not satisfied merely with restoring people to their former level of usefulness in the community. We want to go beyond utilitarian criteria of adjustment and assist the persons who come to us in attaining a level of happiness commensurate with their potentials.

The basic foundation of our therapeutic community, *Affirmation*, if it is to be authentic, is much more than speaking a word of encouragement or the giving of a compliment. It focuses on the very being of the other, on his goodness as a unique human being. It presupposes openness, confident expectation and uninterrupted attention to everything that happens in the other, to all he is not able to express and to all the anticipated good within him, even though the other himself is still unsuspecting of that future good.



House of Affirmation Consulting Center  
Worcester, Massachusetts

#### A BEGINNING

The *House of Affirmation* is a direct outgrowth, broadened in scope, of the Consulting Center for Clergy and Religious of the Diocese of Worcester, established as a result of a request by the Senate of Religious to Auxiliary Bishop, Most Reverend Timothy J. Harrington. It was initiated in 1970 under the sponsorship of the Bishop of Worcester, Most Reverend Bernard J. Flanagan, D.D., and founded by Sister Anna Polcino, S.C.M.M., M.D., psychiatrist. Through her tireless efforts and professional skills, and those of Reverend Thomas A. Kane, Ph.D., psychologist, the new project received an immediate and enthusiastic response from clergy and religious, not only from the Diocese of Worcester but throughout the United States.

Sister Anna Polcino, M.D., and Reverend Thomas A. Kane, Ph.D., became familiar with the scientific writings of Conrad W. Baars, M.D. and Anna A. Terruwe, M.D., and shared the authors' disenchantment with certain facets of psychoanalytic philosophy and therapy. In April 1972, Doctor Baars was invited

to lecture in Worcester at the Consulting Center's "Second Annual Psychotheological Institute for Priests and Religious." On this occasion, Sister Polcino, Father Kane, and Doctor Baars agreed on the existing need for a total residential therapeutic and educational program for religious professionals. Thus began the expanded *House of Affirmation* concept.

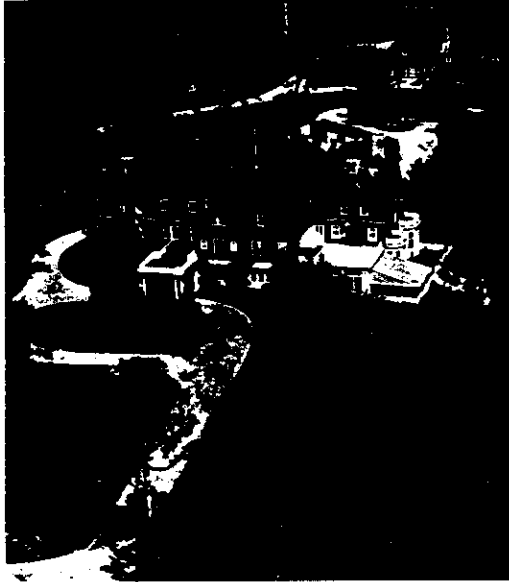
#### "A SPECIAL GIFT TO THE CHURCH"

Pope Paul VI

The *House of Affirmation* utilizes the philosophical concepts and the result-proven clinical applications of two internationally esteemed psychiatrists, Anna A. Terruwe, M.D., and Conrad W. Baars, M.D., described in their penetrating study, *Loving and Curing the Neurotic*, Arlington House, New Rochelle, N. Y. © 1972. In 1971 Doctors Terruwe and Baars were both consultants on the problems of the priesthood at the Vatican Synod of Bishops.

They presented to Synod members the results of their clinical observations from a combined total experience of forty years' practice involving 15,000 patients in North America and Europe. Their presentation to the Bishops addressed itself to the causes, treatment, and prevention of emotional immaturity and illness in priests and religious. His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, has called their work "a special gift to the Church."

It is this "special gift" the *House of Affirmation* offers directly to clergy and religious and indirectly to all the People of God. Doctor Baars will be associated with Sister Anna Polcino, M.D., psychiatrist, and Reverend Thomas A. Kane, Ph.D., psychologist, and a supporting staff together with an Advisory Board chosen for excellence and suitability from the varied professions, disciplines, and skills needed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the *House of Affirmation*.



*House of Affirmation Residential Center  
Whitinsville, Massachusetts*

#### **RESIDENTIAL HOUSE NEEDED**

Having incorporated and definitely planned for the opening of the *House of Affirmation*, a location was sought for the residential center. At this time, the Lasell Ecumenical Retreat House in Whitinsville, Massachusetts was brought to the attention of the founding staff. This building and property are ideal for our therapeutic community. A many-gabled home is surrounded by eleven acres of gardens, lawns and wooded areas. Located in Central Massachusetts, it is easily accessible by all means of transportation. The spaciousness of the grounds provide an atmosphere of peace, physical rest and spiritual refreshment.

The Right Reverend Alexander D. Stewart, Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, owner of the Lasell Ecumenical



Retreat House encouraged the founders of the *House of Affirmation* by accepting a position on the Advisory Board and offering the Lasell property and building at a minimal cost. Bishop Stewart stated that he saw the need for such a Christian enterprise, and he would hope that a minimal purchase price would help to bring about the immediate realization of this project.

Thus, the *House of Affirmation* now has a location for its unique apostolate for clergy and religious. Not only will the staff respond to residential needs but other services will include out-patient psychotherapy, career development, group-process communication labs, candidate assessment for priesthood and religious life, and facilities where professionals in theology, psychiatry and philosophy can meet to dialogue.

## RESIDENTIAL PROFESSIONAL STAFF



Rev. Thomas A. Kane, M.A., S.T.M., Ph.D., D.P.S.,  
Executive Director — House of Affirmation

*Priest of the Diocese of Worcester. Undergraduate studies at St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas. Graduate studies, National University of Mexico, Rutgers University, St. Bonaventure University. Post-graduate studies at Boston University and University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, England. Teaching Brother for eight years in Texas and New York City. Parish Priest, Diocese of Worcester. Clinical residency, New York State Division of Youth; interned in Psychology at Boston State Hospital. Co-director, Consulting Center for Clergy and Religious, Diocese of Worcester. Consultant Psychologist to The Ledges School for the Emotionally Disturbed. Psychological consultant to Congregations of Men and Women in North and South America, United Kingdom and Europe. Guest Lecturer to academic and medical professions in Tel Aviv, Israel and Bombay, India. Consultant to several Protestant Synods and Dioceses. Frequent contributor to educational, theological and psychological journals. Author of "Existential Influences in the Psychopathology of the Religious Professional." Member of APA, AAMD and several other professional organizations. Wall Street Journal Fellow 1964. Awarded the 1972 Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Young Leader Award. Listed in Who's Who in the East 1973 and British Academy of Psychological Sciences 1973.*



Sister Anna Polcino, S.C.M.M., M.D.,  
Psychiatric Director of Therapy —  
House of Affirmation

*Medical Mission Sisters of Philadelphia. Graduate of Immaculata College, Pa. Graduate studies, M.D. degree, Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. Surgical residency at Hahnemann Medical College of Pennsylvania. Nine years missionary surgeon and Medical Director at Holy Family Hospital in West Pakistan and Bangladesh. Psychiatric residency at Worcester State Hospital. Founder and former director of the Mental Health Clinic of the Green Island Neighborhood Opportunity Center in Worcester. Former Psychiatric Director of the Valley Adult Counseling Center in the Blackstone Valley. Founder and present Psychiatric Director of the Consulting Center for Clergy and Religious, Diocese of Worcester. Presently on the staff of St. Vincent Hospital and Worcester State Hospital. At present, Instructor in Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and Tufts University Medical Schools. Member of the A.P.A., A.M.A., and other professional organizations. Frequent contributor to multi disciplinary periodicals. Psychiatric Consultant to a number of Religious Congregations in North America, Europe and Asia. Recipient of AMITA award 1965 for Outstanding Missionary. Listed in Who's Who of American Women 1972.*



Conrad W. Baars, M.D.,  
Psychiatric Director of Education and Research —  
House of Affirmation

Medical Degree, Amsterdam University Medical School. Post-graduate work, Oxford, England and Delft University, Netherlands. In prison for two years in Buchenwald for aiding downed Allied fliers. Received Croix du Combattant de l'Europe. Captain, U. S. Army Medical Corps during Korean conflict. Director of Psychiatric Education, Rochester State Hospital before entering private practice in Rochester, Minn. in 1960. Psychotherapist. Guest House Sanatorium for Alcoholic Priests. Psychiatric Consultant to 1971 Vatican Synod of Bishops. Advisor to Rome on Alcoholism in clergy and religious. Member AMA, APA, ASCH, and other professional organizations. Guest lecturer. Institute of Catholic Thought, Dubuque, Iowa; Institute of Spirituality, Dover, Mass. and the Institute of Spiritual Theology, River Forest, Illinois. Translator, lecturer, and contributor to *New Catholic Encyclopedia* and *Direct Psychotherapy*. Author of numerous professional articles and books, e.g. *Thomas Aquinas and Cure of the Obsessive-Compulsive Neurotic*; *The Alcoholic Priest*; *Psychology of Obedience*; *Sex, Love, and the Life of the Spirit*; *Loving and Curing the Neurotic*; *A Priest for All Seasons — Masculine and Celibate*, *Prevention and Treatment of Crisis in the Priesthood*, and others. Listed in the *American Catholic's Who's Who*, *Who's Who in the Midwest*, and *Dictionary of International Biography*. Director of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life. Dr. Baars is married and has one son and two daughters.

**"AMOR EDIFICAT"** (1 Cor. 8:1)

*"Love builds a house" . . . a house for clergy and religious, where they can find their identity, happiness, and an abundance of life in our affirming love.*

VATICAN CITY  
November 21, 1972

My dear friend in Christ,

I write this communication in reference to the newly organized *House of Affirmation, Inc.*, International Therapeutic Center for Clergy and Religious . . .

The founding members and professional staff of the treatment center are: Conrad W. Baars, M.D., psychiatrist, Sister Anna Polcino, S.C.M.M., M.D., psychiatrist, and Reverend Thomas A. Kane, M.A., S.T.M., Ph.D., psychologist. All three persons are personally know to me as objective, competent, serious and dedicated professionals whose work I have followed with keen interest . . .

On the basis of Doctor Baars' experience, professional competence and personal integrity, I can commend this project most enthusiastically; moreover, his colleagues have been among the most dedicated and competent of my own associates in pastoral and community work in years gone by.

The purpose of the *House of Affirmation* is to promote expert psychiatric treatment for emotionally ill clergy and religious throughout the western world. **Its need is beyond any doubt considerable and urgent . . .**

John Cardinal Wright,  
Prefect, Congregation for the Clergy

Office of the Bishop  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609  
December 22, 1972

Dear Father Kane,

I am pleased to accept membership on the Board of Directors of *House of Affirmation, Inc.* and to contribute whatever support I can to the project. I am convinced that there is a growing need and demand for the kind of therapy which the Center, with a professionally competent staff, will be able to offer to priests and religious. With you, Doctor Baars and Sister Anna Polcino to head the project, I am confident that it is in good hands, and join with all of you in a prayer that it will merit the wide support which it deserves.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Bernard J. Flanagan  
*Bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts*

"Throughout the ages it has been not so much the Church as a whole, but rather a relatively few of her members, her most sainted, yet at the same time, her most truly human members, who precisely because they were so human in the best sense of the word, were able to live the words of Christ, 'I came to bring you life, that you may have it more abundantly.' Francis of Assisi, Damien the leper, John XXIII, and Mother Teresa are some of those fully grown people capable of giving abundant life to others! But in our day, the People of God, priests and religious included, suffer so acutely in their need for identity, self-worth, self-love and being loved that the Church must learn the life-giving "secret" of a Francis, a Damien, a John and a Teresa, and share it with all. Now, not later!"

*C. W. Baars, Psychiatric Consultant to  
1971 Vatican Synod of Bishops*

#### GIVE ME YOUR HAND . . .

You, too, can affirm priests and religious in need during this critical moment of history! You can join hands with the professional men and women — laity, clergy, religious — who are responding to this contemporary issue of Church and society. Without your hand, the healing process is impossible!

Father Thomas Kane, Sister Anna Polcino, and Doctor Conrad Baars need help: your prayers, your personal involvement, your financial assistance. The need for the *House of Affirmation* — International Therapeutic Center for Clergy and Religious has already been significantly demonstrated. Many clergy and religious — of all faiths — are awaiting the opening of the *House of Affirmation*. The Professional Staff will be able to respond once the necessary money is raised to renovate and furnish the building so graciously offered by the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts. Funds are also needed to assist those clergy and religious who do not have adequate financial resources to benefit from the *House of Affirmation* services. We need donations to assist with providing adequate consultation, medical, and physiotherapy rooms. Chapel, vestments, kitchen, library and many other needs can be realized only if there is a generous response from the Christian community and other interested persons. A priority in funding must go to our "scholarship fund" so as to offer the opportunity for clergy, religious, physicians, psychologists, seminarians, and others who wish to come to the *House of Affirmation* to study our specific theoretical and therapeutic approaches. Your continued generous interest in regard to the financial needs of the *House of Affirmation* is essential to the success of this unique apostolate.

"In order to assist the adequate operation of the *House of Affirmation* at present and in

years to come, I consider it very desirable that this project receive from you a substantial form of assistance. All contributions are tax-deductible and should be made to the House of Affirmation, 201 Salisbury Street, Worcester, Massachusetts, 01609."

John Cardinal Wright  
Vatican City, 10/21/72

Without your help the House of Affirmation can't exist. Give us your hand . . . so we can give ours to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

A memorial book will be placed in the lobby of the House of Affirmation listing all those who have contributed to assist this apostolate. A special memorial plaque will have inscribed the names of all those who donate \$1,000 or more. Grants are actively sought from funding institutions. Tax deductible contributions are sought from interested corporations and individuals. No gift is too small. All are asked to pray for the success of the House of Affirmation. We welcome your participation.

"Always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father." (Ephesians 5:20)

"The purpose of the House of Affirmation is to promote expert psychiatric treatment for emotionally ill clergy and religious throughout the western world. Its need is beyond any doubt considerable and urgent . . ."

John Cardinal Wright,  
Prefect, Congregation for the Clergy

"I am convinced that there is a growing need and demand for the kind of therapy which the Center will be able to offer to priests and religious . . . I am confident that it is in good hands, and join with all of you in a prayer that it will merit the wide support which it deserves."

Bernard J. Flanagan,  
Bishop of Worcester

House of Affirmation  
International Therapeutic Center  
for Clergy and Religious  
201 Salisbury Street, Worcester, Mass. 01609

Dear Father Kane:

I am pleased to enclose the following donation to help defray the expenses of the House of Affirmation — International Therapeutic Center for Clergy and Religious.

- Benefactor \$1000.00 or more
- Patron \$ 500.00
- Sponsor \$ 200.00
- Donor \$.....[no gift too small]

Please <sup>do</sup> list my name in the memorial book.  
~~do not~~

- All contributions are tax deductible.
- The names of all benefactors contributing \$1000.00 or more will be inscribed on a special bronze memorial plaque.
- Make all checks payable to House of Affirmation, Inc.

Name.....

Street.....

City.....

State..... Zip.....

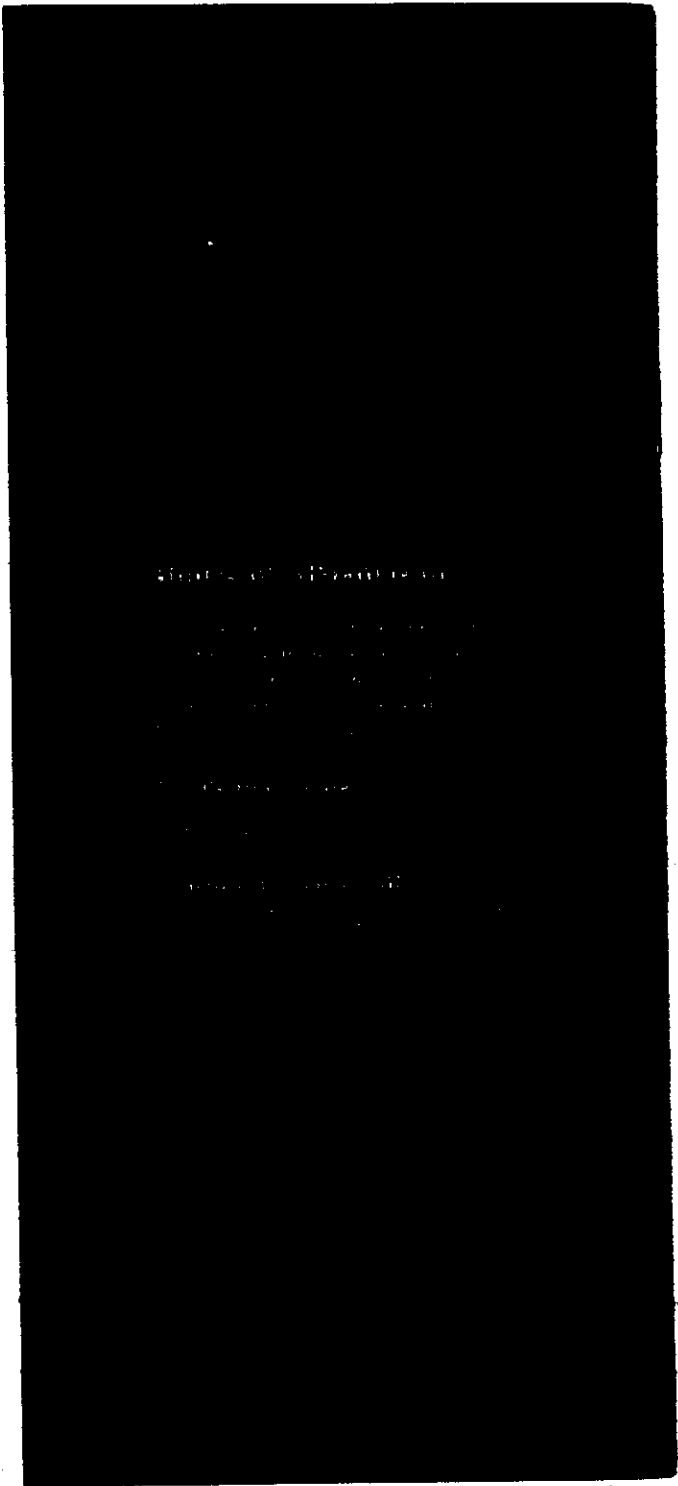


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REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

CONDUCTED BY THE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE DIRECTOR

FROM THE

SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE