

CONVERSATION WITH DON McGUIRE  
January 28, 1994

Meeting with Don following his return from [redacted] was extremely difficult. I met with him, Fran Daly, and Jim Eschwend on Friday, January 28. During the first hour and a half, Don expressed his anger and frustration at the limits in [redacted] and at Fran Daly and myself for not being supportive of him. It was fairly free-floating anger. He was establishing his own territory and indicated that it was important for him to really do what God wanted him to do with the Spiritual Exercises. In this, I believe he was posturing somewhat in order to see what he could get out of his next assignment.

At the same time, I was happy to hear that he is becoming a bit freer to express his feelings since he tends to bottle these up especially the negative ones. At the same time, it was sad to see the fact that he did not mention anything about the original behavior which brought him to [redacted].

After listening to Don for a long period of time, I expressed my own hopes and desires for the future as well as the limits which would be in place relative to his ministry.

I told him that I would indeed like to "walk alongside him" as we move through his re-incorporation into the Society's structures but that I would be balancing care for him along for care for the whole Church and the Society. I reminded him that what we were trying to do by going with Colombiere was to get another opinion with regard to his medical condition which is one of his major issues and, I believe, one of his major crutches. There may well be some physical ailments there but he does use these to control situations. In addition, I thought it would be important for us to work out a setting where he could continue to do his [redacted].

But again this is where I felt that something good was going on because one of his disappointments coming to Chicago was not being able to connect with the support team that he thought he would be able to put in place. And, I encouraged him to make contact with these men individually even if they wouldn't be on his support team to see whether or not he really will do anything to reincorporate himself into the Society's structures. I also alerted him to the fact that it could be that Canisius House would be closing even if he were to stay in Chicago, we might need some other setting.

I reminded him that it was his own behavior with the [redacted] minor which got him into trouble in the first place. In addition, it was a violation of Bob Wild's directives which led to this. As a result, it would be important for me to guarantee that he would have the kind of supervision necessary for me to allow him to return to ministry in any fashion. Certainly, there would be no unsupervised contact with minors in his future.

And whatever ministry he would be involved in would require a fair amount of self-disclosure on his part in order for him to live in a healthy manner.

I tried to explain the necessity for the dissolution of the Bellarmine financial situation which he established with Leo Klein. He gave me the

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perspective that such was set up because he was concerned about whether or not he could pay for his own way. I assured him that that wasn't a concern on my part and that I wanted him to do everything that he could to re-incorporate himself into the structure of the Society.

What is clear is that the basics are not going to change here. Don McGuire is going to continue to try to lead his life as independently as possible.

The good news, however, is that I think he has gotten a bit more inside into himself and so there may be some hope for him to re-connect with the Society in such a fashion which would allow him to do ministry.

For now, he is to stay based at Canisius House and do no ministry until I have approved it. I want him to rest, to review his insights from the past six or seven months, to give me some idea in his working with Jim Gschwend as to how best to proceed for ministry, and to do the 30 day retreat which he'd like to do when it is appropriate. I think even Don knows that this is not the time to do such.

So it ended on a more positive note than it began. But it was an extremely difficult conference. Don has an amazing ability for making one feel guilty and less than supportive which, I believe, is typical of someone with his borderline personality structure.

I think it will be important for us to work closely on this one (Fran Daly, Jim Gschwend, Joe Downey, and I) in order to see how best to proceed. I mentioned that John Hardon might be a part of his aftercare program and I would trust John's supervision of Don in this.

By working together (and especially in conversations) we will avoid the "spreading" which he is able to manage and support one another in remembering the context for comments made and the specifics of challenges/support offered. Don really views the world totally through his own eyes. And while I believe him to be capable of doing some good ministry in the future, I really am not certain that it would be within the Society.

He mentioned the possibility of having to leave the Society and I referred back to that again at the end of our conversation telling him that I thought such a move would have to be clearly from the Holy Spirit but that I understood this as necessary for him to freely look at his life and where his ministry might take him. If that is outside the Society because of the limits of ministry which I will have to impose given his past behavior, then so be it. I sincerely hope we will not get to that point for a number of reasons not the least of which is Don's own ability to reek havoc with the Society but also because I don't think it would do him or the Church a whole lot of good in any case.

As I say, there were some good signs. I think Don was as honest as he could be. Some of the issues which he had with Villa St. John including his inability to celebrate the Eucharist sounded reasonable to me. His own desire to be in contact with Joe Downey and to meet with Joe, Dan Flaherty, and Jim Gschwend would be most helpful. It's this kind of behavior which gives me some sort of hope for the future. But it will not be easy and it could be that there is an extremely rough time ahead.

I don't think this will show until we put the final decision together on ministry but it will not be easy. As I reminded Don, he would have to get to a good deal of self-disclosure in any situation that involves his ministry because he'll need the kind of supervision necessary for me to be able to recommend him to a bishop in any fashion that would be reasonable.

During the conversation, I found myself praying an incredible amount just to be able to attend to the issues that needed attention. Don is bright and uses his intelligence in all kinds of ways--some constructive and some destructive. I felt if I were using every bit of counselling skill that I had available to me.

He's a good and generous man who loves the Church. But there is a great deal that is unresolved. I'm saddened by the fact that after the four and a half month mark he stopped working the program. He attributes this to the difficulties with health; I believe would attribute these difficulties to John Hardon "clearing him" relative to the situation. It does, however, give me hope that we might be able to find some kind of after-care structure which would keep Don healthy and allow him to do ministry.

Brad Schaeffer, SJ  
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