

May 18, 1992

TO: Archbishop Kelly
FROM: Reverend William F. Medley



REVEREND DANIEL CLARK

I have reviewed Father Clark's letter of April 27th to you and look forward to discussing it with you. In the meantime I would offer some observations.

Dan seems to propose for himself a designated role within the presbyterate as a contact person for priests experiencing questions and difficulties, be they personal, ethical or legal, in the realm of sexual abuse and sexual acting-out. I have some serious questions about whether or not Dan would be the best person for such a position though I do not doubt that his experience is valuable and that he has made significant contributions to the larger recovering community in Louisville.

My concerns about Dan assuming such a position within the presbyterate have to do with Dan's relationship to the presbyterate that only marginally is connected to his own prosecution and conviction for abuse. To my knowledge Dan has never attended any clergy gatherings since the time that his troubles began. These would include informal peer group gatherings, any continuing education offerings for the presbyterate or annual presbyteral assemblies. This, presumably, is by Dan's choice. He is on mailing lists and is invited to all of these offerings and has chosen to be reclusive in relationship to his brother priests. Given his history, this may be understandable but raises in my mind serious questions as to his effectiveness to assume any role of leadership or service to that community in so sensitive an area.

On a related note, Dan was never one to be particularly present to these sorts of gatherings even before his legal difficulties emerged some years ago. I think it is reasonable to suggest that the reservations priests may have about Dan, to which he alludes himself, may rest in perceptions of Dan that have nothing to do with his legal questions and difficulties.

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Perhaps Dan needs to be encouraged to reacquaint himself with the presbyterate through the normal opportunities that present themselves during the course of the year. Judging from his own comfort in these settings and that of other priests' comfort with him, perhaps at some point in the future there is a place and a role for Dan to assume. I speak not only for myself but I think of what I am speaking reflects the feelings of the Priest Health Panel. Dan refers in his letter to dialogue with that Health Panel. In the three years that I have been involved with that panel, I cannot recall any incident of Dan's communication with the board.

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