

25 December, 1979

To [REDACTED]

To err is human; to forgive is divine.

Since everything that I will write here is the truth, please feel free to show this to anyone you please. One should not hide the truth, nor be afraid of it. After all, the Lord said that "the truth will make you free."

I know that slowly, but surely the truth will be known at I.H.M. parish and in the Diocese of Orange. I already know that the truth is at work there, thanks be to God.

Originally I had planned to tell you all of this in person, but circumstances and an earlier than expected departure, prevented my being able to do so. You will have to excuse my having to use this less personal method of communication.

During my entire priesthood I have given myself totally to the service of God and of His People. Whatever I have done, good and bad, I have done out in the open. I have never hidden any of my mistakes and weaknesses. And, to date, I have nothing to hide. I have been open to all and with all.

When Bishop Johnson assigned me to I.H.M., I arrived and gave myself totally to the service of all my parishioners. I know that with the great cooperation of a lot of the I.H.M. people I have been able to accomplish great things for my parish.

However, because I am an alcoholic I have made very serious mistakes. In the pulpit I have admitted to and apologized for my errors, sins, bad example, and scandal I have caused. I realize that this has made me very vulnerable.

50600049

In my moment of weakness, in my illness, when I was down and needed help, you turned

against me. I am fully aware—as the people of the parish and of the diocese are finding out—that you mounted a campaign against me.

Through phone calls and other activities you tried to get the members of the Religious Education Board, and the parents and faculty of S. H. M. School to testify against me to Bishop Johnson's office and the school department's office. I am also aware of the unchristian roles played by your cohorts, especially [redacted], and some others.

Fortunately, you misjudged some persons whom you thought would be receptive to your unchristian behavior. As you well know, not everyone cooperated with you. Instead, they came to me to inform me of your plot.

Jesus said that, if you are offering your gift at the altar and find that you have anything against your brother, you should first go and be reconciled. None of you were Christian enough to do this!

The scriptures offer another solution to any Christian community problems. First, you go to your brother alone. If you convince him and he repents, you've won a friend. Secondly, if he doesn't listen to you, take others with you and try to win him over. If he listens to you, you have saved him. Only, when all these efforts have failed, are you to report him to the authorities. None of you followed this scriptural solution. And, to this date—Christmas 1979—none of you has had the Christian decency to come to me and talk about any of my problems personally.

In addition to the wrongs I am responsible for and to which I admit, you accused me of many half-truths, exaggerations, and outright lies. Some of the S. H. M. school children and parents and other parishioners should know

[redacted] for the liar that she is. And, now, the people of the parish and of the diocese are knowing you for the lying and self-righteous hypocrites that you are along with all your cohorts. Jesus described the likes of you so well - "brood of vipers" and "whitened sepulchers".

In his wisdom Bishop Johnson was able to detect your scheme. He has had the Christian and fatherly concern for me that you did not have. He has lovingly and generously offered me a chance for healing. I willingly accepted Bishop Johnson's kind offer.

God always brings some good out of every wrong. And, as a result of all your unchristian activity, I have come to realize many good and wonderful things. In these days I have come to know the love and support of Bishop Johnson and Archbishop Clavel, of so many of my fellow priests and religious, and of the vast majority of the people of the diocese and of St. M. parish. But, most gratifying has been the great love and support I have received from so many of the school children, teenagers, altar servers, and elderly. They have overwhelmed me with so many expressions and manifestations of love, support, and prayers.

I have undergone tremendous hurt, pain, sorrow, and tears. I myself am responsible for a lot of this because I am an alcoholic. But, I know that you and the other two-faced "christians" like you have caused a lot of it, too.

In my heart and in my conscience I know that I have never done anything to purposely harm you, [redacted], faculty members, parents, or students of the school or parish. Even while I was intoxicated, I never did anything to hurt any one of you - the way you have hurt me.

I personally told [redacted] and the rest of the [redacted] what I know to be the truth about them, about you and about others. I told the sisters that I hold no grudge against them and that I forgive their unchristian actions and all the hurt they have caused me. And, I want you to know that I feel the same way about you. With the love of Jesus - which you did not have for me - I forgive you and those who cooperated with you to hurt me. I hold no grudge against you.

It is my desire that this be a time of healing not just for me, but for my parish as well. Along with me, many children, teenagers, adults, and elderly in I.N.M. parish have been hurt by your actions. May the Lord grant us all the power of His love to forgive, to forget, to heal, to help, and to grow.

As I wrote in the beginning, feel free to show this to anyone you want. It is difficult to accept the truth about yourself. The truth hurts, but the truth will make you free!

Through death we come to life. When the old self dies, the new self comes alive. I have no problem admitting my alcoholism and its related faults to you, to others, and to God. I am on the road of healing and recovery - my old self is dying. I look forward to my new self being born again in body and in spirit to serve God and His People more faithfully and wholeheartedly than before.

There must be a Good Friday of passion and suffering and death before there can be an Easter Sunday of triumph, joy, and new life.

God bless you!

J. L. M. P.

50600052