

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Bishop Daily

April 27, 1984

FROM: Father Ryan

RE" "Possible ^{Priests'} Personnel Matter"

On April 27, 1984, I spoke to a Mrs. [REDACTED] who indicated she was a friend of Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED]; member of St. Joseph's Parish, Malden; a widow with children who is a social worker.

She went on at some great length pouring herself out in light of what she described as a:

drug problem that involved a priest and her concern that in his reassignment that problem might surface.....

She began by suggesting that the breakup of the Team Ministry at St. Joseph's Parish (on two occasions: the first being the leaving of the priesthood by Father Brian Clark; and the second when Father Buntel just walked away from the parish.....) has caused a good amount of soul-searching at the parish level. They feel the problem at St. Joseph's is now corrected, but it would seem from her knowledge and those in the charismatic prayer group fowhich she is a member, there is discovery that the problem was known and yet the situation was seen to have been covered up by the Parish Council, etc.

She went on to suggest that the effects of a priest's life on children is perhaps more profound than those older Catholics who would "not get hurt" too deeply."

She indicated that she had been speaking in recent times with the pastoral associate at St. Joseph Parish, Sister Mary Nagle, C.S.J., and Sister has been very helpful to her, confirming that Father Buntel was referred to alcoholic therapy and he had "gone away for a month" before being reassigned, etc.

I pointed out strongly to the good concerned lady that I had no knowledge of the problem and if I did I could not speak with her about it since it would be totally confidential. I then pointed out in her own profession there would be guidelines for protection of the person who is in a problem, as well as trying to resolve and correct the difficulty. I further pointed out someone who had a difficulty could not be labeled forever and not reassigned once addressing a problem and working to correct it. She agreed.

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She went on to pour herself out about her trying to secure a drug program of instruction in the parish a few years ago in line with her professional work. She had sent children to the rectory who were in difficulties and now she is wondering and having concern that in their "working out of their problems" they got into further problem with the individual at the rectory. I cautioned her about rash judgement, jumping to conclusions, etc.

The lady said that she was calling me because she noticed my name was on the "reorganization committee for the Archbishop" and that she hoped that the realignment of structures between parishes, institutions and the governance of the Archdiocese might insure against types of problems in the assignment of priests. I told her that would be the purvey of the Archdiocesan Clergy Personnel Board and the Archbishop, and not the reorganization study group.

She confided that she had supported philosophically the notion of "team ministry", but now having experienced it for a good number of years at St. Joseph's and having a Pastor in the dimensions of Father Daley, she feels that it is best to have someone who has authority, responsibility and will take full charge such as a Pastor.

She went on to hope that in the reform of parish structures, etc., bazaars would have less importance and evaluation of the parish needs, visitors to the homes, etc. would take precedence.

The lady seemed to have knowledge that Father Buntel was now assigned at St. Catherine Parish in Westford and she wanted to express her hope that he was being cared for. I told her in faith and hope in the Church she would best make that assumption and put to rest his alleged past and allow him to live out his life and the needs that he has in a very local situation of new assignment. I then urged her to focus her life on her children and the Parish of St. Joseph, Malden, to see if she could effect some of the goals that she feels parish life of the 80's should incorporate.

I concluded by suggesting to the good lady that if she had any further concerns regarding personnel at the parish level, etc. that her confidential conversation or addressing of a letter to the Regional Bishop would be the appropriate manner in which to deal with it and not to the Chancery Office. She was most grateful for the chance to speak; she seemed to be conscientious in her concern and I think she will hopefully put the matter to rest at this juncture.

I concluded by urging her prayer for the Church; her example to children and to keep the confidentiality of a professional as regards any information she may have secured about past situations at the parish. I pointed out that during this life we only receive "glimmers of truth" and we shall receive the whole truth in eternity. Thus it would be well to give the benefit of the doubt to those who seem to have greater struggles in living the Christian life on this earth.

I give this to you simply for your information at this time.

FJR:tg


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