

Aug. 29, 1973

Dear Fr. Ed,

Thanks so much for your letter. It was good both to hear from you by mail and also to talk with you. You must be very exhausted and I hope that you will be able to get some rest before the school year begins in earnest - though the change of pace may itself give you some respite.

I wanted to share some things with you which do not require responses but which will enable you better to understand where I am. These are subjects which I hope that we can speak about when I come up north.

Before I begin, though, let me say that Maria called earlier this week and conveyed your message about making the Exercises. Although I was a bit disappointed, I will follow your directions. I also declined the offer of sharing that apartment in Md and am now considering how to find a place to live. Maria also spoke with me, as you probably know, about the importance of us being together during the time we are engaged. I agree and especially since it seems that she can do little there. The original decision was one not easily made, but which I think was made according to a generous motive. But I believe that what you have suggested - that we be together - is right and now that it seems there is nothing she can do at N.D., it is the obvious thing to do. I appreciate your counsel on this.

I want to write about several things....

(1.) Me and my present state. It's hard to know exactly what's happening with me, but I think it would be fair to say that this has been a hard & bad week. It is as if there is a great wrestling match going on inside me. From

my first waking moments, ^{all day,} and throughout the night, I have been debating this action or that issue. There has been very little peace and I sense that is not how God wants me to be. Part of the problem may be inactivity or loneliness. But part, too, I think has deeper causes.

Today I went to visit a MD and ~~a~~ had a thorough check up. I went with several questions and received some answers. I described to him some of the things I experienced - black outs, partial paralysis, dizziness, etc. - when running or especially exhausted. He did not seem surprised and told me that what I experienced was called hyper ventilation. He said that it was a result of extreme nervousness or anxiety and that those symptoms were to be expected. He also said that except for a need for a lot of rest & a new life style, I was fine I guess that I am trying to weigh what that means to me. One thing I have experienced all day is a great sense of peace. I guess that comes from hearing that the things I was sure I was undergoing were real and frightening (he said it was understandable that I would be frightened). It is hard to explain the relief that caused, but I'd like to try because I do not want to be misleading myself or seeking to cover things up.

I guess that one of the things at the back of my mind is the sense that I have been deliberately guilty of great wickedness. I can't quite describe that sense, but it is a feeling that I consciously and with deliberate foresight choose to engage ~~a~~ ~~me~~ myself in situations which were wrong and that I was just evil and wicked. That I was hard to deal with

because there were some situations (toward the end)
that I did provoke or create for sexual
satisfaction and with deliberation. And I know
my ability to reason my way out of things
and all the rest. So, for me, the interior verdict
was that I was absolutely "guilty" of a
horrendous wickedness. And yet, there was something
inside me that objected and said "no". Those
things have been going back and forth for some
time, but especially this last week. And the
tension has been a terrible strain. It has come
out in dealing with homosexual temptations. I
have had to deal with such temptations for
a long time. Since all this has happened,
they have been much easier to deal with -
although I understand that probably will be
passing. But it seems as if something within me
which had begun to fester was opened &
cauterized with fire and now wants to heal.
And I have found that simply taking quick
and firm action is sufficient for temptations
and that as I am loyal in this, they
decrease - ~~But I have~~ and have decreased to a
considerable extent. But I have also found
something in me which has taken a great
deal of energy. It is something which looks
pure and righteous and which condemns me
as a homosexual and as someone basically evil.
It is that which regards even the temptations as
signs of sin and which just seems to want
me to be perfect - too holy. I can't explain how
exhausting it is to live with that, because
confronting it seems like rationalizing. But I
think that the end result of that "perfect"
impulse would be to so drain me that I
would be less able to discern or act against

real sin. { This also showed ~~that~~ in confession. I confessed some ~~slowly~~ in reacting to temptations, but I found myself ~~psychol-~~ ^{logically} weighted down by the confession.

The effect of what the Doctor said was to show me that the whole thing is more complicated than just my evil. I know that what he has said about extreme nervous exhaustion is true. And I also believe (though if I'm wrong, I want to know it) that I was fighting and resisting evil and homosexual temptations even though in some cases I yielded to them in various ways. I guess I can't live with the belief that I am just perverse and sold God out. But that's what has been going through my head all this time.

I don't know if I'll ever be able to sort things out and it may be wrong to try. But with this inner battle raging, I've had to look at some things and try to face some. The fact that nervous exhaustion could in fact produce the spells I experienced also leads me to suspect that it also was a factor in my weakening resistance and poor judgment. I do know that during those spells, I was terrified to be alone and that all I wanted was for someone to hold me. I don't think I made that up or created those situations. I think that a stubbornness & stupidity made things worse too.

I wanted to put this to you, because if I am wrong, I want to face myself and repent. But I almost feel as if what I need to do is rest, relax, and learn to build a lifestyle in which I can use my talents and yet also rest & relax. I sense that that is what I must do & perhaps what God wants. (More than just fighting, or facing this problem of homosexuality, which I need to watch, but which I feel will take care of itself - in other words, it's not the root.)

in continuing
the pace of
my work

(2) All of this relates to the national work that I did and the Service Committee. More than anything, I think it was the tension of dealing in those relationships which has undone my nervous & psychological tranquility. I realize that I could be reacting in anger here. I want some direction. I feel as if the whole thing was absolutely wrong for me (the way I really would put it was: evil) and that I should have just withdrawn regardless of what that would have meant. For some reason there has been a growing sense of total distrust for the SC and everything it represents. In fact, as I read your letter about the meeting all I could think of was Kafka's novel The Trial. It is a bizarre situation in which the principle character is hauled before a court again & again & told nothing about its authority or the charges against himself and expected to plead guilty. That he doesn't do so promptly and humbly is further evidence of his guilt. Even if I could, I think nothing would ever convince me to touch the S.C. again. There is such a distaste within me for it and all it stands for that I can't explain it. In fact, I find myself filled with forebodings for the C.R. because it holds so much power - much of which I helped create.

I am deeply sorry that you have had to undergo more suffering with them on my behalf. I will pray part of my daily rosary for you until the Oct. meeting & offer up various sacrifices on your behalf.

I suspect that there are limits to what would be proper for us to speak about and I don't want again to speak to you about this. But I do need help in sorting out my own reactions.

(3.) The third area is June House. My own feeling is that I probably will never be able to return. That's hard to face - though I have already accepted it. I can't express why I feel that way, but I do. I know very little of what's happening there, but feel in my bones that a new & very different direction is being taken - one which is based on more popular principles. I think there would be little that I could ever do in such a situation, though I may be wrong.

(4.) Here is an interesting problem. Lee Callaghan called Tues., saying they believed (in Clearwater) that God was calling me to settle there in the future. I have had the same strong leading. Someone on their pastoral team offered to pay my whole way through law school (well get to that later) if I would agree to spend 3 or 4 hours a week giving their pastoral team advice. Oh dear. What do I do about that? It would start in Jan or Feb., I would decline any authority over people, etc. but should I just dismiss the offer out of hand?

(5.) law school. I don't know how to explain it, but I really am feeling drawn to it. I don't think I want to practice law, but as preparation for a job in business. I really want to talk openly with you about it, though, since I really

want to make the decision most pleasing to Our Lord. One thing about the school (Stetson) in St. Pete is that it's no great place (you need a D+ to get in & their acceptance rate is 100%) and so I would not be overly drained in school (good for me & marriage), and wouldn't be able to use it (law) for anything very flashy, but still could earn a decent living. I guess I feel it would give me an outlet for my talents & still ~~over~~ ^{allow} some leisure for other projects. I fear I never could be content just teaching, but would wind up administrating. I could take an MBA, but the math would kill me, hence, law. Now, if those organizational, etc. drives should be quieted & if that is the way my spiritual life can advance, I will & want to do that. I sense, though, that God has given them to me for some reason & that what I need to do is to learn to live with them & order them. Others have done this & I think I could too.

Thank you for all you've done for me. I pray for you often & miss you very much. I will be leaving here next wk & if you want to reach me by mail, you'd better write to Bethesda (Difatos). I'll let you know when I'll be in South Bend. It should be w/in 2 wks.

your son in Christ,

Sorry for the long letter.

