

July 12, 1989

Reverend Donald J. Straub
3849 Elow
St. Louis, MO 63116

Dear Don,

Please pardon the tardiness of this letter in reply to your letter of June 7. I have not ignored it but have consulted as I am obliged to do in such a situation with the other Bishops here. I have also consulted with our Personnel Director, Father Tom Santen.

I believe you may have seen the letter I wrote to Father Bert Miller on May 22 in which I expressed my concerns for you at this time. I mentioned that you are living in very definite peril which will be greatly increased should you be returned to ministry here in the Archdiocese. A number of families have been deeply hurt and they are very much concerned that the same hurt does not fall on other children and other families. Seeing you back in ministry could very well trigger reactions against you and against the Church. I believe they might very well involve the law and you could be in very serious trouble. I believe that I have an obligation to protect you and to protect the Church. Also I obviously have serious obligations to these families and to their children.

In my letter I also mentioned that I have raised the question of ministry in some other diocese or religious community where the above mentioned peril would be much minimized. I would be happy to help you if you showed interest in returning to ministry in such a situation but I have not heard from you in that regard.

In summary, that is the situation I face. It is not that I doubt your ability to live in a new lifestyle but I am not sure that others would share my confidence.

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July 12, 1989

Page two

I have been impressed by your efforts and so has St. Luke's Institute. I believe that you could serve the Church very well but I do not believe it is possible for you to do so here because of the above mentioned problem. I would ask you to consider the situation of [REDACTED] and I would wonder if you want to take the chance of having something like that happen in your case. Once again I assure you that I am acting only in view of my responsibility and not with any lack of concern for you or confidence in you.

With my personal regards and my prayers for you
in all this difficult time,

Fraternally in Christ,

Most Reverend John L. May
Archbishop of St. Louis