

5/6/65

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# Boston College

CHESTNUT HILL 67, MASSACHUSETTS

May 6, 1965

Dear Ed,

That was thoughtful of you to include the clipping. I remembered Joe Magnini but I could recall Terry Dummick only after looking him up in the Yearbook. I can imagine what a shock it was to the family and the teachers and classmates.

I have decided to answer your letter at once for fear that it will no longer mean anything if I wait, knowing how rapidly these matters evolve. As for this summer, I will definitely be taking a chaplaincy at Camp Calvert in Leonardtown, Md. about the middle of July so we should be able to get together sometime around then. My plans until then and after are question-marks.

As for Newman, I used to enjoy reading his work and works about him and I have no doubt he has given me many ideas. He appears to be having an immense effect in the Church today and it has only taken a century.

I'll now attack the April 10<sup>th</sup> letter page by page. (By "attack" I just mean that I will take it up now.) Too bad about Fr. Ciuffi. It was wonderful to hear a friend praised so. He is a very hard working, sincere person, and he has plenty of experience in the practical problems of being a priest. He's also one of the funniest people I've ever met - a very sharp, perceptive sense of humor. I wish there were a Mass like his around here; I would attend it no matter what.

As for choosing a major, I have experienced that feeling of frustration at not being able to be more than one human.

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Lately, I have been in quite a few long conversations on the question of changing the lives of others. I wonder if this is a universal principle (probably found already in many spiritual books) or if it is only true in my life now. It seems to me that I spend or want to spend a great deal of time determining what it is that God wants me to do in big areas of my life where I am, at present, doubtful. It seems to be a very good (if not necessary thing) to find out God's will in those areas. Meanwhile, I do very little with the energy I have left after these fruitless reflections. There are many small areas, well within my capacity, where I know just what God wants. But since they are apparently less important and it is hard to accept that God wants me to center my attention on such small, undramatic concerns, I find it very hard to attend to them. Some speculations: these doubts as to what is God's will in major areas cannot be cleared up. It is God's will that the area be doubtful. (This, I feel, leaves the person free to do as he wills - as long as he desires that it be God's will.) Reflection will not reveal God's will. So, focus your attention on the smaller areas in your search for God's will and relax in the big areas. Learn how to live in the doubt that allows you to choose as you please. Make plain to God (and to yourself) which side you are on by doing God's will where it is clear, no matter how unimportant an area of life e.g. even just saying hello to somebody etc.

I feel now that the question of effecting other people is totally depressing (I just thought of an item I read somewhere. It gave the reaction of a high-school student to his history book. He said he didn't like it because nobody lasts more than two pages.) unless it is given a

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qualitative (personal) basis. Even Christ only lasted two pages. In an occupied country, of despised people. And thirty years of that,  $\frac{1}{11}$ , in a farm village. Also, I feel \* that all the advice that you get the opportunity as psychiatrist, sociologist or priest, to give to others is totally ineffective (a superb exaggeration). They must see you in act. If you display courage, faith and love in action you will impress them, you will make them wonder about the way of their life. Your biggest glory is to turn yourself - a being with a personality, naturally self-centered, desirous of increasing your own joy and avoiding pain - to turn yourself, under God's invite and with His help into a son of His. That is, a person who goes around acting as if God were His own father. And, I feel, this will have more effect on those around him even if, in God's will, he is destined to die in an auto crash at 18, or live until he's 90 as a blind, cripple, or as a dish washer etc. than if he does become President - maybe even our first Priest-President, with a degree in psychiatry.

I have a suspicion I heard all this for the first time many years ago, but it meant nothing to me.

I suppose you'll come up to Harvard for orientation the day I leave for Washington. Well, let's hope not. I'll probably be here until early July, at least.

As for Fr. Cioffi being born inspired: he certainly has many natural qualities but...

You say, "Is there any chance that I could work and make myself great...". Do you mean get your two pages in the

history books? Then, yes. But I don't identify that with greatness. Why do you want to become the best son in the family, thus concentrating on your relative standing with respect to your brothers? Why not try to become a good son and concentrate on your relation with your father and just be glad that the others, who may be ahead or behind you, are not competitors but your own brothers?

I know Fr. Burns and Fr. Hoy? (Hawkey). They were at Woodstock with me, though neither is in my year.

I thought the Phenomenon a very powerful book.

Question 1 Born a flash? - I think most people would say that this is partly true. You must have the vocal cords to start. But then you have to train and, even then, if you don't have 'personality', you're liable to be a mere technician.

Question 2 (the impudent question). Why limit your audience? - I just try (at least, when a good boy) to do what I think God wants. I don't see what the size of the audience has to do with choosing a career. This choice is determined by other factors. Doesn't your effect on the audience lose in depth as your audience grows? (sometimes?) You have only so much paint in the can and the wider you want to spread it, the thinner it will have to be. The paint doesn't increase just because you are intending to paint a wider area. Personal effect is a highly qualitative question. I hope this makes some sense and isn't unadulterated trite.

8/4/65

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Dear Father

Would it be alright if I come to talk  
to you on Fri. Aug 13. I suppose you will be  
leaving on Sun. Aug 15. Do you need a ride  
back to D.C. - if so, I can wait till Aug 15, - let  
me know.

The reason I would like to see you is  
because about 6 or 7 ~~P~~ questions developed from the  
last time I talked to you. I wrote them down, but  
as I review them only 1 or 2 seem important.  
If you have the time, then I will be seeing

reverse is p 23

Fr. Samson S.J.  
Camp Calvert  
~~Leonardtown, Md.~~  
~~Leon~~  
Leonardtown, Md.

you on Aug 13 at about 1:00 P.M (noon).

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Thank you

Ed.

P.S. excuse the envelope.

M  
W

W. Sampson  
2344 Prospect Ave.  
Cleveland, Ohio  
apt. 117

1/12/66



Near Ed,

It was very pleasant to receive and to read your letter and my delay in replying is mostly due to the fact that I didn't get it until a few (3 or 4) days ago.

I was especially glad that you have come into close contact with Fr. Cioffi because I know him well and I feel safe in recommending people to him. As a matter of fact I was with him during the last days of August and he invited me to help him in giving that retreat but I was detained at the last minute. But, I do feel that you're in the best hands.

Your enthusiasm for your courses was also happy news, and I hope you successfully switched to a nearly Christian or mediaeval history course. Your statement, "... looking at Religion from a scientific point of view ... the only reasonable point of view - allowing of course for faith ..." can mean a few things, some of which I would agree with also. But I guess a conversation would be a better place to develop the idea.

As for the weekend in Christian living I have heard only praise. And I would like to take part in one. I will admit that I am not personally enthusiastic about taking part, but just curious, but I suppose that's natural since I am so ignorant of it.

I found the 'telling thing' of Fr Cioffi's Curtin's to be very provoking. I had just been through a period of decision-making in which calculation was not very useful. But I had reached a certitude on what I was to do (much as one reaches the certitude of Faith) and because it was so uncalculated, I had a very

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hard time getting others to see that it was even reasonable.

As for myself, I am no longer at B.C. nor am I in Tertiationship. I requested my Provincial a few times over the past few years to be allowed to live independently of the Society and the priesthood for a year or so. For me it would be like a pilgrimage (which was once a required part of Jesuit training), a testing. And unbelievably enough I was finally allowed to go. So in September I came to Cleveland, got a job as a blueprint-folder and a room by myself. At first it was intensely exciting, a real close shave with starvation, but gradually my wealth grew and my personal contacts, and now I am a real brougham.

I am trying to decide now whether to move into the negro section of town and get a job there. I find the people I am now in contact with are quite Christian and though not wealthy are not destitute either. But I am not sure I can with charity break with some of them whom ~~I am~~ are in real need of help, even from me whom they do not know to be a priest.

As for the summer, it's all just probabilities. I hope to be back at the camp again and then resume some activity in the Society. I think you should make your plans independent of where I may be, because my future is so doubtful - I have permission to stay out another year, though at present I don't think I'll use it.

It has been very profitable for me. I'll keep you informed of where I will be, as I learn about it myself and perhaps we can get together. Thanks again for the very fine letter.

Your friend,

Father Sampson