

Saturday, July 15, 1995

Coadjutor Archbishop Harry Flynn  
Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Clayton Emmer  
Saint Paul Seminary  
2260 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear Archbishop Flynn:

My name is Clayton Emmer. I have just completed my first year at Saint Paul Seminary as a student for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. I am writing to let you know about a decision I recently made in regard to my pursuit of the vocation of diocesan priesthood. This past week, I made the decision to join the Companions of Christ for a one-year trial period in order to discern whether life in this association is part of my vocation to diocesan priesthood.

In recent months, I have been spending time with the Companions and exploring their communal life. The time I have spent with the members of this association has been an opportunity for some discernment. Kevin Finnegan, the moderator for the Companions, has been aware of my interest in the association and recently extended an invitation to me to join the association for one year. In consultation with my spiritual director this past week, I have decided to accept the invitation. The agreement reached between Kevin and myself involves a one-year period of living at the Companions house on Marshall Avenue while continuing the program of priestly formation at the Saint Paul Seminary.

Please find enclosed a copy of the acceptance letter I wrote to the Companions. Explanatory letters similar to the present one have been sent to: Archbishop John Roach; rector Father Phillip Rask; vice rector Father Ron Bowers; and Father John Echert, my formation advisor.

I would be interested in your response to my decision. If you would like the opportunity to talk with me about my interest in the Companions, please contact me at the seminary residence (962-8434).

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Clayton Emmer

Saturday, July 15, 1995

Kevin Finnegan, moderator  
Companions of Christ  
2137 Marshall Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55104

Clayton Emmer  
2260 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear Kevin:

I would like to thank you and all of the Companions for the hospitality which you have shown to me during the past months as I have begun to explore the life and vision of your association. All of you have been very generous in sharing with me your time, your insights, your food (special mention of Tom M. in this regard seems in order), and your friendship.

Most of all, I appreciate the invitation you have recently extended to me to join the Companions for a trial period of one year beginning this fall. I accept this invitation with great joy and look forward to spending this year with all of you as I discern, with your assistance, whether I am called to the way of life which the Companions has adopted. I am very excited about the vision of priesthood which your association embraces and feel that it is very much in accord with the mind and heart of the Church.

I would appreciate your prayers at this time. I want to do what is most pleasing to the Lord. Right now it appears that joining the Companions is His will for me.

I look forward to making plans for the fall.

In the love of Christ,

Clayton Emmer

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

*Office of the Archbishop*

July 26, 1995

Clayton Emmer  
Saint Paul Seminary  
2260 Summit Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Clayton,

How pleased I was to have received your letter of July 15, 1995 in which you informed me that you had made a decision in regard to the pursuit of your vocation of diocesan priesthood and that decision is to join the Companions of Christ for a one-year-trial period in order to discern whether life in this association is part of your vocation to diocesan priesthood. Congratulations!!

Indeed, Clayton, I would very much like to have the opportunity to speak with you about your interest in the companions. I would ask you to call Mert Lassonde (291-4408) to set up this appointment that is some time mutually convenient. I have been on vacation and will return to St. Paul around the first of August.

My interest in speaking with you is twofold: firstly, you are a seminarian studying for the Archdiocese and secondly, I am interested in speaking about the need for community and support in living out a celibate and priestly commitment in our day and age. I would like to hear your reflections on this.

With blessings and good wishes to you, to all the Companions and to all our seminarians, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Harry J. Flynn

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Coadjutor Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Saturday, August 5, 1995

Coadjutor Archbishop Harry Flynn  
Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Clayton Emmer  
Saint Paul Seminary  
2260 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear Archbishop Flynn:

Thank you for your response of July 26 to my letter about joining the Companions of Christ. I recently contacted Mert Lassonde to make an appointment to see you. I look forward to meeting with you on Thursday, August 10.

I thought I would send along to you a short reflection I wrote on pastoral identity as part of my chaplaincy internship at Ramsey Hospital. If you have a chance to look it over, I would be interested in your response.

Again, I look forward to seeing you on Thursday.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Clayton Emmer  
Theology II

## THEOLOGICAL INTEGRATION PAPER

It may be possible for each [person] to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbour. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would strongly be tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another... There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.... This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption.<sup>1</sup>

This quote from C.S. Lewis articulates well the theology which grounds my approach to pastoral care. Coming into the C.P.E. program this summer, I was pretty intimidated by the task before me... the task of ministry, which I see as a call to take up "the burden of my neighbour's glory." The reason this was so intimidating for me was that I saw ministry as one-sided—as simply a 'work' I would perform on behalf of another person—rather than as a reciprocal effort which would engage both persons in a pilgrimage of love. Yet through my experiences this summer, I have come to understand my ministry instead as a calling forth of the freedom of another person—that is, as an invitation to a person to engage in the experience of faith. I have had patients ask me difficult theological and moral questions—questions of theodicy, health care, change of lifestyle. Sometimes, when the questions are asked, I sense that the person asking is somehow abdicating responsibility for answering these questions themselves. When I have sensed this happening, I have restrained myself from providing a lot of answers, and instead have waited for the individual to articulate their own 'theology.' Sometimes I have offered some words based on my own faith, trying to be careful to preface them as such, but many times, I have simply facilitated the theological engagement of the other person. At times this has required a painful patience on my part, as I have a strong sense of the objectivity of many of my convictions, yet I have come to see it as a necessary patience. I want to be an advocate for the development of personal faith, and for faith to be personal, it must engage people at the level of their freedom, at the innermost core of their being where they confront the ultimate questions of life. This is part of my commitment to carrying out pastoral care: "One of the basic objectives of... renewed and intensified pastoral action [for and with the sick and the suffering]... is an attitude which looks upon the sick person, the bearer of a handicap, or the suffering individual, not simply as an *object* of the Church's love and service, but as an *active and responsible participant in the work of evangelization and salvation.*"<sup>2</sup> I believe that allowing patients to grapple with their own faith commitment is part of this pastoral attitude.

However, there has been an inner tension in my ministry in this regard; there is a question that has continually haunted me as I have gone about my pastoral care in the hospital this summer: What, then, does it mean for me to be a *pastor*—that is, a shepherd? Am I simply a theologically trained sheep walking alongside other sheep? Or will there be something specific and unique that ordination will bestow upon my ministry? In other words, what specifically will pastoral care mean for me one day as an ordained priest?

In order to answer these questions, I have turned to the documents of the Church on priesthood as a way of grounding my own understanding of pastoral identity. In particular, I have been reading an exhortation on the formation of priests that has recently been written by John Paul II. The Pope speaks of the need "to initiate

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<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*.

<sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Christifidelis Laici*, par. 54.

the candidate [for priesthood] into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work.”<sup>3</sup> My desire to get a sense of what it means to be a shepherd—to “bear the weight of my neighbour’s glory” in a specific way as an ordained priest—is one of the reasons why I decided to wear clerics during my summer internship.

So what does wearing clerics mean to me in my ministry now, at a time when I am not yet an ordained priest? For one thing, the clerical collar serves as a reminder of the responsibility I have to form my pastoral identity according to the mind and heart of the Church. This does not imply a slavish submission to some abstract teaching, but rather an assimilation of the rich theology of priestly ministry:

The exercise of his ministry deeply involves the priest himself as a conscious, free and responsible person. The bond with Jesus Christ assured by consecration and configuration to him in the sacrament of orders gives rise to and requires in the priest the further bond which comes from his ‘intention,’ that is, from a conscious and free choice to do in his ministerial activities what the Church intends to do. This bond tends by its very nature to become as extensive and profound as possible, affecting one’s way of thinking, feeling and life itself: in other words, creating a series of moral and spiritual ‘dispositions’ which correspond to the ministerial actions performed by the priest.<sup>4</sup>

Putting on the collar every morning serves to remind me of the ministry for which I am preparing, a ministry which the Church describes as a configuration to Christ. This configuration makes the priest a representative of Christ in much the same manner as an icon.<sup>5</sup> In the words of the Pope, “the priest is a living and transparent image of Christ the priest.”<sup>6</sup>

How does the collar serve to manifest this image? I am not certain what—if anything—the Church believes in this regard, but in my own mind, I have developed a “theology of the collar” this summer during my internship. For me, the collar is like a ring (now an engagement ring; one day a wedding ring) which testifies to the spousal relationship which the priest has to the Church. In essence, the priest “marries” the Church at ordination: “The gift of self, which is the source and synthesis of pastoral charity, is directed toward the Church.... The priest, who welcomes the call to ministry, is in a position to make this a loving choice, as a result of which the Church and souls become his first interest, and with this concrete spirituality he becomes capable of loving the universal Church and that part of it entrusted to him with the deep love of a husband for his wife.”<sup>7</sup>

What can serve as the source of this love for the Church? I believe it can come only from a love for Christ, a love that I have noticed slowly developing in my life as I have walked the path toward a vocation. Having experienced Christ’s love, I desire to reciprocate it:

The primary point of reference of the priest’s charity is Jesus Christ himself. Only in loving and serving Christ the head and spouse will charity become a source, criterion, measure and impetus for the priest’s love and service to the Church, the body and spouse of Christ.... This was the explicit and programmatic teaching of Jesus when he entrusted to Peter the ministry of shepherding the flock only after his threefold affirmation of love, indeed only after he had expressed a preferential love: “He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love

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<sup>3</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, par. 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, par. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Letter to Women*, par. 11; John Saward, “The Priest as Icon,” *Priest*, November 1994.

<sup>6</sup> *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, par. 12.

<sup>7</sup> *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, par. 23.

me?’ Peter...said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’” (Jn. 21:17)<sup>8</sup>

For me, wearing the collar is a symbol of my desire to love Christ through a particular form of service to his Church. In wearing the collar, I have a visible reminder of the dedication of my whole life to her service through the vows of poverty, celibate chastity, and obedience.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the collar also represents to me the authority of the priest, authority understood as service: “The authority of Jesus Christ as head coincides... with his service, with his gift, with his total, humble and loving dedication on behalf of the Church.... The spiritual existence of every priest receives its life and inspiration from exactly this type of authority.”<sup>10</sup> It is this sort of pastoral authority—marked by “no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption”—that I pray I will be able one day to exercise as an ordained priest.

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<sup>8</sup> *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, par. 23.

<sup>9</sup> When I speak of service to the Church, I do not thereby limit my ministry simply to baptized Christians.

<sup>10</sup> *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, par. 21.

Wednesday, January 31, 1996

Archbishop Harry Flynn  
Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Clayton Emmer  
6321 Yosemite Avenue  
Excelsior, MN 55331  
(612) 474-8618

Dear Archbishop Flynn:

Thank you for returning my phone call of last week. I'm sorry I missed both of your attempts to reach me. This week, I was able to contact Mert Lassonde and he arranged an opportunity for me to meet with you on February 22.

I wanted to write to you before that time, however, to let you know that I have arranged for a one-year leave of absence from the seminary beginning with the spring term, which starts this week. I hope to use this time as a means for further vocational discernment and personal growth. I plan to be living and working in the Twin Cities and hope to arrange regular meetings with both my spiritual director and a personal counselor. As part of the arrangements for the leave, I will be maintaining contact with my formation advisor, Fr. John Echert.

At present, I have moved in with my parents in Excelsior, and will be looking for work in the coming days.

I look forward to speaking with you about this decision when I see you on February 22.

Sincerely,

Clayton Emmer



May 8, 1996

Archbishop Harry Flynn  
Archdiocese of Saint Paul & Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Clayton Emmer  
6321 Yosemite Avenue  
Excelsior, MN 55331

Dear Archbishop Flynn:

I am writing to let you know that, after consulting with my spiritual director and speaking with the rector and Fr. John Echert (my formation advisor), I have decided to return to Saint Paul Seminary to continue my formation for priesthood. I plan to resume studies this coming fall by traveling to Jerusalem for the semester abroad with the class of Theology III.

I thought about trying to contact you in person to let you know this, but I know that you are very busy and I also know that I tend to get a bit tongue-tied when I am speaking to the archbishop. When I came into the chancery in February to speak to you about my leave-of-absence, I was so nervous that I forgot to mention to you that I had written you beforehand explaining that I had decided to take a leave. I was very surprised to learn that you had not received my letter... so surprised that I forgot to mention the letter!

At any rate, I am returning to the seminary and am eager to return to doing what I think God wants me to do. I appreciate the advice you gave me back in February: "Whatever you do, make time to listen to God." That advice has consistently echoed in the back of my mind during the past three months and has served as an important reminder about what really matters in a vocation: doing the will of God.

May God bless your dedication to the archdiocese and provide you with everything you need to carry out your work with the peace and joy that comes from serving Christ and his Church.

Sincerely in Christ,

Clayton Emmer  
Theology II

P.S. - I understand that you will be visiting with the Johnson family on Mother's Day. The Johnsons have been members of my home parish for a number of years and have been good friends of my family for quite some time. They have invited me to their house on Mother's Day as well, but I will be attending the graduation of a friend in Steubenville, Ohio, so I will not be able to be present.

Joan Johnson in particular has been a support to me as I have considered a vocation to the priesthood. Her life as a Third Order Carmelite and her joy -- the fruit of her life of prayer, to be sure -- have been an inspiration to me, and I know she has been supporting me with her prayers. I think of her as a mother to me in the order of grace (after the Blessed Virgin, of course). If you could thank her for this on my behalf when you see her on Mother's Day, I would appreciate it.

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

*Office of the Archbishop*

May 13, 1996

Clayton Emmer  
6321 Yosemite Avenue  
Excelsior, MN 55331

Dear Clayton,

Many, many thanks for your kindness in writing to me on May 8, 1996. The news in your letter caused me great joy. I am happy to know that after consultation with your spiritual director and with the rector of the seminary and with Father John Echert, you have decided to return to The Saint Paul Seminary to continue your formation for the priesthood. I am delighted to know that you will resume your studies this coming fall by traveling to Jerusalem for the semester abroad with the class of Third Theology.

Clayton, every once in awhile it is good to step back from our intended paths and give some thought to what we are about. You have done this and you have done it well. I am glad that you took my advice to listen to the Lord because I am convinced that the unhappiness that seems to pervade in so many hearts in today's society is because people do not take time to listen to the Lord and the Lord will always tell us how much he loves us but he will always keep us on the right path.

I did not get to the Johnson's on Sunday. I had some extra work to do over the weekend and hoped to get it done on Saturday. However, I went to the memorial service of the coach at Benilde-St. Margaret's on Saturday afternoon and it took me longer than I had anticipated. Therefore, I had to call the Johnson's and tell them I would not be able to come. I was a bit disappointed myself.

Thanks again and I keep you in prayer.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Tuesday, July 9, 1996

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Clayton Emmer  
6321 Yosemite Avenue  
Excelsior, MN 55331

Dear Archbishop Flynn:

It was good to see you at the Couple-to-Couple League Convention at Bethel College a couple of weeks ago. I appreciated your homily on vocation as well as your presence at the Convention during the morning.

Before Mass, I was anxious to try to get an opportunity to speak with you about life at the seminary. Ever since the beginning of May, when I began to reconnect with the seminary, I have wanted to speak with you about my own experience of Saint Paul Seminary and some very troubling things I perceive to be happening in the institution. When I spoke with you briefly at the Convention, however, I suddenly felt at peace about the whole situation and did not feel I needed to speak to you immediately about seminary life. I had the sense that you were aware of the struggles going on in the seminary community and that things were going to be okay. I cannot tell you what peace that has given me. You have a very calming presence, akin, I imagine, to the presence of Christ for the apostles.

Nevertheless, I wanted to write to you to share my thoughts and observations about Saint Paul Seminary. I understand that you took the time this spring to sit down with every seminarian studying for the Archdiocese for a personal interview. Since I was on leave-of-absence, I did not meet with you, but I would like to write you a letter as a way of offering some comments. I don't believe I will be telling you much of anything new, but for my own sake, I am writing to you.

I have been working on a letter for nearly two weeks now, but have not yet completed it. My best guess is that I will need another week before I will find the time to finish it. In the meantime, I have decided not to wait until the letter is complete before sending you a book that I recently picked up. The book—written by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and entitled *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*—has been a helpful resource for me as I try to understand what is happening in the seminary and the diocese. To be honest, I have not yet read the whole book, but I began by reading the epilogue entitled "Party of Christ or Church of Jesus Christ?" For me, this epilogue serves as a wonderful examination of conscience, one to which I know I will need to return again and again.

At any rate, I offer it to you for your reflection.

Congratulations on receiving the pallium from the Holy Father in Rome recently. I hope your time in Rome was personally and spiritually refreshing for you. Be assured of my prayers for you and your intentions as you continue to serve this Archdiocese.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Clayton Emmer  
Theology II

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

*Office of the Archbishop*

August 12, 1996

Clayton Emmer  
6321 Yosemite Avenue  
Excelsior, MN 55331

Dear Clayton,

How pleased I was to have received your letter of July 9, 1996. I also express gratitude to you for giving me the book written by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and entitled Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today.

Clayton, I apologize for being so late in responding to you. However, I was on vacation and then I gave a retreat to the priests of Davenport. I am just now getting to my mail.

I would appreciate it if you would call Mert Lassonde at 291-4408 and get some time when it would be convenient for you to come in and sit down with me for a visit. I would like that very much. I would certainly reflect on any comments that you might have which might be helpful. But I would want you to know that as a seminarian studying for this Archdiocese I will be most respectful to any suggestions you might have.

You honored me by writing to me and I am grateful.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Archbishop Flynn*

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

8/19  
Called Mert Lassonde  
Pls call in  
Jan. when  
you return.

May 19, 1997

Archbishop Harry Flynn  
Archdiocese of Saint Paul & Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Clayton Emmer  
2260 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear Archbishop Flynn:

I am writing to let you know that, after consulting with my spiritual director, my formation review board, and the rector, I have decided to take a leave-of-absence from Saint Paul Seminary at the end of the spring term. Since I have completed two-and-a-half years of formation, and have been unable to make a clear decision to continue toward priestly ministry, I am stepping out of formation for the foreseeable future.

I took a leave-of-absence before, beginning in February of 1996, but returned to the seminary in time for the fall semester. In retrospect, I think my return was premature. My discernment has been complicated, I believe, by a long-term pattern of depression which has been diagnosed this spring and which I am seeking to address with a combination of counselling and medication. At any rate, the seminary has supported my decision to step out of seminary, continue to get professional help for the depression, and then make a decision regarding vocation when the depression has moderated. I will be living and working in the Twin Cities, and will continue to engage in spiritual direction periodically.

I figured that a letter would be the best way to contact you, as a recent phone conversation with Mert Lassonde made me aware that your calendar is full until August.

If I could make one request of you: Would you please pray that I will listen to God and, with His grace, develop the courage and faith to do what He desires? I would appreciate that.

Sincerely in Christ,

Clayton Emmer

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

*Office of the Archbishop*

May 29, 1997

Clayton Emmer  
The Saint Paul Seminary  
2260 Summit Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Clayton,

Many, many thanks for your kindness in writing to me on May 19, 1997. Indeed, I was sorry to learn that you have decided to take a leave of absence from The Saint Paul Seminary at the end of the spring term. At the same time, I was at peace concerning your decision because from reading your letter it seems to me that you are going to try to get the necessary help that you need through counseling and medication to deal with the pattern of depression which has been diagnosed this past spring.

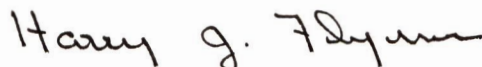
Clayton, I will pray for you. You are an outstanding young man. I have always been glad to be in your presence and I have always found you to be serious about whatever you were doing. I mean that as a real compliment. Having watched you at times when you were in the sanctuary in the St. Paul Cathedral or at liturgy at the Seminary, I've always been impressed.

It is absolutely true that I have been overwhelmingly busy these past few weeks and will continue to be through June. It will be necessary for me to be out of the office in June for the Bishops' Meeting, etc. Then in July I will be going home. However, I would enjoy a good visit with you in August. Perhaps you could call Mert Lassonde and set that up now so that we could have it on the calendar.

Keep searching for the will of God. Our Lord will let you know what His will for you is and then have the courage to embrace it. Believe me, you will be in my prayers.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

*Office of the Archbishop*

December 19, 1997

Clayton Emmer  
336 Kenneth Street  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Clayton,

Thank you very much for making the retreat this past weekend. I greatly appreciated your presence and I greatly appreciated the opportunity that I had of visiting with you.

Thank you for your reflections concerning your own personal life and also your reflections on The Saint Paul Seminary. I value your opinion.

I take this opportunity to express to you my gratitude for the book on the Discernment of Spirits. That will help me greatly. I've known Father MacNutt for many years. I knew he had left ministry and I am glad he is back in the Church.

With blessings and good wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis



ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

*Office of the Archbishop*

December 23, 1997

Clayton Emmer  
336 Kenneth Street  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Clayton,

I want to thank you for joining me at beautiful Villa Maria in Frontenac. I write to you today to express to you my heartfelt gratitude for your taking the time, and making the effort to be with me on that weekend of prayer and discernment.

In my judgment, it was a splendid and successful weekend. I felt the presence of the Lord when I walked into Villa Maria on that Friday evening. I knew that each one present was serious about his purposes, and entering fully into that beautiful spirit of quietude and desert in solitude. This you did, and you did it so beautifully. At the same time, we had opportunities for visiting, and camaraderie.

I want to impress upon you once again, the importance of prayer in your everyday life. Find sometime when you can be alone with our Lord. Then ask Him what He wants you to do with your life, and then learn to listen for the answer, and you will find it within your own heart.

For my part, I want you to know that I will be praying for you. You will always remain very special to me because of that weekend. Our Lord has a plan for you, and eventually that plan will be revealed to you, and you will have the courage to embrace it, and do it, whatever it might be. Only what God wants will ever make you happy. When you learn what that is, step out in faith to do it.

I send to you my blessings during the holy season. I hope you are enjoying the season immensely, and that 1998 will bring you even closer to our Lord.

With every good wish, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Archbishop Flynn*

Most Reverend Harry J Flynn, D D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

*Thanks again, for the book!*

Thursday, February 26, 1998

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Clayton Emmer  
336 Kenneth Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear Archbishop Flynn:

Recently, I received a letter inviting me to apply to the revised MA/PS degree program at the Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity. I imagine that by this time you have been made aware of the program, but, just in case, I have decided to forward a copy of the materials to you.

There seem to be numerous attempts at the seminary to provide formation for lay ministry in the Church. While I applaud efforts to offer formation for lay people that will nourish them in their vital role of serving the Church's mission, I sometimes wonder if the programs offered at the School of Divinity help lay people to understand their role as distinct from the role of clerics. In some cases, the current offerings would seem to foster a reaction against the recent teaching of the Church regarding the meaning of ministry. This saddens me, as such a reaction would only deepen existing wounds in the Church and further hamper efforts to build up ecclesial communion.

I understand that Gene Scapanski was the founder of the MA/PS program at the University of Saint Thomas. A friend of mine participated in an elective course last fall taught by Mr. Scapanski—an elective in ecclesiology. During one class period last fall, Scapanski made a lively presentation about the Instruction entitled Some Questions Regarding Collaboration of Nonordained Faithful in Priests' Sacred Ministry. In December, his sister, Jan Viktora, sent out the mailing for the revised MA/PS program that I am enclosing with this letter.

Please also find enclosed related materials: an article by Gene Scapanski that was printed in a recent collection of essays by seminary faculty; a slip I received as a commuter student inviting me to apply for various liturgical ministries; a description of the Ash Wednesday activities at the seminary; and an article on Befriender Ministry that appeared in the Winter 1998 issue of Saint Thomas Magazine.

I hope this information may further your understanding of the current environment at the Saint Paul Seminary.

May you continue to receive from our Lord everything you need to carry out your mission to make Jesus Christ known and loved.

Sincerely in Christ,

Clayton Emmer

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

226 Summit Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-2197

*Office of the Archbishop*

March 2, 1998

Clayton Emmer  
336 Kenneth Street  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Clayton,

Many, many thanks for your kindness in sending me the booklet on The Saint Paul Seminary. I certainly will read it very carefully.

It was good seeing you at the open forum the other evening. It is always good to see such a friendly face at any event.

With blessings and good wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Archbishop Flynn".

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

October 1, 1999

Page 1 of 1

To:  
Sr. Anne Ganley  
Office of the Archbishop  
Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102-2197

Fax: (651) 290-1637

From:  
Clayton Emmer  
336 Kenneth Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Phone: (651) 690-9453 (h)  
(612) 243-2099 x8013 (w)

e-mail: [francesco1221@hotmail.com](mailto:francesco1221@hotmail.com)

RE: Appointment to see Archbishop Flynn

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Sr. Anne-

In mid-August, I happened to see Archbishop Flynn during the Irish Festival at the University of Saint Thomas. He knows me from the two-and-a-half years I spent as a seminarian for the Archdiocese. Since it has been about a year-and-a-half since I spoke with him, he asked me if I would call you and set up an appointment to meet with him. I think he probably would just like a chance to sit down and catch up on what has been happening with me since I left seminary in 1997.

Would you please set up a meeting with him? I am a full-time computer trainer, so my days tend to be booked; however, if I know the meeting date a couple of weeks in advance, I can arrange to have a day out of the classroom when I would be free to meet with the Archbishop. As I look into the next few weeks, the best days would be:

Fri, October 8

Tue, October 12

Wed, October 13

Mon, October 18

(any of these days after 10 a.m.)

This is about as much as I know of my schedule. Just choose a good time for the Archbishop and then contact me to confirm.

Thanks for your help.

In Christ,

Clayton Emmer



*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."* Heb. 13:8

## Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Office of the Archbishop

October 21, 1999

Clayton Emmer  
336 Kenneth Street  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Clayton,

Many, many thanks for the tomatoes which you brought back that very same day of our appointment. They were delicious and I want to thank you for them. I even shared them with the secretary.

It was wonderful seeing you again and having the visit. I am glad that you are discerning God's will for you, and you seem to be finding great peace in that. Take care of yourself and many, many blessings.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

December 7, 1999

Most Reverend Harry Flynn  
Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102-2197

Dear Archbishop Flynn,

Thank you again for taking the time to visit with me back in October. It was good to see you and I'm glad that you enjoyed the tomatoes.

During our conversation, I mentioned to you that I had been interested in monthly spiritual direction but was having difficulty finding a director. At that point, you graciously offered to make spiritual direction available to me if I was interested in that. I felt very honored that you would consider making time in your busy schedule for this.

Over the past couple of months, I have given your invitation thought and prayer. I have decided that I would be interested in your offer of spiritual direction, if you are still willing to do this. I feel a bit awkward asking someone who has so many responsibilities to take on one more. If you had not mentioned it to me, I would never have considered asking you.

At your convenience, would you please let me know if you are still willing to do this? I wouldn't expect that we would meet monthly, but perhaps I would be able to correspond with you by letter and then meet with you in person occasionally, as your schedule allows.

Wishing you a blessed Advent and all the joy of the Christmas season.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Clayton Emmer



*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."* Heb. 13:8

## Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Office of the Archbishop

December 9, 1999

Mr. Clayton Emmer  
336 Kenneth St  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Clayton,

Thank you so very much for your wonderful note of December 7, 1999. I was very happy to hear from you, and, of course, I will be happy to assume the role of your spiritual director.

You were very understanding in not expecting to meet monthly. However, we can set up a schedule, and you can come in as planned. In the meantime, know how grateful I am to you for your kindness in writing. I would suggest that you call me at 651-291-4410 so that I can personally make the time with you. Thank you very much and many blessings.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Monday, August 4, 2003

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis  
226 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Clayton Emmer  
336 Kenneth Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear Archbishop Flynn:

I wanted you to receive at least one encouraging letter on your first day back in the office after your return from vacation.

Welcome back to the Archdiocese. I thought about sending you my half-empty bottle of PROZAC, but decided that cookies might be a more salutary gift. Comfort food never hurts. (Besides, if the antics in this Archdiocese continue in their current vein, I might need that PROZAC myself).

I was at Steubenville North yesterday and heard you mention all of the letters you have been receiving. I imagine that gets a bit draining.

Can I share with you one of my little personal fantasies? Here it is: I get hired by the Archdiocese to respond to all of the angry letters you receive. Obviously, this would be a full-time position. Here is how it would work: I would open your mail, make a quick assessment of each letter you receive and then pass the nice letters and business on to you without reading further. The nasty letters would go into my inbox, and my job for the rest of the day would be to write the responses to these. I would relish this. I would sit down and pen responses, using all sorts of well-chosen adjectives and action verbs. Then I would pass the letters over to you, so you could tone them down and make them compatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This might save you some time, and it would be very cathartic for me. I think we'd make a great team.

In all seriousness, though, I just wanted to send a short word of encouragement and gratitude.

First of all, I just want to thank you for being like a spiritual father to me personally -- most recently, through the offer of spiritual direction over the past two years.

I've kept a file of all of the letters you've written to me over the years, and I can't tell you how often I have pulled out the letter you wrote to me back on May 29, 1997. That spring, I decided to take leave of the seminary to treat the depression that had set in. I remember how embarrassed and ashamed I felt about taking this leave. Your response was so thoughtful and kind that I remember bursting into tears when I received it. I knew that you probably had dozens of letters to write that week, and here you were writing me a personal note... and not just any note, but a note any seminarian would be proud to receive. I will never forget this.

Now I know that your job consists of doing more than sending replies to the many letters you receive. And recently I have noticed that you've taken several courageous actions in this Archdiocese, which I am certain haven't made life easy for you. I am more grateful for this than for all the kind letters you have sent me over the years. I know others are also grateful, but I don't know how many people have bothered to send along their words of



gratitude.

Ultimately, however, for you, for me and for every Christian, our vocation rests not on the favor (or lack of favor) we receive from those around us. I stumbled upon this quote from St. John of the Cross which spoke to me personally and maybe will have some meaning for you as well:

Take neither great nor little notice of who is with you or against you, and try always to please God. Ask him that his will be done in you. Love him intensely, as he deserves to be loved.  
*Sayings of Light and Love, #155*

As you continue to serve as shepherd of this Archdiocese, please know of my prayers and support. You have my high esteem, my deep affection, and my sincere loyalty.

In Christ Jesus,  
our hope,

Clayton Emmer

PS - I have also included a book by Cardinal Ratzinger that I found very encouraging. Here is a man who sees all sorts of craziness in the Church every day, and yet he is a man of serene hope. He is my hero.

PSS - One request (note, I said *request*, not *demand*): Please don't spend your time writing a thank you note to me. Instead, take a moment in the chapel with our Lord. Thanks.



*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."* Heb. 13:8

## Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Office of the Archbishop

August 12, 2003

Clayton Emmer  
336 Kenneth Street  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Clayton,

I know that in your letter to me of August 4, 2003, you gave me a P.S.S. and that was that I should not spend my time writing a thank you note to you. Instead, you advised, that I take a moment in the chapel with Our Lord. Suppose I do both and when I'm in the chapel I will pray in thanksgiving for you.

Thanks so much for your beautiful, beautiful letter. It touched me deeply and I thank you for the cookies. I'd rather have the cookies than the Prozac.

I just needed to tell you how deeply touched I was by your letter and it is my hope and prayer that we will get together and have a visit before you leave for California.

With blessings on you, dear Clayton, and with much gratitude, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Archbishop Flynn*

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

*Thank you in a special way  
for the book by Cardinal Ratzinger.  
Filled with hope !!*



*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."* Heb. 13:8

## Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Office of the Archbishop Emeritus

March 10, 2009

Clayton Emmer  
910 Juno Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Clayton,

How very happy I was to have received your wonderful note of February 26. Yes, we have lost touch during the last five years when you were in Los Angeles.

Welcome back to St. Paul. I am delighted that you are here and delighted that you are at Nativity parish. Thank you for teaching the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation class at Nativity.

I will be coming to the parish this week to give a Lenten session. It will be great to see you. However, I would love to have an opportunity to visit with you for a longer period of time as we did in the past. My home phone is 952-652-2914. Call me there and then we can make a time which is mutually convenient.

In the meantime, know that I welcome you back to St. Paul and will be delighted to see you again.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop Emeritus of Saint Paul and Minneapolis



*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."* Heb. 13:8

## Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Office of the Archbishop Emeritus

April 8, 2009

Clayton Emmer  
910 Juno Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Clayton,

First of all, let me tell you how wonderful it was to have a visit with you just this past week. I don't think you've changed at all. You look just as young as you did before you left for California. I can't believe that it was five years since we had a visit.

Thank you for sending me the articles about which we spoke. I shall read them with great interest and use the Stations of the Cross for my meditation during this Holy Week. Thank you again and I send blessings and good wishes to you.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop Emeritus of Saint Paul and Minneapolis