

CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE
RECEIVED

September 1, 1973

Cardinal Humberto Medeiros
Archbishop of Boston.

ADD
NOT ACKNOWLEDGED AT
CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE

Dear Cardinal Medeiros: OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In case you are wondering what you are paying me for and what I am up to in the interim since last we talked, here is a synopsis. As you will observe, the problems require almost a complete restructuring and duplication of the services which we provide for straight people.

I have been receiving a steady stream of congratulatory messages, many of whom I have encouraged to write to you since you were the one whose sensitivity and courage made my ministry possible. I imagine you are receiving as many hate letters as I am and only pray that you do not falter in your willingness to stand up to the furies. When your name is mentioned at Mass, there is warmth of feeling among these people who know the jeopardy in which you have placed yourself by approving of my ministry. As Cardinal Cushing was a man of the poor and the oppressed, the rejected and disenfranchised, refusing to be controlled by the more conservative elements surrounding him, so you have emerged as among the first Bishops in the Country to show concern for this perhaps the largest minority group in America.

My every effort is bent toward protecting you and explaining your position as well as seeking to show the utter Christian complexion of such a ministry. I hope, when you think I am veering from that intention you will remonstrate. Perhaps it would be well at this juncture for us to have a regular meeting time once a month. At the present I am able to meet with groups such as Dignity and assure them of your intentions. There is however the ever-present threat of a mass protest against the Church. Boston, I hope, will be singularly impervious to the just criticism being leveled at other areas in the Church.

The article of Bishop Riley appearing in The Pilot created an aura of gloom and anger but my letter to the editor trying to place emphasis on the virtue of love rather than purity was not deemed printable. I know that you told newsmen through your secretary that this was also your position. In the future I would appreciate it if you would at least let me consult on any statements you make about Gays. You wouldn't speak about blacks without consulting with those Priests who are working among them.

Here is a brief and quite incomplete list of the possible answers to the needs of Gay people which await only quarters for me to operate out of. I have all the volunteers and funds necessary.

An AA program for Gays. Relegated to the bars for social contacts, it is not surprising that there should be a higher incidence of alcoholism among gays, especially since they must struggle with society's contempt. I have the people ready to begin this program.

A Gay Employment counselling service. Many Gays find difficulty in obtaining employment if their sexual orientation is known. On the other hand, there are many gay people in management who are willing to employ gays. The problem is putting them together. I have the staff to do this.

Housing. Many gays are living alone in studio apartments. We have on the drawing board a plan which will cost no money but which will provide single Gays with a community setting while preserving the need for privacy so often overlooked by communes.

A Half-way house for Gays who are in the toils of the Dept. of Youth Services. We have the approval and enthusiastic endorsement of the authorities who have pledged to send us all gay juveniles if we provide the building and staff. We have the staff.

Ministry to Gay prisoners. On the West Coast, it took many years of badgering to wrest permission from prison authorities for such a program. Without a whimper, indeed before we could ask, we were given the encouragement from Sheriff Buckley to begin such a program. I have the volunteers and funds. I lack only the office space necessary to coordinate such a program.

Picketing has been the best method devised by the Farm Workers to bring their message of exploitation to the public. We have a Zap group of pickets or pressure group which will be calling on all those media people who continue to insult gay people. This is non-violent and as American as those church groups which lobby or march on the State House.

Mass. Because there is so much anger at the Church among gay people, some might be surprised to learn that our problem is finding quarters large enough to accommodate the numbers who attend weekly.

A continuing seminar on Changing Sexuality, similar to the courses I have taught at Boston College which would afford Gay people and their friends or family as well as professionals the opportunity to become educated on recent advances in the field of gay studies. We lack only a building in which to carry this out.

A film depicting the ministry to gays. American Productions has already begun work on this and The Merrill Foundation is considering a Grant of \$25,000. to finance this project.

A continuing weekly column dealing with the questions surrounding homosexuality, exploding the myths and stereotypes and providing Christian contexts in which to make judgments. This has been written and awaits the day when some courageous newspaper will accept the harassment inevitable for publishing the column. Meanwhile we have written many articles for gay publications.

Developing a Gay Studies Course in every major college and university as well as a Gay Students Union. This effort is well under way but lacks coordination without a central office and telephone.

Availability of professional counseling for gay, bisexual and confused young people especially of high school age. We are overwhelmed by the demand for this and have organized a staff to provide the time and expertise. We lack quarters.

Out-reach program to guidance personnel and other youth serving agencies who might come across gay people in the course of their work. Usually they panic and call us. We need to train them to deal with the problem themselves. We are already doing this in many isolated instances but require a coordinated effort. The same need, of course, was evident back in the days when drugs burst upon the youth scene and few were equipped to deal intelligently with it.

A Drop-in Center in Provincetown during the summer months. Many younger gays migrate to this well-publicized gay area each summer and develop all kinds of problems while there.

A once-a-month meeting of all the leaders of the gay community. This is on the drawing board for immediate implementation but we lack a facility. Much of the impetus of the gay movement has, like the black and peace movements, been dissipated for lack of coordination through empire building, jealousy and misunderstanding. We are in a unique position to be able to heal some of the wounds. We believe in the advisability of pluralism rather than combining into one group. But we also believe in the need for cooperation and communication.

An office for Police-Gay Community Relations. There has been a rash of homophobic violence against gays. There is a problem with rumors which lead to angry retaliation when a rumor control office could allay such eventualities. Police are as prejudiced against gays as against blacks and need to know that they will be held accountable. By its silence and seeming lack of concern, the Church legitimizes violence against gays. By default, it contributes via the sin of omission and opens itself to the same accusations leveled at it during the Jewish exterminations in Germany.

A Gay Hot-line especially for the startling number of suicidal gays.

Rap Groups. We have several of these already under way. They consist of weekly discussions of the problems plaguing gay people. They are limited to eight persons per group and are supervised and facilitated by me. The waiting list grows outrageously while I seek conducive accommodations.

A Gay Emergency Telephone Pyramid. This project has already been started by a committee of students at the University of

numbers of gays in the event of a disaster such as the fire in New Orleans which killed thirty gays.

A Gay Community Center. Thus far efforts to obtain such have been abortive, yet such a center would provide an alternative to the bar scene which is so debilitating for gays.

A Gay Free Clinic. I had the personnel and the funds for this project but lost them due to my inability to provide quarters. Gay people have some medical needs that are not satisfied in the regular clinics. Just as street people and runaways ran into similar problems in the '60s.

A Farm. If you are opposed to promiscuity, you would be delighted with the program envisioned for this farm. Couples only will preclude cruising. All the activities will be directed toward encouraging enduring relationships rather than one night stands. We have the farm but lack facilities to organize the program.

Two groups (one of gay singles and one of gay couples) have expressed interest in developing "religious communities ministering to the homosexual. While this may at first seem ludicrous, the numbers applying and the intensity of their dedication makes me feel that this cannot be rejected out of hand.

European trip for gays sponsored by myself. While not high on priority, there is as much if not more need for this as in the straight community.

Legal Aid for Gays. I have the staff but need office space. A District Attorney was recently quoted in the Phoenix as saying that in twenty years of court room experience he had never once seen a case where a gay person had been given a favorable decision by a jury.

Half-way House for Gay Prisoners. We have the assurance from authorities that they believe gays should be in prison for shorter times than straight people, yet there is a tendency to keep them longer for lack of a half-way house to take them. We are assured that if we provide the house, they will provide the funds and will release all such prisoners to us gladly.

A Gay Trust Fund. Without progeny, wealthy gays are leaving their money to cats. They need to know of a reputable, worthwhile fund to whom they could contribute.

I have been at great pains to avoid giving to the gay community the impression that I was the "Messiah" come to solve all problems. On the contrary, I have avoided duplicating any existing program as well as waiting to take my cues from the leaders in the gay community. All of the programs mentioned here have the endorsement of gay leaders with whom we have been fortunate to establish the finest of rapport.

I am sorry to burden you with so lengthy a letter but it seemed important for you to know as much as possible about my activities and

As you can readily see, I am in danger of being overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of people seeking my help. The only solution I can see is a building. Hence I am asking you to consider allocating a Church or building in the Boston area. St. Clement's, St. Cecilia's, St. Joseph's, Holy Trinity in the South End all seem to have diminishing numbers of parishioners. If any of the pastors are known to be considering transfer, perhaps you might consider allowing me to discuss the possibility of using the basement or rectory for my needs.

My own salary has me living close to the bone and unable to afford even a car. As you know, I have never asked you or your predecessor for funds. I am not now doing that. But I do ask you now to consider a building for the sake of the needs and sufferings of so many. If you find this impossible, I shall continue on as before.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

(Rev.) Paul R. Shanley

