



Province of St. Barbara

FRANCISCAN FRIARS

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December 12, 1994
(dictated Nov 22, 1994)

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Robert Van Handel - J30982
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Dear Robert,

Peace and all good!

I wanted to write you this brief note before the Thanksgiving holidays, and even if you get it a week later, I wanted you to know that I was thinking of you. I think that it's appropriate - I would like to give thanks to you for your presence in my life, for the friendship that you've given, for the trips that we've taken together, for the service that you gave at St. Anthony's and as my provincial secretary. I appreciate all of this. And no matter what's happened, no matter what water has gone under the bridge, no matter what difficulties we've experienced together, still, it does not outweigh the good and the value of your life for me. And I want you to know that.

Things in the office have quieted down a little bit as they always do around these Thanksgiving holidays as the world shuts down. I'm glad that the world shuts down because it gives us a chance to shut down a bit too. Tomorrow morning I'm going to leave for Santa Barbara and drive down there with my sister and then take my mom out to have dinner with my brothers on Thanksgiving Day. It should be a nice family occasion. It's always a little bit difficult to go into Santa Barbara these days as I'm associated with so many events of the past two years. But it will be nice to see my mom and to have a good visit with my sister as we travel down together in the car.

█ gets back from Australia tomorrow. I'll be eager to see him. I think he's had a great time. He sent me a progress report on his trip. You can imagine it. It was structured in categories with a description of each category, what he had done in each category, and how he was responding in each category. I thought it was really quite informative and I was glad that he was able to share it with me. At the same time I was especially glad to see that he's happy to come back and continue on as Provincial Secretary. He's done an

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outstanding job, I think, really, one of the finest we've ever had in the Province. Anyway, it will be good to have my good friend home.

Mike's doing fine. We had dinner together in our new house, just the two of us, the other day. It was a good meal and we spent about an hour and a half talking. Also I find that as a friend that knows me so well I'm able to discuss a lot of my own personal issues with him and he's always ready to give a willing ear and then to respond in kind. I really appreciate his love and friendship.

We are making some progress settling the abuse cases. In fact we've made a good deal of progress the last few weeks. A couple of the insurance companies have been very cooperative and although it's true we're entering into an arrangement with them whereby some of the monies will be coming out of the province, I'm optimistic that we can reach an equitable solution for all concerned. And I believe we will be able to extricate ourselves from some of these difficulties without doing any lasting damage. In fact, as I've mentioned to you in many letters, there's been a great deal of fruit borne from the whole affair.

By this time you've certainly found out about Phil Wolfe. It was a real tragic affair. I was comforted by the thought that Louie called me up after Phil had taken his life and indicated to me that this had been an outstanding issue. In fact, it had been an issue with Phil since his young adulthood, previous to any of the abuse cases in Santa Barbara and previous to his involvement with the [REDACTED]. I gather that it was something that stemmed way back into his family history. He was a very bright man and I think he did great work for many people. And yet he was troubled always by these inner demons. In addition he had a very rigid personality. I understand the friars had a very good service for him at Huntington Beach. God bless Gus Krumm. He did an outstanding pastoral job. I just wrote him a letter congratulating him for this. I was glad he was able to do it. I did not attend as I think it would have been a lightening rod for some news media and these days I try to avoid that. Most of the friars seem to be taking the death fairly well, although I'm sure it has been a real discouragement for some. I hope not so much for you and I hope you've had somebody to talk with. If there's anything I can do, don't hesitate to ask.

Thanks for the visiting forms. I'll fill them out and hopefully they will be processed in due time and I'll be able to get to see you sometime in the next eight weeks or so. At least I hope so. It will be good to sit down and have a chat. I like the description of your 'digs' which you offer periodically in your various letters which I see. It's not exactly the same as mine at Oxford, but

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let's face it, Greyfriars was somewhat of a prison. So we can share that experience together.

Please remember me and all the friars in your prayers, Robert. We certainly remember you continually and let us pray that we might move forward together in great wisdom and peace.

Faternally,

[REDACTED]

Provincial Minister

[REDACTED]