

POPE JOHN XXIII NATIONAL SEMINARY

WESTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02193

RICHARD CARDINAL CUSHING
FOUNDER

April 5, 1979

REV. JAMES W. DEADER
RECTOR

CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE
RECEIVED

APR 5 1979

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

His Eminence Humberto Cardinal Medeiros
Archbishop of Boston
Cardinal's Residence
2101 Commonwealth Avenue
Brighton, MA 02135

Your Eminence:

I have listened to Father Paul Shanley's tape, "Changing Norms in Sexuality", as you suggested. My reflections are as follows:

Personal Remarks

Father Shanley is a classmate of mine at St. John Seminary. He is a friend even though I have not seen or spoken to him for at least seven years. I have admired his 'gutsy' style that faced issues and situations that most of us avoided. My mother tells me that he addressed the League of Catholic Women some years ago, and when finished the ladies spontaneously passed the hat to give him an offering, an unheard of practice in their annals.

Doctrinal Content of the Tapes

There are many things in the tapes I disagree with; in fact, most of his argumentations are built on presumptions and facts that I feel are debatable. By his own admission he is given to hyperbole, and he disclaims making moral statements. His approach is informational and pastoral. As stated, I would dispute some of his information; and I feel there is at least a 'male sonans' dimension to his pastoral approach. His criticism of the Church (much of it is true) has a harshness that offends and lacks a pastoral outreach to his own ... something he is seeking to extend to the 'sexual minorities'.

I think the tapes should be listened to in their entirety, and upon completion I feel it would be difficult to make a doctrinal case that Father Shanley is exceeding the respectable limits allowed theologians and pastoral persons in regard to the teaching of the ordinary magisterium.

Pastoral Method of Father Shanley

There are several contemporary models of integrating Church teaching with sound and competent pastoral care. The traditional approach was to give clear moral principles and norms, and to allow the good confessor some leeway in applying these principles when life structure was difficult and made it nearly impossible for full compliance. What Father Shanley does is take these pastoral principles - originally designed for confessional use - and bring them to light in the external

RCAB 00040

His Eminence Humberto Cardinal Medeiros

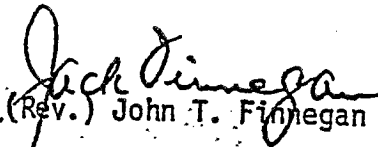
Page 2

forum. I question the wisdom of this tactic on such sensitive issues since it creates misunderstanding and confusion. His basic problem with the official Church, as I see it, is not so much in the area of defiance of Church teaching, but in the area of his model/style of public pastoral care.

I only know what I read in the newspaper, but I feel the recent decision to invite Father Shanley back to pastoral work in a parish is a sound one. He needs a broader ministry, and he needs to be in touch with some of the other heroes, like himself, who are putting a lot of their life efforts on the line to do God's good work. His difficulties are not chiefly theological, in my opinion, but are personal and pastoral. They should be handled at that level.

My prayers and best wishes to you.

Yours respectfully,


(Rev.) John T. Finnegan

JTF/crd

RCAB 00041