

EXHIBIT B

SACRED HEART CHURCH      1530 UNION STREET      INDIANAPOLIS, IN      46225

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March 17, 1978

Dear Members of the Catholic Community of Sacred Heart:

Honest to God, this letter has been a long time in coming. It is the fruit of much thought, study and prayer. To me, each of you fit into this category; I think you are a serious member of Sacred Heart Parish Community; I think you are a serious Christian and Catholic; I think you'd be open and frank enough to give me some suggestions if I asked for them...and that's just what I'm doing with this letter. (By the way, I told you fellow K.C. members that I would get in touch with you when I needed help).

My basic concern is this: What can Gospel-living people, Sacred Heart Church in particular, do about our neighborhood? Should it be doing anything? Should it be the backbone and beacon in the community? Should it be growing rather than withering on the vine? Should it be evangelizing through its witness, example, and genuine Christian Spirit? Do the majority of non-catholics in our area know much about Sacred Heart and its people? Do they really care one way or the other? Should they?

After a year now - of observing, talking, researching, thinking and praying, I can see that we'd definitely have an impact: IF we somehow got into the Real Estate business and help especially the elderly sell, buy or rent their homes. IF we could take over some of the homes, remodel them into 2-3 apartment dwellings and rent them to widows and widowers; IF we could maintain a local police force; IF we could provide our own taxi service, etc. etc. BUT, I also see several funded and non-funded neighborhood organizations working hard to solve just those problems.

As I see it, money doesn't solve all problems, especially government or foundation monies that have a whole network of strings attached to them. Many parishioners have reminded me that neighborhood organizations have existed locally for years now and there seems to be little or nothing to show for them. It's easy for all to become discouraged and simply say: "That's life, and there's no hope".

Never will I believe that there is no hope. An Easter people, as we are, we can never believe there is no hope. Little steps forward, as small as they may be, lead us to rainbows, sunshine and hope. Here's my conclusion. I'd like to know what you think about it.

It's hard to save the whole world at once - or even the whole neighborhood. But we can do an awful lot for individual human beings - persons - one at a time. I think Sacred Heart needs a St. Vincent De Paul Society. Some things it would provide Sacred Heart:

1. A chance for individual men and women (parishioners) to share in a concrete way in the mission of the Church to reach out to the poor, the needy, those who have little knowledge of Christ or His Church.
2. A real assistance to the clergy so that 100% more truly Christian ministry can be given to those who need it.
3. Many non-catholics will be given the opportunity to meet Christ

personally through a real person - one of His modern day followers, a Sacred Heart parishioner.

4. The neighborhood will sense a real spirit of hope as they witness an organized program through which specific good is given and received.

How would it work?

1. We would organize and establish a Chapter of the St. Vincent De Paul Society at Sacred Heart. We would tie into a definite, already organized, effective program that has proven itself through many years of experience.
2. Memberships would depend on the kind of commitment given - open to men and women, young adults. Members might commit themselves to weekly involvement, monthly involvement, occasional help, personal physical help, transportation, telephone work, secretarial work, financial or spiritual assistance, etc. etc.
3. If someone requests help of any kind, the needs are referred to our St. Vincent De Paul Society.
  - A. At a weekly meeting (after some prayer and meditation to assure ourselves that we are doing our work out of truly Christian motives) we will assess the needs according to the requests, assign work to be done (all home visits are made in pairs of two members each) and report back on work accomplished. These meetings are confidential, not gossip sessions on the people in the neighborhood.
  - B. Members get to know the needy in the neighborhood and will follow-up with social visits, phone calls, etc.

In general, we would follow closely the organized, time-tested program of the National and Indianapolis St. Vincent De Paul Society - which has not only transformed the lives of all those in need, but has also renewed the lives of many, many, 'ordinary' Catholics who have taken the opportunity to let the Gospel come to life in their lives.

I met with Steve Kramer the head of Catholic Social Services, and Joe Smith, the President of the Indianapolis Council of St. Vincent De Paul Society. I was skeptical at first, but left quite impressed with the new St. Vincent De Paul Society. I sincerely think it is what Sacred Heart needs - both for our parishioners and our neighborhood.

What remains is to find out what you think, whether you would at least come to a special meeting to hear more about it and give us your input. Finally, and only later, would we ask if you'd be interested in participating. No obligation.

Consider this letter a personal invitation to come to a special meeting at Sacred Heart Hall on Sunday, April 16th at 2:00 PM. If you have some interest, but can't make it to the meeting, I would appreciate hearing that too.

Sacred Heart Church is not dying. It need not die, and it won't. I see a renewed and visible parish community in our neighborhood. I thought you would like to be part of it. Thanks for your time and consideration.

May God continue to bless you with peace and all things good.

Sincerely,

*Fr Tom*

Fr. Tom Vos, OFM  
Pastor