

Alakanuk, Alaska.

July 16, 1960.

Rev. Fr. Paul O'Connor, S.J.
P.C.

Dear Father O'Connor:-

You will recall that after the meeting we had at St. Marys last winter, you had intended to write to Rome concerning the abuses of Fr. Poole and his questionable handling of diverse matters. I wrote to you advising you not to do it, because Fr. Poole had left in me the impression that he had heeded our comments and was about to bring things back to normalcy. Am sorry I wrote that.

I have just returned from St. Marys where I gave the 8 day retreat to the combined community of Ursuline and Native Sisters.

While I was at St. Marys I had a chance to see for myself and to confer with those living there. It is my belief that Fr. Poole has embarked in a carefully studied plan whereby he, far from returning to normalcy as you and I understand it, is determined to make his policies stick and to win followers so in due time a strange school of thought may be firmly established.

He is quoted as having said that he presented his case to the bishop, to the Provincial, to Fr. Hargreaves and to the retreat master, Fr. Murphy, and that all gave him the green light to go ahead. My answer is that he must have presented his case couched in such terms that it was rather misrepresented. It is possible that Fr. Hargreaves know a lot about it and yet he may either look the other way avoiding noise or simply approve of it. As I grow older, I'm prepared for more incongruities.

This is the ~~story~~ story.

So sooner did Fr. Poole land in St. M. as Superior than he made these two statements: a) I am so discouraged at the great number of communions! It pains me to give holy communion to these children. Their communions are all sacrilegious. b) There is not one child in this school that ever made a good confession beginning with their very first.

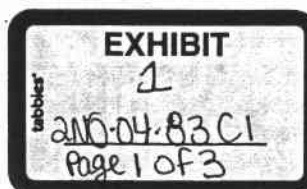
Mind you, there are children over 18 years old in school that have been going to the Sacraments since they were, say, 7 or 9. It means that all the Pastors who send their children to St. Marys are idiots, irresponsible morons, who handle the Sacraments in total ignorance of what they are doing.

Therefore Fr. Poole set for himself two main tasks: 1) to stop all sacrileges at the communion rail; and for this purposes he forbade the children to go to communion except on some specified occasions ~~with~~ after some specified rules had been followed and, 2) to put every child thru a general confession beginning from the first to bring sanctifying grace to that soul for the first time.

In his catechism class the accent was confession and confessions. It became so distasteful that some big girls complained that they were tired of the subject.

In the confessional proper he keeps big girls for half an hour or more of questioning that leaves them in a state of terror as if a volcano had just erupted before them. Convinced as he is that no child can keep from mortal sin after so many hours, he has instituted the practice of having late Masses so he can sit and hear the confessions of those that may be allowed to receive communion

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Immediately after confession. People are kept waiting for the Mass to start because he is hearing confessions. Then, I am told, not all that go to confession go to communion, either.

As things stand now, daily communions are killed. Including Sundays, one counts with the fingers of the hands the children that go to communion. Last Easter Sunday and Holy Thursday were no exceptions. The bulk of the students, I am told, did not go to communion on Easter Sunday.

There is hanging all over the place and atmosphere of suspicion, sex offenses, bad confessions, bad communions, strange fears.... with the result that children abstain from communion as if it were poison; and if they are asked about it, they stiffen and shut up like clams. How irreparable the damage is, time will tell.

Then comes the question of soul searching.

He gets a big girl in his room -(he says that the girl comes herself)- and keeps her by the hour sitting stiff near his desk regardless of the time of the day or evening. It may be during class hours. It may be very late at night. I was told that on one occasion he kept a big girl so late at night that when she went back to the Sisters' building to sleep, the doors were already locked and the whole community was in bed; so a door was removed from its hinges to "smuggle" the girl back.

This is his strategy: he will not stop until the girl "breaks". One Sister, Mother John Francis, probably out of curiosity, took the treatment, and after ten hours of solitary ^{meditation} - solus cum sola- in four different intervals she finally capitulated and then and there she became his ardent supporter and proselytizer for his system.

This nun goes to confession to him every day during meditation or whenever she can and stays in the confessional anywhere between 12 and 30 minutes to the shock of the rest of the nuns who look at her as a veritable pain in the neck. It is their belief that she it is that passes on to him whatever goes on on the Sisters' side, thus creating an air of mistrust and bitterness.

Girls that took the treatment aver that they were "forced" to admit what they had never done. As the Father kept on asking: "Are you sure? Think again. Take your time. Think again. Surely you did it, didn't you? Tell the truth"...etc. after hours of this, the girl, half panicked, said YES knowing that it was not true. That is called "break". After that the girl goes about in a daze. Angela Joseph, of Abulurak, in a moment of fear wanted to quit the Church.

On the other hand there are girls who love the treatment. It is all on sex, as a rule. There are girls that love to be told all about sex, to walk all over the field of sex, to talk about sex, to hear about sex, alone with a young priest in the solitude of a room.

Some people have come to the conclusion that Fr. Poole has a fixation on sex; an obsession; some sort of mental aberration that makes him see sex everywhere. Some think that may be he is projecting outwardly what is eating him inwardly.

Having that mentality, one would think that he ^{if any one} -of all people- should take precautions against sex. Yet he is deliberately placing himself at all times in dangerous situations.

He went to St. Marys to liberate the girls from the grip ^{the nuns} they had on the girls. He went to the dormitory and arranged the beds of the girls according to

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at the time
 his own ideas without the nuns knowing that it was he that did it. He converted the Fathers' chapel into so called Student Chapel which is across from the door of his room. Girls are advised to visit the Student Chapel. Now, mind you, there is the big general chapel in the Sisters' building where the girls could visit the Bl. Sacrament by just walking a few steps. Instead, the girls leave their building and walk to Fr. P's door to visit the Student chapel. It has never occurred to him that it is not the Bl. Sacrament they are going to visit, but him.

His room is practically the living room of the girls. He has small seats to accommodate lots of them. They walk in and out, sit, read, talk... He entertains them with jokes, stentorious laughter, the constant radio, tape recordings and general entertainments.

I went to read my office in the chapel one afternoon and I had to leave the chapel. The theatricals coming from his room (5 feet away) prevented me from keeping any attention to what I was reading.

After supper, girls wait on the passage way to walk in with the Fathers to say the litanies. Fat girls with bare arms rub elbows around the door and pews, get up in the middle of the litanies and go out. Remember that these are boarding girls that should be on the Sisters' side. Fr. Poole says that it does good to the girls to see the Jesuits pray together!

Father made the nuns sit on the first pews of the church so the girls would not be watched by the nuns. Result: the girls, sure that Father takes their side, and that he does not approve of the nuns' attitude toward the girls - (too strict) - and feeling that now at long last they are free, proceed to behave like pagans in the church. They talk, chew gum, read comic books, scratch the pews while the good Fr. Poole is at the altar thinking that he has invented the secret to handle girls.

There is a well founded belief that the school is being run by a so called "triumvirate": Father Poole, Mother John Francis and lay apostle Kelly.

This Kelly plays the guitar or some like instrument. He sits in Father's chair, Father sits nearby and as many as 40 girls have been counted jammed in Fr's room listening with goo-goo eyes to the hill billy music coming from the presidential chair. The girls are made to feel that it is not the nuns, but Father Poole the one who is their guardian and protector.

The eternal buzzing of girls around his room becomes quite disgusting after a time.

Things are kept constantly at the highest peak of excitement: movies, dances, picnics, shows, programs, Japanese dinners, music at breakfast, dinner and supper, a lot of noise. Thus children are kept in perpetual motion. No sacrifices are asked at any time including during Lent and Advent. The result is that all that counts is a good time. No wonder children have begun to act accordingly.

I am told that some children have had to be ~~punish~~ punished after school for their bad behavior in class.

The discrepancy: lamenting so much sinning in school and forcing the children to lengthy dances and frequent semi-pagan movies. And no sacrifices.

I spoke to Fr. Poole, or rather, I began to talk to him about some of these things, but in less than two minutes we were involved in a battle royal, so I apologized to him and made up my mind to go elsewhere for the remedy. He is determined to establish a policy that will spread.

I wanted to send this to Fr. Small, our new Assistant, but I don't know if he is still here or is gone. You may send it to him or in any way you, as Consultor, may may any use you want of this. In union of prayers I remain devotedly yours in Christ.

Segundo Florent, S.J.

