

B.V.M.H.

A.M.D.G.

Saint Stanislaus Seminary,

October 18, 1916.

Dear John,

I have just received and read your letter, and I am certainly glad to hear from you again. I noted everything you told me, and I surely appreciate your trying position. I feel a great deal more sympathy for you, by the fact that all you told me is so much like the troubles and doubts that affected me for a long time before I came here to be a Jesuit. Right up to the very end, during the summer before I came here, I don't think anybody but god knows the interior trials and misgivings I experienced. I remember going

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into the church, or walking outdoors trying to figure things out, and sometimes even cold drops of perspiration stood out on my forehead by reason of the struggle going on within me. My reason would tell me what I knew it was best and right for me to do, and along with the logic and reasonableness of it something the grace of god would greatly move me to join the Society and become a Jesuit; but then again after a little while the thought would rush in on me, what kind of a fool resolution was that you had about being a Jesuit" "It is impossible that that should be what you are going to do." And if I went out much with, or gave myself over much to people who did not have the same previous

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inspirations, god was giving me, but who in their blindness only saw as far as the miserable things of this world, I say - if I went out or was thrown in much with them, then in proportion, those ideas which seemed so exalted and gave me such consolation when I was by myself, seemed all the more like "empty dreams", and myself to be all the more of a fool. sometimes too, I would be ungrateful enough to kind of satisfy my conscience by thinking, "why, I would be only making a jackass out of myself if I would even mention being a Jesuit, and most of all if I would be so exceptional as to leave the ordinary stream of life which everybody follows. The whole world goes on living as they do,

and I can do like the rest of men." But I forgot that I had received a particular and exceptional invitation, which all are not favored with, and that this too, was accompanied and supposed by unusual illuminations, sent from god (for inspirations to leave the world and follow a crucified Christ can only come from God) which are priceless graces not given to all men, and which are the very same that formed god's saints the most charitable, noble and fearless men that have ever people the earth. after having been side tracked for a while by the devil's suggestions, and the exterior influence of the world around about me, Our Lord in this mercy would again deluge my soul with a true and genuine knowledge

of things, and I would clearly see (not only by his grace, but by (with his help), making use of my own power of reasoning), just exactly what was the true value of this world, my certain destiny, death; and then an eternal existence. I knew from sure reason that all This was the truth for certain. - accordingly I would form ideas and kind of make resolutions. The next morning I would wake up and,- what kind of a fool conclusion was that you came to" - would maybe come to my mind immediately. - "That was a wild dream" you had." But God wouldn't be outdone. Maybe that very afternoon he would renew his wonderful work of persuading "poor me" to accept his friendship and love instead of that of a passing world destined to certain

destruction; whereas he will reign as supreme god forever.

Sometimes things came to such a years that for five minutes I would say I should then for five minutes that I shouldn't. Then I would try to think harder then ever, and I would ask myself, ought I, or would I be a fool, or ought I not. Until as you said, I was almost driven crazy. - John, all that such a business is, is merely the conflict between the grace of God pitted against our corrupt nature with its self seeking, and against the suggestions of the world and the devil. God allow, so as to make us humble and to purify our souls. If we have courage, have recourse to prayer, and put our confidence in him, we are certain of victory,

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over the lies and deceits of the devil and the blinded world about us.

again, John, whatever course we follow for our life's work having the end in view of saving our soul, the whole thing should be figured out and done according to the reason God has given us for that purpose. Reason shows us the truth about a matter, and truth never changes. What we arrive at to-day by means of our reason, will be the same to-morrow, though our feelings might be altogether different. Our feeling's are subject to every little wind that blows the weather, our food, our surroundings, the suggestions of the civil and the example of the world, - but truth arrived at by reason never changes, and as we are men

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it is by reason that we must be guided. Our desolate feelings are like the fall of night all is gloomy, but the path lies the same as in the day time. Only a fool would leave what he knew to be the true road because it was dark. Our absolute and gloomy feelings should make us stick all the closer to what God showed us to be the true road when his grace and light were upon us. Besides feelings never last long. If we just stick to the ship, the grace and light of God will soon return. He just withdraws for a little while to keep us humble, but never tries in a beyond our strength. Many a person does the wrong thing because he is guided by feeling rather than reason.

I thought I would mention to you a

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couple of the rules Saint Ignatius gives for the choosing of a state of life. To many a person they would seem hard or even narrow but they are founded on the highest wisdom, and given by a saint. One is: Do now, what you think you will wish you had done at the hour of your death. At the best we will all die soon and if we don't do this now then our death will be a sorrowful one. Again he says, suppose yourself to meet a stranger who is in exactly the position which you are in, then St. Ignatius says, for you yourself to do that which in your secret heart you would advise him to do if you had a strong desire for his best welfare. Then in general, Saint Ignatius, says to always place before you your last end; the sole reason of your having been

created at all being to save your soul and so give glory to God. Do that which leads to this end, and reject what leads the opposite way.

As far as your past career goes, it is the wonderful goodness and providence of God, that you ought to praise and thank for having protected and preserved you in such a wonderful way, even in spite of yourself, so that now if you will, you may accept from him the most precious gift he can bestow. He purposely leads us by checkered ways in order to show how little we ourselves have to do with what he accomplishes through us. He would have us know that of ourselves we are wholly nothing, but he is our Father full of wisdom, and who sees farther than

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we can. For myself, moreover, I feel as though I can serve God fifty percent better, as a result of the little experiences he gave me in the world. His ways are wonderful, and he, all without our knowing it, trains us and fits us by various experiences for those things he all the time knows he will use us for later on. In his mysterious wisdom he converts our very fault into means for the furtherance of his glory at some later date. All we can do is to marvel at his mercy and thank him. We ought to grieve for our past sins, but it would be a false sorrow and one rather prompted by the devil, which would make us think for a minute, that our past mistakes would or could keep me from giving our whole selves to God. You need not

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fear a bit about the Society not receiving you. The Society does not go out in the high ways seeking for members. It's members are chosen by God, and God is the one who inspires and sends applicants to his own company. If he inspires you to come, he will also receive you and help you to persevere until death. Death in the society is kind of like getting a notice that vacation has come, and now you will have rest, and all you desire or can wish for forever. If you make up your mind to be a Jesuit, I would just get rid of everything else that stands in the way, as soon as possible, for example your present commission etc., and just come and see the Provincial at Saint Louis, and you needn't worry about not being received. You are

young compared with many who join the Society. As far as studies go you would have no trouble. You would just have to tell the Provincial that you had five years Latin and four years Greek. The requirement is four years Latin and one year Greek. Even if you have forgotten all you knew, you will know them both backward and foreward when you leave Florissant. When I came here I didn't know anything about either of them. You can come here to begin your novitate at any time you wish; of course after the provincial receives you the Master of Novices would tell you when to blow in but no particular time during the year is required. - I want to give you these details because I can't write very much and you might

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as well know them.

before I close, I would advise you, if you are too much bothered by doubt etc., to write to Father Mathery or Janss and have them help you, because in such affairs it is the ordinary Providence of God that we should be helped and overcome the devil by the council of others whom God gives special graces for that purpose. When he struck Saint Paul blind from his horse, he told him to go and submit himself to the direction of a holy Man in Damascus. Then don't forget that you are always welcome to come here to make a retreat, and so settle everything once and for all. I don't think, though, from what you say, that you need a retreat

at all. All you have to do is to cast yourself on the Mercy of God, and make the leap. Everything is clear before you; all that is left is for you to act.

When you closed your letter, you said you thought you would stop for fear I would be digusted; well, I will be glad if you finish this one to the end. I might have talked too much in detail, but I have told you what I thought would help you the most; for the rest if you pray to the sacred heart and the blessed Virgin, you are bound to come out right. I will enclose a little blessed badge of the sacred Heart you can wear.

I wish you could be here on the day Sister takes her vows. The three vows when

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taken are just like another baptism. The more checkered one's career is in the past the more he should want everything, all purgatory and the rest of it cleaned out forever, And he can take a whole new start before God and Man-I will surely be glad to see God when he comes. I was surprised to hear that Sarse is engaged. I won't mention about the other one write whenever you can, and don't think I will ever get tired of hearing from you. I will always try to answer as soon as I can, especially, if I can may be help you I will pray for you as well as I can, and I know Sister will offer up her vows especially for you. Never get discouraged and tell the devil to go to hell.

much love in the
Heart of Jesus,
Wm M Markoe S.J.
(over)

P.S. John, I was just looking at your letter again, and noticed what you said about getting a little wild in the life you had to lead the last several years. You certainly don't want to care about what you say there.

If we were all saint a it wouldn't be necessary to do anything to save our soul. True piety does'nt consist in our feelings anyway.

a man is pius if he has a good generous heart, and wants to love God as best he can and do his will. Even if we fall, but keep trying, God is pleased with us.

much Love

Wm