



BELLARMINE COLLEGE

2 0 0 0 N O R R I S P L A C E

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40205

November 16, 1965.

Dear Tom:

I think your letter to Jim was, as you say, painful but necessary. A moral brake has to be applied. Laport's own death may have had some effect this way, but after the initial shock the urge for a further dramatic "witness" is likely being felt again.

I continue to feel strongly that you should write on this in a public forum. The obvious place is The Catholic Worker, which reaches precisely the people most involved (by which I don't mean, of course, only Catholic Worker people). I would think that your letter to Jim, in both form and content, is the approach needed. By "form" I mean not a letter, but rather the questions you raise and the way in which you raise them. An article of this sort, "Questions for the Peace Movement", on the front page of the Worker would be very effective.

The three main questions you raise should be everyone's concern at this point. I showed Father John your letter, and he remarked that the first especially -- the question of a genuinely non-violent appeal to conscience -- has been uppermost in his mind during these weeks. But alienation from the Catholic community, which is itself growing in an understanding of the Church's peace mission (your third point), is also a matter of deep concern. It would seem that patience, in the sense of a suffering labor which works in, with, and through the community -- in all its limitations -- is essential to non-violence. I think we have been too little patient with both the American and the specifically Catholic communities, both of which are surely more open to transformation than the testimony of suicide suggests. The Incarnation has never been a dramatic success, and perhaps it is the victories in love, often hidden, which we should continue to seek.

I'm going to send a copy of this letter to Dorothy, in the hope that you will write such an article and that she will put it on the front page.

The Council is now voting its way through Schema 13, without having reached war and peace yet. The American bishops are reportedly very upset with the new text, but the hour is late for them to act. They may still force a final debate, however. I wrote to six bishops over the week-end, urging them to speak if there should be another debate (which would occur this week): Ritter, Mussio, Wheeler, Flahiff, Delargey, and Konig. I also cabled Ritter, Mussio, Flahiff, and Delargey. To Cardinal Ritter: MANY HERE FEEL AMERICAN BISHOPS ON TRIAL WHO AMONG THEM SPEAKS FOR PEACE?

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Eileen Egan has also been writing, and I presume Gordon Zahn as well. Eileen said on the phone last night that she'd persuaded Donald Keys of SANE to send Cardinal Ritter a cable in the name of SANE's 25,000 members. Everyone feels that Ritter is the key man. But his convictions have remained silent. Oremus.

Please pray, too, these days for someone very dear to me and for my beginning understanding and openness to problems which I've never sought to share. I fear that I know more about the Bomb than the heart.

Peace,

Jim