

January 1980

Dear Mike,

Greetings! Please feel free to share this message with anyone. Just ask them to pray for me.

I enjoy receiving but I don't like having to send form letters. But, because of all my work here at MAKALIN-ST. LUKE and because of the many, many cards and letters I am receiving, I must make use of a form letter to speed up my replies to all of you.

I am presently undergoing treatment here at Marsalin-St. Luke Institute in Holliston. Marsalin stands for Maria, Salus Infirmorum, Mary, health of the sick. St. Luke was a physician who authored some sections of the New Testament. Our Lady and St. Luke are our special patrons.

Our client (patient) population changes from time to time. Departures mean new arrivals. At present we are ~~some~~ ^{eleven} priests, seven sisters, ~~one~~ ^{one} brother, and one non-Catholic minister. We come from various states and provinces in the USA and Canada ^{and elsewhere}. We all have one common illness—alcoholism. The numerous tests that we undergo also show many other related illnesses including my own lunacy.....no comments! *and you don't have to agree.*

Father Doctor Michael Peterson, a mormon convert, is the founder and director of the Institute. Presently he is assisted by a professional staff of one priest, one brother, one sister, and several lay persons. They provide us with a program of healing and renewal that touches the physical, mental, and spiritual.

We attend a minimum of four AA meetings a week. Therapy is the IN word: we get individual, structured group, small group, intercommunication group, community living group, all in the name of therapy. At clinic we get our daily dose of shots and/or pills—I'm getting seven pills daily! We are also learning relaxation therapy, bibliotherapy, lecture-discussions, audio-visual discussions, and theology workshop discussions. (If you saw the movie "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest", you'll have an idea of what I'm talking about: I landed in the Cuckoo's nest!) We must also participate in daily weekday exercise, walking, running, and the YMCA on Fridays in addition to dieting and daily weigh-ins. (Have you heard of the Good News? Well, this is the BAD NEWS. But, believe it or not, I have lost weight—I had the "runs" last weekend.) The first 30 days of the program we have to pretty much stay "on campus." After that time we can leave campus for free time ("G" movies, Shirley Temples on-the-rocks, and sober driving).

Our daily prayer and liturgies bring the whole program together to our Higher Power to whom we surrender our life and illness and turn to for help.

I also turn to you for help. I am an alcoholic and have other illnesses and faults, too. I know and accept that healing and recovery is a life-long cross for me to bear. I need you to be my "Simon of Cyrene" and to help me carry my cross. Please help me with your prayers, support, and understanding.

I take this opportunity to publicly thank Bishop William R. Johnson for generously offering me this chance for healing. My pastor and many of my fellow priests, my family and relatives, many religious and dear friends, all have been most gracious, generous and supportive. I want you to know that I am most grateful to all of you. May God love you and reward you for your prayers, kindness, generosity, phone calls, and so many cards and letters.

I assure you of a daily remembrance at Mass and prayers. As I undergo my struggles, and face the painful memories, and relive fears, anger, resentments, anxieties, I am glad for the liberation that the Lord offers me. Through the darkness I can see light. My illness of alcoholism has been a blessing to bring me to see the light and love of God for me. After Good Friday comes Easter Sunday. Each new day I celebrate the Lord's and my own resurrection.

Peace,

Al Ramos 50600060