

March 9, 1988

Dear Dick,

So refreshing to read your letters. Yes letters. John Smith sent me a copy of your letter to him, and I'll likely send your letter to me to him.

I have faced another natal day -- marking my seventy-sixth ride around the sun. I can't persuade myself that I am "old." But there is evidence I am getting there. I've had 2 proctate namouts, and the urologists test a specimen (how delicately they refer to the stuff) regularly. An internist checks my heart every quarter and says it's "good" and blood pressure also "good," but "keep taking aspirin." I have had a bout with hemorrhoids, but they've been quiet for almost a year. Bonita takes medicine to control blood pressure -- it does the job. I've said that humanity has two ultimate choices -- Bleah! and Amen! My life has flowed fairly close to the latter. I should have said it more often.

I never can recall the best jokes I hear.

✓ One recent acquisition: A priest extracted a promise from Pat to stop drinking. Pat showed at mass sober for three weeks in a row.

Then the priest saw him on the street obviously drunk.

Priest: Shame on you Pat. You promised to quit drinking. Now look at you. You're drunk!

Pat: Father, I am not drunk.

Priest: Then why are you walking with

one foot in the gutter and one foot on the curb? (2)

Pat: One foot in the gutter, one foot on the curb?

Thank God, I thought I was crippled.

This, courtesy of Tip O'Neil.

Our church, Fairview, has had four pastoral changes in three years, two of them assistants. The most recent was the decision of the present pastor to leave after only three years. He followed an immensely popular and energetic man who was here for 16 years. In my opinion this man was almost a sacrificial victim, not from any animosity or failure, but simply because someone has to live through the changed patterns of dependency. The next man should have a better chance to carry on the work.

My hobby has been woodworking. I'm slow, and make many mistakes. I do enjoy making things on a lathe. Last piece was made of alternate layers of cherry and walnut glued with the grain at right angles. This meant more resistance when the gouge hit ~~the cut~~ across the end grain. I had a terrible time with the chatter of the tool against the wood, and nearly gave up. I persisted, and finally finished a handsome piece. That kind of activity saves one's mind.

People here follow the Univ. of Dayton basketball almost as passionately as OSU people follow football. But the firing of Earl Bruce caused considerable perplexity.

Why Jennings would fire a coach with the best record in the Big Ten no one could figure out. The timing and method of firing seemed beneath the dignity of an institution of higher Education. You may have read of the violations of S. M. U., and of the NCAA penalty imposed -- no games for one year, and no home games for a second year. The coach of the Green Bay Packers has accepted the job of rebuilding. He is a graduate of the school, and wanted to return bad enough to take a \$200,000 cut in income. When I was in college Prof Engle got me to read an article "The Game or the Candle"; it rested on an old proverb -- the game is not worth the candle, and the argument was that the benefits of college football, inter-variety -- was so ruinous to health, moral and academic standards that it should be abolished. I remember being in the locker room with a big lineman. I was a runner in track, he was the shot putter. He said that if he had it to do over, he would not go out for football. He had painful injuries that would bother him for years. Maybe the sport is safer now.

Do you know Thurber's story about the big tackle who had to pass an economics test in order to be eligible to play in the big game. The prof thought he would make it easy, and asked the tackle to name a means of transportation. No light shone. The prof asked, "How did you get to Ohio state?" The tackle: "My father sent me."

We're reading "The Time Between the War" by Jonathan Daniels. I have vague memories of the Armistice, and of Coolidge and Harding, or rather H + C. And I have vivid memories of the crash, and the bank closing. The book recalls all of these and more. One thing, Am. Protestants poured all their energy into Prohibition, and Billy Sunday preached a conservative, or reactionary social creed. Now the same phenomenon appears in the issue of school prayer (and abortion) and the Social Darwinism of Swaggart, Robertson, Robison, and others.

I remember how my father and your father used to lament conditions in the conference. When my father was thinking of going to a Congregational Church in Beloit, he said your father urged him to take the offer, indeed was thinking of seeking a change. Neither man left the U. S. and neither had much chance really, given their abilities and ideals, to rise in the hierarchy. What men they were. Once your father said to me he wouldn't turn his hand over (he made the gesture) to play politics in the conference. He was a great man.

I'm glad for news of your health and activities. Let's keep on keeping in touch. News from John is not very encouraging, though his attitude is inspiring.

All the best —

Ed