

BEARINGS WILLIAM P. RESTIVO *President* for re-establishment

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BEARINGS FOR RE-ESTABLISHMENT, INC.

BIBLIOTECA
POLIGRAFICO DE MEXICO

Bearings for Re-Establishment, Inc. is a charitable, non-profit, tax-exempt organization formed in May, 1966 to help former religious--particularly priests and sisters--reestablish themselves as productive members of the Church and society.

The purpose and goal of Bearings can be expressed very simply--to show a Christian concern for priests and nuns who have left the active ministry. These fellow Christians are often suffering and in need. Reestablishment can be translated into several action-areas:

MAKING THE TRANSITION

The most difficult period for the former religious is the initial period of transition. Although the decision to leave the active ministry was a willed one, the person in question frequently lacks a sense of dignity, is uncertain of his future and professional capabilities and is often alone in a strange city.

The principal consideration of most former priests (and also nuns) is that they do not want to "hurt the Church." This, consequently, creates difficulties in seeking suitable employment--employment which requires background references. Most men do not know how to explain their past without "hurting

the Church." Thus, some sell ties, others operate elevators or drive taxis. Many want to serve the Church with their talents, education and past experiences. Bearings helps to alleviate this situation by helping the person find a job--not any job, but a job where the person feels his talents and capabilities are being properly used.

Job hunting is often a discouraging experience for a former priest or religious. Bearings arranges vocational counseling and puts persons in contact with reputable employment agencies.

Sometimes, a man or woman in a strange city will need someone to talk with, a place to sleep, or temporary funds. Bearings provides these services and if necessary, some emergency "tiding-over" money--with no interest, and often no obligation to pay it back.

Integrating the Person

A second essential goal of Bearings is to integrate men and women who have left the ministry into the Church and into society. This is accomplished, first of all, by the very presence of Bearings as a group of Christians willing to help their brother no matter what his circumstances may be. Bearings' concern helps to erase misunderstandings that may have arisen in the trauma of departure with one's religious superior, bishop, or family. Bearings helps reestablish the "family."

Bearings attempts to overcome the isolation of former priests and religious by bringing them in contact with persons who can assist them for

what they are--men and women in need of understanding and assistance--
and for what they were--men and women who have given years of their
lives to the Church.

Bearings also attempts to help them by giving apostolic openings in the
local community; it suggests works that can be done by individuals or by
groups, thus providing continuity with their own basic orientation.

For those persons who have temporary or long ingrained emotional
problems, Bearings can arrange counseling with professional psychologists
and psychiatrists. Much of this counseling is volunteered and can be
obtained with little or no cost to the person in need.

Frequently priests and bishops ask whether or not Bearings is encouraging
religious to leave the active ministry. The purpose is not to encourage
religious to leave but simply to help those who have left. Helping these
people by corporal and spiritual works of mercy can only further the work
of the Church.

Bearings has assisted priests in returning to and remaining in the
active ministry and will continue to assist any who wish to return.

Background

Bearings was organized by William P. Restivo. Actively involved are
Rt. Rev. Monsignor Robert Brown, Archdiocese of New York; Ursula
Gerty, Ph.d.; Rev. William J. Davis, S.J., Jesuit Missions; Sister
Timothy, Marymount Manhattan College; Donald F. Brophy, Paulist-Newman

Press; Thomas Merton, osco; James Lee, Mercy College; Anne Lally, New York Cornell University Medical Center; John F. McTarsney and Richard Surving--Surving Associates; Margaret Kelley, Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Offices have been initiated in Detroit, Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco.

It is a volunteer organization. The New York office presently retains a full-time Executive Director and Secretary. Beyond this, all time and money are donated.

Bearings is incorporated in the State of New York as a tax-free, charitable and educational organization. It is bonded with the Continental Casualty Insurance Company.

Persons Served

Bearings has been contacted by 175 former religious - 85% of whom are priests. It has directly helped about 50 persons find employment. About twice that number have been helped by Bearings' personnel in other ways - by personal advice, financial assistance, or lodging. Many others, especially those who have been out of the active ministry for several years, have expressed their gratitude to Bearings for the sense of encouragement and dignity they have experienced after hearing of its work.

Most of the job opportunities for Bearings' clients come through personal contacts. A few are arranged through reputable employment

agencies. Bearings also arranges for its clients to take federal or local civil service examinations for service-oriented government positions.

Relationship with the Church

Bearings is a service organization, not an ideological group. Bearings does not promote or support any faction or pressure group within the Church.

Bearings does not support or encourage those who desire to change the canonical regulations for clerical celibacy.

Bearings does not encourage persons to leave the Church's ministry.

Bearings does not question the validity or duration of vows or the eternal nature of the priesthood.

Bearings' intention is to cooperate fully with other Church organizations, with chancery officials and with the hierarchy. We have asked, received, and welcomed their guidance, assistance and cooperation. It is not an exclusively lay organization. Many active priests and nuns are already assisting it.

Bearings can and does serve the visible Church in two major areas:

(1) By assisting priests, ministers, brothers, nuns, and seminarians who are changing their way of life, Bearings helps to relieve their sense

of isolation--an isolation which sometimes even leads to serious depression--and provides a Christian melieu in a difficult time of a person's life. The end result is that the Church gains a dedicated worker who continues to contribute to the building up of the Christian body.

(2) Similarly, Bearings discourages its clients from making statements, holding press conferences, etc. that may place the Church or its leaders in an unfavorable light. Such statements ordinarily are the results of the pain of parting; the pain rapidly dissipates once the person finds security and dignity in his secular life.

Eventually, Bearings hopes to provide confidential data to bishops and Church leaders about the motivations and states of mind of those who leave the ministry. This information could help the Church preserve and enlarge its clergy. Bearings exists only to fulfil a present need.

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