



FR. PAUL J. CUDDY  
**On The  
Right Side**

Dear Joy,

Your letter is before me and I am pondering over the sentence: "You once wrote an article on Letters. I hope you still believe what you said. This past summer when coming back from college each noon, I would see people going to their mail boxes. I always hoped they would have a letter, especially if they were elderly or looked lonesome. It could change the whole day — if some one remembered them." To this I give a resounding Amen!

Since my service days, which began in 1942, I have considered letter-writing second only to my priestly ministry. Service men came and went. I followed hundreds of them with letters; and knowing the concern of their parents and kin back home, expanded the letter writing to many of these. The principle is always the same: every man needs love, assurance, encouragement. Following the example of my patron, St. Paul, and Basilian Father William Marceau's beloved St.

Francis deSales, and my greatest saintly inspiration, St. Ignatius Loyola, the apostolate of the pen I have continued happily.

In fact the other night I was reading The Catholic Reformation by Henri Daniel-Rops. He wrote that we possess 6,742 handwritten letters of St. Ignatius. I must send you the book. It illustrates a curious twist of history. For some centuries preceding the Council of Trent (1545-1563) the Popes unhappily were rarely holy. In the decades following Trent, they did improve. Yet especially in Tridentine times and since, the Papacy has drawn the utter devotion of the true Reformers of the Church, with St. Ignatius above all.

For four centuries since Trent the Popes have been men of solid holiness and integrity, yet today an agitated sector within the Church has specialized in undermining the Holy See and the Church, which Vatican II describes as One, Holy Catholic, Apostolic, Unique and

Visible. (Const. on Church). The original discipline and dedication of the Jesuits to the Holy See, based on their foundation, have evolved into a divided Order. It seems to me, as in the case of the California IHM Sisters, that such Orders and Congregations should split. Let each group follow concepts of community which are held as basic to them but rejected by the opposing group. Our Lord said: "A house divided against itself will fall." (Mc 3:25) Contradictory basic concepts bring necessary disintegration and eventual dissolution.

Pardon my wandering. My mind unfolds better with a pen than with a tongue. To return to letter writing. Recently I stopped at the bed of a patient in coronary care. He was fondling a bundle of letters and cards. I remarked: "You're well remembered." He replied: "I did not know how much it means to be remembered. It is good to have friends." One of the saddest of sights is the poor GI who stands in line hoping for a letter or even a card, and

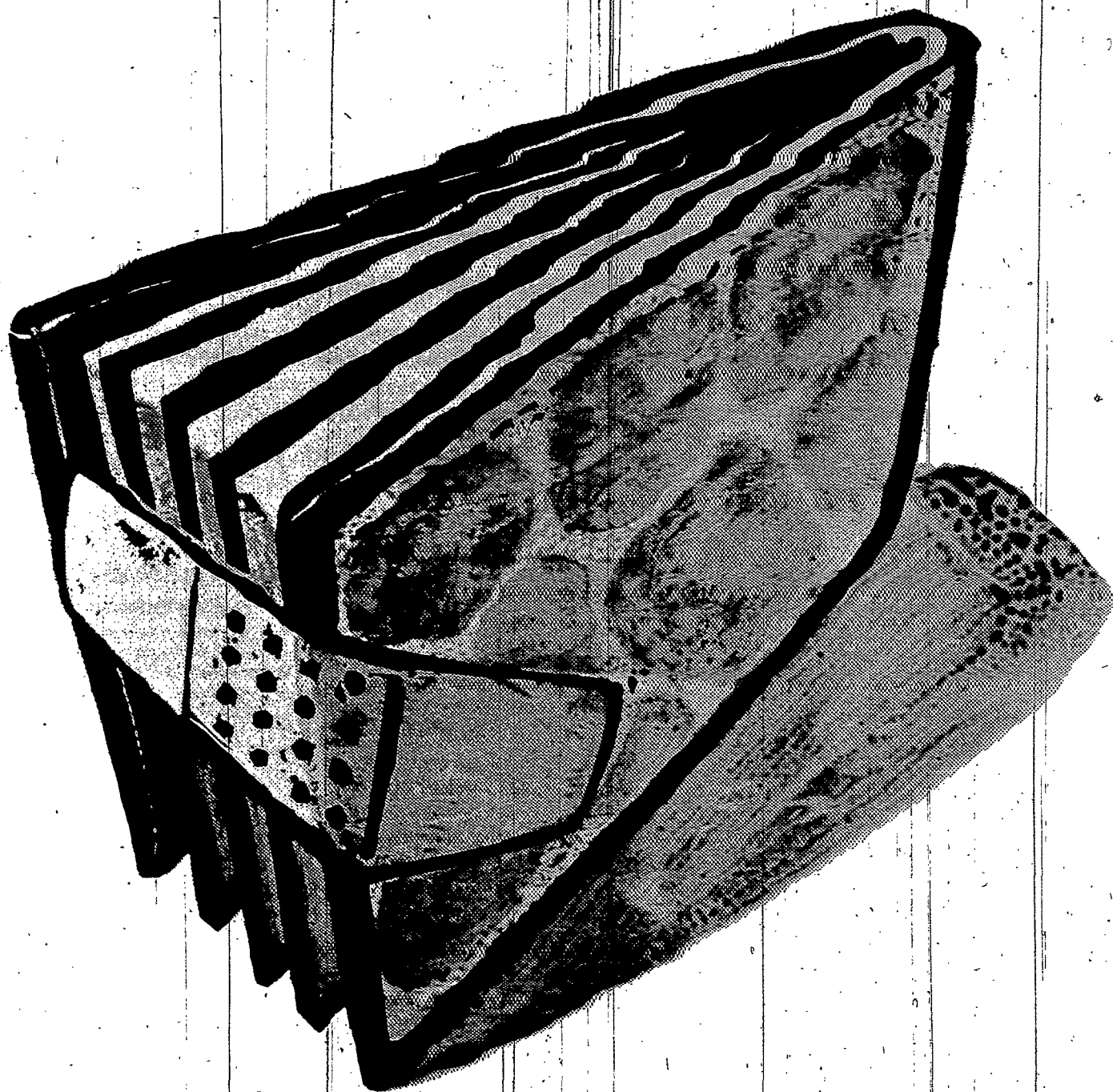
there is none. One of the gladdest sights is the man who gets a letter, if it is cheerful. As he pours over the words he knows: "Some one cares about me."

Besides personal letters, other mail is helpful. Thirty years ago Father John Crowley of Auburn mentioned at St. Alphonsus' Forty Hours: "Every year I go through the phone book and get 100 names of farmers with non-Catholic names, and send them with a check to OUR SUNDAY VISITOR. Gad! When winter comes and the snow is blowing these farmers will read anything!" The fact is that any reading which comes through the mail has a special charism for most people.

So thank you for your own good letter, and for letting me ventilate about letter writing. Perhaps some will take pen in hand and write that note so long intended, so long in the mind, so long unwritten, absent, unrecieved.

Keep smiling, and let us pray for one another.

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