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Personal

9th August, 1976.

Dear Father Baker,

You may not have received my letter of 4th August before leaving home, so I write to ask you not to make another public visit to Newcastle. There is no need for me to detail the various ways in which - during the past few days - you have broken laws of the Church which are not new; they were in force when you were ordained and they still are.

You said in your previous letter that you are sincerely trying to do God's will and that it is not in your nature to be defiant towards authority much less ostentatious. May I then offer you traditional Catholic advice to follow in your present situation?

I accept that you have a personal conscientious difficulty about celebrating the Novus Ordo Missae; you say that you could not bring yourself to do it. The Church allows you to celebrate Mass in the former rite 'sine populo'. So you should do this and no more. To go further is to do what both of us would always have considered wrong; to use one's priestly office and authority to spread one's own views rather than the official teaching and practice of the Church. And to make them public property through the mass media is even more alien to traditional Catholic values.

If you consider this advice carefully, I think you will realise that it would be better to stay at Downham Market and to leave to the Bishop and priests of Hexham and Newcastle the pastoral care of all those committed to us by Our Lord.

With all kind wishes,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ Hugh Lindsay

Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.

The Reverend Oswald Baker,
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