

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT ALLEN T.

I was born on 4 December 1927 in Louisville, Kentucky. My mother was _____ and my father was _____. I was born out of wedlock. I never knew my biological father because he left Cincinnati, Ohio, when I was about four years old. My only memory of him is our sitting at a piano together and his holding me. He left Cincinnati and went to New York; it was rumored that he had been invited to leave the city by the police department.

My mother and I returned to Cincinnati from Louisville, when I was about a year old. We had lived with my maternal grandparents in Louisville. I started public school in the first grade in 1933 when I was six years old. Sometime during my first year in school my grandfather became ill in Louisville, and my mother and I returned there to be with him. I continued in the first grade there.

After his death (it was rumored he had committed suicide), we returned to Cincinnati, and I was enrolled in Holy Trinity School, a Catholic school conducted by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People. Although my family was not Catholic at the time, I asked my mother if I could attend this school because I was intrigued by the sisters in their religious habits as each morning they passed the public school I had formerly attended. In the third grade I was baptized a Catholic. I had asked my mother if I could become a Catholic because each morning the school day began with the entire school attending Mass, and since I wasn't a Catholic, I could not receive Holy Communion, which I wanted to do since all my classmates did. She gave permission, and I was baptized a Roman Catholic on Easter Sunday, 1935.

I first masturbated at the age of eleven or twelve. I vividly remember I was at home alone looking at a pornographic cartoon booklet I had found in a drawer in my mother's bedroom. The booklet belonged to my stepfather. I was not only surprised at the experience of my first orgasm, but I was even more surprised at its intensity. I became a compulsive masturbator at a very early age, and also a frequent confession-goer. Further, I knew very early in my life that I was homosexual; I don't recall ever a time in my life when I was attracted to girls or women. It was also very early in my life that I decided I wanted to be a priest, live in a community, and teach. This desire came when I was in the fifth or sixth grade, the nuns certainly encouraged me.

I was never "one of the guys"; I had friends, but was never a member of the "in crowd." I was a lousy athlete, one of the "YOU-choose-Tarleton" people. But I was a good student and read voraciously. I didn't have a girl friend ever. I think I was saved the ignominy of being considered a "sissy" because very early I expressed the intention of becoming a priest. In fact, I remember coming home from Saint John's in the summer and asking someone to get me a girl, and being told I shouldn't be thinking about girls since I was going to be priest. (I don't even remember why I wanted a girl, probably to go to a dance.)

In grade school and my first two years in high school (I attended a Catholic grade school, Holy Trinity, for seven years and a public high school, Woodward High School, for my first two years of high school) my primary sexual outlet was masturbation. On three occasions I entered the room of a boarder living in our house and fellated him to climax. On each occasion he pretended to be asleep, but he never approached me for sex and never told my mother. On another occasion after a scout meeting in our parish hall, an older scout caught me in a dark room and engaged in frottage; I pretended to resist, but secretly enjoyed it. It happened only once. I also recall at scout camp groping a boy sleeping in my tent; again, I think he pretended to be asleep and never mentioned it to me. At this time I remember being groped in a movie theater and experiencing orgasm. I even mentioned this to my mother later, because I thought I was a "sissy." My mom reassured me that I wasn't a "sissy." I didn't have ready access to much pornography at this time, but enjoyed it whenever I got the chance. In the public high school, I enjoyed watching the guys in the locker room and the shower, although I never made any advances to anyone.

I mentioned elsewhere, it was during these early years that I developed the love/hate relationship with my stepfather. (I never called him dad, only I recall at his funeral, which I conducted in a funeral home, in giving the eulogy I was switching back and forth between using dad and using . Needless to say, I felt like an idiot, but I didn't feel right in calling him dad and yet my half-brother and half-sister and my mother were in the congregation, and I kept wondering what in the hell they wanted me to call him! In thinking back, I wonder what I wanted to call him, but couldn't?) But, it was during these early years that I formed a strong physical attraction for him. He was an ex-Navy fighter in WWI, with a very muscular body, and also a large penis. (I'm sure I must have seen it, but I cannot remember what the occasion was. He certainly never showed it to me deliberately, and I can't remember ever seeing him naked. He lived with another woman just about a half block from our house, but he would frequently spend the night with my mother, and I had no illusions as to what they were doing. The house was quite small. However, I never actually saw them in bed together.

was the father of my half-sister, born on and half-brother, born on . Although I call them technically my half-sister and my half-brother, I consider them both just my brother and sister. I know my mother had one abortion, assisted by because I was present the night it happened, and showed the fetus to me and commented that it was my little brother. I was too young to know how the abortion was induced, but Mom was very sick for a while. The abortion occurred sometime after was born.

For the most part, our family was supported primarily by my mother, with giving her money, but I don't think on a regular basis. The earliest job I recall my mother having was that of a domestic for the family, owners of a low-grade

shoe factory. The job required that Mom live on the premises and allowed her to be off only on Thursday and Sunday afternoons, when she would visit me. Two problems from my childhood that followed me into adulthood was bed-wetting and a speech-blockage. I wet the bed even as late as my freshman year in college, and the speech-blockage is still an occasional problem for me when I read in public, although it isn't as bad as it used to be. Reading in the monastery dining room or in the church was sheer hell for me. And even today it can be me an occasional anxiety attack.

Until shortly before my sister was born, I lived with a succession of women, including one lesbian couple. These people were always good to me, but Mom was never around. One of my favorite surrogate moms was _____, a White woman who lived in the Black community and had a succession of Black male companions. She was quite plump, outgoing, very warm, and affectionate. She enjoyed hugging and being hugged. She owned two boarding houses and was a shrewd business woman. I used to clean the rooms in both houses on Saturday and got a "salary." (As I look back on this experience, I wonder if I was just cheap labor; however, I certainly did feel this way when I was young.) She was constantly buying me clothes and gifts of all kinds. (I don't know if my mother paid her for my room and board, but I don't think so.) I did much shopping for her, and she appreciated my sense of color and fabrics. She might scold, but she never physically or emotionally abused me; nor did she permit anyone else to do so, including _____. I remember on my fourteenth birthday she made me a beautiful four-layer cake with white icing, covered with tiny red candy drops, and gave me fourteen silver dollars. I loved that woman very much.

Another one of my caretakers was _____, a woman who is still living today at the age of ninety-seven. She considered me her son, and was a very warm, loving woman. It was impossible for that woman to show violence to anyone, and certainly to me.

Shortly before the birth of my sister, my mother gave up her domestic job and moved into an apartment with me and later my sister. She found employment as a waitress. This was the first time I recall our settling into a home as a family. I was still going to Catholic school and was very much involved in the parish as a boy scout, an altar boy, and in school activities. Even though my mother was not a Catholic at the time, she was involved in the school, being secretary of the PTA.

However, when I completed grade school and was going to enter high school, my Mom insisted that I either go to a White Catholic high school or else to a public school. At that time Blacks were not accepted into the White Catholic high schools in Cincinnati. So I ended up going to Woodward High School, a public school, for two years. It was at this time that I met a Black priest who came to our parish, supposedly on a vacation. He came from Saint Paul, Minnesota. But I found out later that he had come originally from Trinidad, been ordained in Texas, and moved

from diocese to diocese, unable to find a bishop who would accept him into the diocese permanently. It was revealed that he was a paedophile after he became involved with my classmate and had to leave the diocese, going to Kentucky. But it was he who told me about the Benedictine monks at Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. I had written to several religious orders prior to meeting this priest, but I had been refused admission because of my race. And my mother knew this. (My mother was not keen on my becoming a priest, and at one point she said I would never go to a seminary as long as I lived under her roof. I replied that I would go when I wasn't under her roof. This was a mistake; she slapped me so hard my nose started to bleed. My mother found the racism in the Catholic Church an issue very difficult to deal with.)

At any rate, I wrote a letter to Abbot Alcuin Deustch, then the superior at Saint John's, telling him that I was Black and asking to be admitted to the high school in Collegeville. He sent a beautiful letter in reply, a letter that caused my mother to cry. I was accepted into Saint John's Prep School in September, 1944, as a junior and a priesthood candidate for the Benedictine Order.

I had a major crisis at Christmas time regarding my vocation. The first job I ever had was working after school and on Saturdays for a dentist in Cincinnati, Dr. George Buchanan, who weighed over 350 pounds. I ran errands and did a little typing for him. (It was _____ who had gotten this job for me.) Dr. Buchanan became fond of me, and told my mother that if I would go into dentistry, he would pay for my college and dental school education. My mother found this offer appealing and told me to bring all my belongings home when I returned for Christmas vacation. I had no desire to become a dentist and mentioned my dilemma to Abbot Alcuin. He advised that I remain at Saint John's and not return home and that the abbey would support me until I actually joined the Order. In the meantime, my grandmother wrote, saying that I should come home and that my mother would not insist on my staying, but would allow me to return to Saint John's. I told the abbot this, but he was not too happy because he thought I was getting cold feet about becoming a priest. At any rate, I went home and returned to Saint John's after Christmas break.

In my two years in the Prep School, I was a good student. I masturbated regularly, but also went to confession regularly. In high school I once touched a student's genitals while he was sleeping in the dormitory. But apart from this episode, my sexual "acting out" was restricted to watching guys in the showers or in the locker room or while undressing in the dormitory. I graduated from the Prep School in May 1946, and entered Saint John's University in September 1946.

In my freshman and sophomore years in college, I was not sexually active with anyone; again, only being the voyeur in the locker room and in the dormitory. I did have a very close relationship with another college student, _____. He and I spent a lot of time together, but we never engaged in any sexual activity. We

did occasionally wrestle in the gym, and I would experience an erection on these occasions, but nothing further happened.

Prior to Vatican Council II, it was customary for priesthood candidates to join Saint John's Abbey after their sophomore year in college. So I entered as a Benedictine novice on 10 July 1948, receiving the religious name of Gilbert. I was given this name because the monk who previously had this name had died, and his mother "adopted" me as her son, i.e., she paid for my college and seminary education. So out of deference to her, I requested that I be given the name, and the abbot granted the request. During my year of novitiate, I was a compulsive masturbator and experienced intense guilt feelings, spending a lot of time going to confession. I wanted very much to be a priest, and thought that somehow I would be able to control my masturbation, but nothing worked. I certainly didn't help the situation by choosing priests for my confessors who I knew would not give me a "hard time." The guilt feelings were intensified because I received communion every day, and it's a sacrilege in Catholic moral theology to receive communion while in mortal sin, and this was precisely what I was doing. The only other acting out was watching novices changing clothes in the dormitory or going swimming in the lake during the summer. At the end of my year of novitiate, I made my vows for three years on 11 July 1949 and began my final two years of college. On the day before I made my simple vows, I received a letter from my mother. She said that she would be unable to be at Saint John's when I professed my first vows, but, as a present to me on that day, she would receive her First Communion as a Roman Catholic. Unbeknown to me, she had been taking instructions in the Catholic Church and had been baptized into the Church.

At this point I would like to make a comment. Today in American seminaries and religious orders it is my impression that more serious attempts are being made to prepare candidates for a life of celibacy. This was not true when I was in formation. During my seven years of formation (from entering the novitiate in 1948 until being ordained in 1955), the authorities made no attempt to seriously address the psychosexual issues confronting the young monks. I am convinced that the authorities themselves didn't even know what the issues were. The bane of seminary and religious life was the "pf" or particular friendship. Religious or seminarians did not have one or two special relationships or close friends. One should love the whole brotherhood equally, not single out particular people. Furthermore, emotions were, at the very least, suspect, and at the very worst, evil and should be rooted out or kept under rigid control. When I was in formation, the average age of a monk preparing for the priesthood at Saint John's was between twenty and twenty-four years of age. Also, in the years I was in the clericate (the area of the monastery reserved for the young monks preparing for the priesthood and containing study halls, dormitories, and recreation rooms) between seventy and ninety young monks were living together, preparing for the priesthood. Young monks from other Benedictine abbeys throughout the United States and Canada studied philosophy and theology at Saint John's. Needless to say, particular

friendships were formed; and, needless to say, spiritual conferences abounded, railing against them and with little effect.

During my first year in simple vows, I developed an intense relationship with Father _____, a young monk from _____, who had been sent to Saint John's for his philosophy and theology studies. At the time I became involved with _____ I had a very low self-image, and spent a lot of time thinking about being born out of wedlock, being Black, and being gay. That _____ would be attracted to me was almost inconceivable. He was everything I was not: he was White, very handsome, blonde, possessing a swimmer's body, very athletic, highly intelligent, outgoing, well-liked, one of the luminaries of the clericate. He was in his first year of theology, and I was in my first year of philosophy, so he was two years ahead of me.

It was about a year after we were together that he revealed he had been born out of wedlock in _____, and had been _____. My reaction to this revelation was one of disbelief and wonder, but simultaneously one of feeling _____ another link bonded us closer together.

_____ and I never had genital contact, but it wasn't because I didn't want to. He told me one night that if he and I had not been _____ in the monastery and I had been a woman, he "knew what he would do." I think _____ did not want to admit that he was gay, nor did he want to have an orgasm for fear that he would have felt that he had violated his vow of celibacy. I say this for two reasons: 1) it was he who asked me one night if I would object to his kissing me. (This was the first time we had made physical contact. Lord knows, I had wanted to kiss him before, but had not made the first move out of fear he would object. 2) One night we were both alone in a dark room wearing just our pajamas. (Up to this point, we had often kissed, often quite passionately.) At one point he removed my pajama top and then kissed me all over my body, excluding my genitals and my buttocks. He even kissed the soles of my feet. And I did the same to him, but we never touched each others genitals. (I must confess, it was one of the most frustrating nights of my life, but, at the same time, one of the most enjoyable. I think had he had an orgasm that night, it would have broken up our relationship. But had I had an orgasm, I don't think that would have been true. Maybe these two episodes are insufficient evidence for me to conclude that _____ is a latent homosexual. But to me they do suggest that. I had also said above that as long as he didn't have an orgasm, _____ did not feel he had violated his vow of celibacy. Although we never touched genitals, we came as close as we could by kissing and touching the rest of each other's body.

After about a year and a half of intimacy, we finally stopped when our immediate superior caught us one night together in a dark room, fully clothed, however, and just talking. Later, _____ spiritual director asked him to break off completely with me, since our pf was potentially destructive to both of us. We both abided by this injunction, although I sure as hell didn't want to. _____ was

ordained a year early and moved out of the clericate into another part of the monastery, and we had little contact with each other.

was the first person who really loved me the way I wanted to be loved and accepted. I was completely obsessed with him. (Each time I hear

, I recall the first letter I ever received from after he had returned to during the summer break. I was listening to that recording when I read the letter.) At one point I even wanted to transfer to his monastery in simply because he was there. At the same time I found it almost impossible to believe that he could like me, and (following my usual pattern), used all kinds of little tricks to "test him," e.g., not speaking to him for a couple of days, getting out of bed late at night and going to a deserted room to see if he would follow me (we both slept in the same small dormitory), or pretending to be upset about something and not telling him what it was just so he would follow me around.

I was obsessed with his body. We used to change each other's bed linen on Saturday afternoon, and I would enjoy seeing when he had had a nocturnal emission. He was one of the few clerics who took a bath; most used the showers. Several times I spied on him and masturbated as he bathed. I frequently masturbated while thinking about him.

Except for twice when he returned to Saint John's to study church music (he was a musician), I did not see until 1989 when he stopped off at Saint John's as he was returning to from a vacation in Florida. (Over the years, however, we had been in touch by phone and letter.) He left the monastery and the priesthood after receiving a dispensation from his vows from Rome.

During my three years of simple vows, my life was primarily devoted to study. In 1951 I graduated from college with a double major in philosophy and English. (All priesthood students had to get a major in philosophy.) I was an average student, but had a strong interest in literature, so I took as many literature courses as my schedule allowed. During these years I was sexually acting out by being the voyeur, i.e., watching monks in the showers or in the dormitory or as they were changing for swimming. I had one experience shortly after I made my first vows with a senior cleric.

He invited me for a walk one Saturday afternoon into the woods. (Saint John's is surrounded by 2400 acres, mostly woods and lakes. As we walked he would periodically swat me on my thigh on butt, saying that he was killing mosquitoes and horse flies. When we had gone a good distance into the woods, we were lying on the ground, relaxing and talking. Gradually, I closed my eyes and dozed off. I suddenly felt him pulling down my zipper; I pretended to be sleeping. He masturbated me to orgasm. As soon as I climaxed, I was filled with disgust, hating both myself and the other monk. On the way back to the monastery, I didn't say a word to him. During vespers later in the afternoon, I became so agitated in choir, that I had to leave the church. Shortly after this episode, he left for graduate studies at the University of Louvain, and was away from the abbey for some seven years doing doctoral and post-doctoral work.

On 11 July 1952, I made my vows for life (solemn vows) and began my second year of theology. (After graduating from college in May, 1951, I started my first year of theology in September, 1951.) During my second and third years of theology, in addition to my own studies, I was also assigned to teach literature to a class of seniors in our boarding school. Also during this time I continued my voyeur activity and my masturbation. (I masturbated during all of my years of formation.) On 4 June 1955 I was ordained to the priesthood, becoming the first Black priest from the state of Ohio.

I spent the summer of my ordination year assisting in a parish in Fargo, North Dakota. When I returned to the abbey at the end of August 1955, I was told that I would teach English the coming school year in our boarding school, but also be a prefect (faculty resident) in one of our college dormitories. I was the first Black monk at Saint John's to be a college prefect. (In those days all the faculty residents in the college dorms were monks; even today most of them still are.) I was in the college dorms for three years, and my sexual acting out with college students began my first year I had the job. My of it was just looking at students in various forms of undress. But one afternoon I was working with a college freshman on a paper in my room. I was attracted to him and he seemed especially vulnerable. As we worked on the paper, I began to feel his thigh, and eventually worked my hand to his genitals, which I manipulated through his trousers. He didn't resist, but neither did he assist my efforts. I finally released his penis from the trousers, and fellated and masturbated him. He acted surprised, but he never resisted. When I finished, he walked out of the room without saying anything. On several other occasions I went to his room when his roommate was gone for the weekend and fellated and masturbated him. He never indicated that he liked it, but neither did he ever resist. He did not return to Saint John's the following year. On another occasion I got into bed with a sophomore--he was wearing boxer shorts, and I was wearing pajamas. We talked and I rubbed his bare chest, but did nothing more. It was during my first year as a prefect that I, during the Christmas vacation, invited one of my high school seniors to my room in the dorm. I used some excuse that I was studying

nude art and wanted to study his body. He came to my room on several occasions and lay nude on my bed, while I pretended to be studying some art books that were lying open on my desk. On one occasion I gave him some wine, but he became sick and threw up. While he was lying on the bed, I would stroke his body. This happened about three times. At the end of the year he graduated and returned to Canada. I was not involved with any other high school student until many years later.

From 1955 until about 1964 I acted out sexually with about ten college students in the college dorms. The acting out usually involved going into a student's room while he was sleeping and fondling his genitals. However, on one occasion I gave a sleeping pill to a student and then masturbated him while he slept. On another occasion I allowed a student to take a shower in my room and then masturbated him on my bed. Three times I was reported to my superiors; once to the subprior, who asked me if I was guilty and I said yes. He thanked me for admitting it and gave me a little talk. Two of the students reported me to the abbot, with the result that I was removed from the dormitory as a prefect, but continued teaching; by this time I was teaching in the college. It was during this time that my alcoholism came to the fore.

Students were not permitted to drink on campus, and when they returned to campus from the nearby towns, they had to check in with their prefect, who noted whether or not the student had been drinking. I never knew for certain whether certain students had been drinking, so I decided to experiment. Although I didn't drink at the time, someone gave me a fifth of scotch for a Christmas present. One night during the Christmas vacation, when there were no students in the building, I sat at my desk correcting papers and very slowly drinking the scotch. Before long, I was unable to grade papers, so I went to bed. During the night I woke up violently ill, and had to crawl to my bathroom. The next morning I discovered about an inch and a half of scotch remained in the bottle; I had drunk almost a fifth a straight scotch. In spite of this very bad experience, I began drinking regularly short after this episode. In a relatively short period of time, I was consuming a large amount of alcohol. All the monks I worked with in the college drank, so no one noticed my drinking.

Between the years 1956 and 1964, I attended graduate school during the summers at the University of Minnesota, working for a master's degree in English. I even took one full year off in 1963-1964 to complete the work. But it was also during this time that my drinking grew steadily worse and my sexual acting out became even more pronounced. I discovered the baths in Minneapolis, and the bus depot restrooms. I also began to invest a lot of time and money in pornographic magazines. (I had really been introduced to pornography by another monk at the abbey who had quite a collection. He later had an 8-millimeter projector and a collection of films. And he had special guests for dinner, followed by a "film

festival." I was almost always invited. Today he has a huge collection of porno video tapes, and in recent years I borrowed many tapes from him.) Getting back to the University of Minnesota.

I never got my degree because I wasted an enormous amount of time on my obsession with sexual activities and alcohol. I lived in a rectory and would leave in the morning supposedly for the university, but would go to the baths, where I would spend the entire day, going home just in time for supper. On weekends, if I didn't have to go to a parish for weekend ministry, I would spend the day in the public restrooms at the university.

It was also during this time that I renewed acquaintance with a graduate of Saint John's University. We had both been in college at the same time, but I didn't know him that well. We met again in a class at the University of Minnesota one day and he invited me out for lunch. That was the beginning of a relationship that lasted for several years--a relationship that had many rocky moments. Physically, we could not get enough of each other, but again I played my little games of making him prove that he accepted me. Even when we were acting out, I very seldom satisfied him sexually, at least in the beginning. He would satisfy me and then I would go to sleep. He bought me expensive gifts, e.g., a portable bar for Christmas or season tickets to the theater. But I would make a date with him and then cancel at the last moment, or change where we were going at the last minute. Also, often after we had had sex, I would resent him and not speak to him for a period of time. Our relation final broke up when I returned to the abbey after my year in graduate school.

I taught in the college the year following my stint in graduate school. However, two students reported to the abbot that I had threatened to give them failing grades if they didn't have sex with me. This wasn't true, and the abbot said he believed me. However, he said he was under pressure to remove me from the faculty, and he asked me to go to the Bahama Islands and teach in our high school in Nassau. This was in 1965.

I was on the faculty at Saint Augustine's College (actually a high school) and did parish ministry. I also continued drinking heavily. On one occasion I was scheduled to preach at an evening Mass, but passed out in my room, with the superior having to take the assignment at the last moment. But somehow I was able to prepare for my classes, organized two fashion shows to raise money for the school, and I was never seriously confronted by the superior.

At the end of the school year my first year in the Bahamas, I was asked to go to Andros, one of the Family Islands in the Bahamas, to work in parish while the pastor came to the States for a vacation. I took care of five mission stations while there, but also drank heavily. Although I was not involved with anyone while I was on Andros, I did one night while drinking strip off my clothes and do into the

darkness outside the rectory and cavorted in a soft, warm rain. Mercifully, no one came to the house that night.

When I returned to Nassau at the end of the summer, a letter was waiting for me from the abbey. In it the abbot asked me to go to Seton Psychiatric Institute in Baltimore for an evaluation. It was never indicated to me why I should go there. This was in September 1966. I was to remain there for twenty months. The issue addressed at the institute was my homosexuality; my drinking was never an considered. While at Seton I became involved with an ex-seminarian,

who was thirty-two years old at the time. He had been sexually abused by a priest in the seminary. We never had any sexual contact, except the day he left when we kissed rather "heavily." Later, he returned for a visit to Seton, and I left the premises without permission, had dinner with him, and then went to a motel where we spent several hours having sex. I remember that although we had sex for hours, neither of us had an orgasm. When I returned to Seton, I was confined to a closed ward for several months. The only other sexual activity I engaged in while at Seton was with another priest-patient; I fellated him once.

When I left Seton in 1968, I returned to Nassau and resumed teaching. I might add that my stay in Seton had not effected any change in my behavior, either regarding my drinking or my sexually acting out. And I resumed both activities in the Bahamas. I became sexually active with one of the brothers in the monastery, going to his room at night. It was also at this time that I met Sister

a Bahamian Benedictine sister. I first met her when I was sent to a Family Island, Freeport, to do weekend ministry. When my tour of duty there ended, she wrote me a letter, telling me that she was attracted to me. This began a relationship that ended with her death in . On several occasions we engaged in some passionate kissing and I felt various parts of her body through her clothes, but we never went any further. We loved each other deeply, but, although I enjoyed her body and kissing her, I was never able to have an erection when we were together. And I dreaded that she might touch my genitals and find me impotent--a problem I never had with men.

She was a beautiful woman in so many ways; highly intelligent, witty, very attractive, a sense of humor, perceptive, sensitive. Although we did not see each other that often, when we were together, we enjoyed each other's company very much. I know she would have married me had I left the monastery. For some reason, I never "tested" her as I did some other close friends. I knew she loved me, and I felt secure with her. I thank God that she came into my life and stayed there for so long.

I saw her for the last time in the Bahamas when I left there in the middle of the school year in 1969. On a Sunday morning, after I had said Mass in a local parish, I went to see her at her convent. While there, I received a call from my superior, asking me to return to the monastery immediately. When I got there, he

told me that he had made reservations for me on a flight to Minnesota, and I was to leave at 1:30 that afternoon. When I asked him why, he told me that one of the women teachers accused me of striking her at a faculty gathering the night before, and her roommate had confirmed the attack. (I was the last teacher to leave the house that night.) I was flabbergasted. And asked to see the women, and was told that they were afraid of me and didn't want to see me. I had no choice but to pack a bag and go to the airport with the prior to return to Saint John's. I felt I was being railroaded and was furious. During the ninety-mile trip from Nassau to Miami where I would board a plane for Minneapolis, I decided to leave the priesthood, the monastery, and the Catholic Church. In Miami I changed my ticket to Cincinnati, Ohio, my hometown. Arriving there, I went to my sister's home and moved in. It was only years later that I concluded I must have had a blackout that night and had no recollection of the incident.

I had decided that I would just disappear, making no effort to contact the abbot or anyone else at Saint John's. I was not too keen on seeing my mother, and even less inclined to see my maternal grandmother. And true enough, neither of them was too happy to see me either. After two days, my grandmother persuaded me to contact the abbot and inform him as to my location. I did. I later received a letter from him, suggesting that I take a year's leave of absence and be dispensed from all the vows except celibacy. This I agreed to.

I lived with my sister for a while, and with the help of my stepfather, I got a job as a case-worker with the welfare department. I moved from my sister's house, to the central YMCA, to a more classy residence hall for men, finally to my own apartment. Shortly, after I started working for the welfare department, I met a young priest, an assistant in a Black parish, who suggested I get a teaching position in the parish school, since the school was looking for Black male teachers. I jumped at the opportunity, since I hated the welfare department.

It was a dynamic Black parish and also the provincial house of the Congregation of the Precious Blood. I taught English in the grade school and lived in my apartment. During this time I was drinking and acting out sexually by visiting restrooms and becoming involved with some gay men who lived in my apartment building. I was also involved with the civil rights movement in the local Black community.

When my year was up, I decided that I wanted to remain in the priesthood and a monk of Saint John's Abbey, but I also wanted to work in the parish in Cincinnati. The abbot gave me permission to do so, and the provincial of the Precious Blood Fathers agreed to my working in their parish and living in the rectory. I enjoyed this arrangement and the work. But I was drinking and being sexually active at the same time. I was not involved with any particular persons, but was just living a very promiscuous life. The people in the rectory knew I was drinking, but I was still able to function, even when I became the first assistant in the parish.

When a small Black parish lost its pastor and since I was one of only three Black priests in the archdiocese at the time and since one was already a pastor and the other did not want to do parish work, the archbishop offered the parish with its small school to me. So in 1970 I became the parish administrator, but not its pastor. I was woefully unqualified for the job. Parish work interfered with my drinking.

I frequently was late or missed saying the morning Mass for the sisters. On Holy Saturday I eliminated all the ceremonies except the Mass itself, pleading illness; I mishandled parish funds by not keeping accurate records; I failed to record marriages in the proper registration volumes. Further, a priest-friend asked that I take into the rectory for a period of time "until he got his bearings" a young man who had been, for a time, with the Trappists at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. I was very happy with the arrangement. He moved in and the very first night we acted out sexually. He lived with me for about three months. He was a talented musician and organized a youth choir. But he also became involved with a 17-year-old man in the choir. One night the three of us were involved in a kind of orgy.

The principal of the school tried to warn me about my excessive drinking; the mother of one of our students told me that she knew I had given some alcohol to her son and some of his friends, but she didn't want to make an issue of it. It was true I had given them some alcohol, but there had not been even a suggestion of any sexual activity.

Because I had allowed the finances to get out of control, the archbishop placed the finances under the control of a committee of parishioners who were responsible directly to him.

When the ex-Trappist left, I was lonely, depressed, plagued with a very low self-image, and burdened with the realization that I was extremely harmful for the parish. So one night I called the personnel director and asked for a teaching assignment in a local high school, to which he agreed. So I gave up the parish and began teaching religion and English. But my drinking landed me in the hospital for a few days. When I returned to the school, I was told that my services were no longer needed. So I left the archdiocese and went to a parish in Louisville at the invitation of a confrere who was the pastor. He asked me to take charge of the school. I left the archdiocese without informing the ordinary of my departure.

In Louisville, the drinking got worse; at one point I was drinking a quart of scotch a day. I did very little work in the school, and was in an alcoholic haze most of the day. One day I had two fire drills, one right after the other just because two little girls were talking as they walked down the stairs. The climax came one night when I walked drunk and in a blackout into the parish hall during a bingo game and caused quite a disturbance evidently, but I had no remembrance of it. This episode caused the pastor to contact the abbot and ask him to bring me back to the abbey. The abbot complied with the request. The night I returned to the abbey was

the night my maternal grandmother, _____ died of a heart attack. The year was 1973. The year _____ died also from a heart attack as he waited for a city bus on a downtown street in Cincinnati.

The day after I returned to the abbey I entered my first treatment center for alcoholism in the Saint Cloud Hospital. Between 1973 and 1982 I went into treatment four times--twice in the Saint Cloud Hospital, once at Hazeldon (which continued at Saint Michael's in Saint Louis), and once at Saint Luke. However, I was not able to achieve sobriety until I spent six months at Saint Luke, 2 December 1982 until 16 June 1983. Until I came to Saint Luke I also was engaging in sexual activities. In 1977 I spent two weeks in Chicago in the baths and in the Central YMCA drinking and sexually acting out. I failed to inform my family I would not be home (they were waiting for me at the airport), nor did I inform my monastic superiors. I decided just on the spur of the moment to go. In 1981 I was sexually involved with an eighteen-year-old senior in one of my classes. Ten years later he brought a civil suit against me, but the charge was dismissed because the statute of limitation had expired. However, this incident made all the news media in Minnesota, and even merited a small coverage in USA Today. In 1988 an employee of Saint John's Prep School brought a civil suit against me for sexual improprieties and was awarded \$100,000 out of court.

In 1991 I began experiencing difficulty with my feet because of my diabetes, my smoking, my overweight. I have had the two great toes amputated and still have an ulcer on the bottom of my right foot. I have spent much time in hospitals and in our health center at Saint John's Abbey.

My mother, _____, died _____, after suffering a stroke on the feast of Mary's Assumption 1985. In her own way she was a good woman, who worked very hard for her family, at one time even washing cars in a drive-through. She was proud of her children. She accepted me and my homosexuality. As she told me just before I came to Saint Luke the first time and after I had come out to her, "You are my son, and I love you." And I know she did.

My sister, _____ is an active alcoholic, but she is also capable of much love and she loves me deeply and I love her. But she is in a lot of pain right now; she still can't accept the death of her husband, _____, who died of lung cancer two years. He and I had some great times drinking and talking together.

My brother, _____ is divorced and has two children and four grandchildren, and he's proving to be a hell of a grandfather. He and I are very close. We have gone to Europe together three times. And he wants my foot "to do something" so we can go off together somewhere like to Egypt, Greece, or Gambia.

Well, these are a few thoughts about Allen T. It was damn hard writing these lines, and I sure as hell don't relish the thought of going through all of this in front of a group of people. But I think they'll understand. Don't you?