

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PASADENA CALIFORNIA 91125

DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES 228-77

December 3, 1982

Msgr. John Tracy Ellis  
The Catholic University of America  
P.O. Box 337  
Washington, DC 20064

Dear Msgr. Ellis,

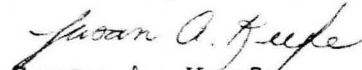
I wish to thank you for the article you contributed to America (Oct. 9, 1982) entitled, "In Defense of the Church's Memory." I read it with great interest because I am a Church historian and because I am currently seeking a post to teach the history of the Church in the late classical and medieval period. For the reason that, in this period, I view Church history and general history ("West Civ.") as synonymous, I am equally concerned at the lack of knowledge of the Church's past by seminarians today. It is hardly "fiddling while Rome burns" to draw attention to so fundamental a gap as a lack of historical perspective in those responsible for educating today's society from the pulpit. Especially now when society views nuclear disarmament, abortion, immigration policies, the death penalty, euthanasia, and gun control laws as debatable moral issues, the role of Christian educators demands enormous responsibility on their part. To impart a right conscience they must seek a right conscience; but how to seek without a sense of history? What startles me even more is that I find I do not even have a high level of expectation for the clergy today regarding their ability to be historically conscious. Then, indeed, the problem must lie in the institutions that train them.

After reading your article twice, I wanted to respond to your concern about the neglect of Church history, given my training and interests. I hope you do not mind that I have written to you directly. I would simply like you to have my name and Vita should any seminaries or other institutions write to you about acquiring a Church historian. My field of specialty being in ecclesiastical history and the history of the liturgy, I feel called to serve the Church by teaching these subjects particularly to young Catholics who will possibly go into ministries.

I am currently completing a two-year appointment as a Mellon Postdoctoral Instructor/Researcher in History at Caltech and am seeking a teaching position for September, '83. If, on any occasion, you should pass on my name to whomever it is appropriate, I would appreciate this very

much. Thank you, again, for your provoking article. It would give me great honor to meet and talk with you some day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan A. Keefe". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Susan A. Keefe  
Div. of Humanities & Social Sciences