Dear Father,

Just your letter today, written on Sunday when you were obviously depressed. I'm sorry that you were, but I know that you must get terribly bored from time to time.

Have you ever thought any more about making the graveyard with the quotation from the Arnoaldo story?

The next time you get a Sunday N.Y. Times, run out the stock contest and let me know how we are doing. Also look in the stock pages and see if we have any stuff from T. Rowe Price. All I want is the address—don't send me any stuff.

One of the things which struck me most forcefully about the group of election observers was their universal contempt for the press corps here. Even Jack Knight is unhappy with the quality of stuff coming out of here. Well, having met a few of them during my stint with the kids, I can say why they are held in such contempt, and although I usually discount such statements about journalists, I must say in this case, they seem well-founded.
Here in Saigon the bulk of the reporters are young, ignorant, uninformed, and drunk. They have not any knowledge of Vietnamese politics, military operations in general, cant-speak Vietnamese, or French. In fact, it is not apparent what their qualifications are. They are mainly eager, which, let us see with their great number, leads to an intense competition resulting in a series of sensationalized feature articles on whatever they think will be interesting in the U.S. Consequent to this and the ever-present overclassification of too much information by the army, there is no overall picture of the war available to the American public.

There are of course some good people here, but they seem to me to be in large part prisoners of the system, even the human chiefs.

When my observers were here, it seemed as if every damn reporter in the place was around the election vote rigged, and, not content with leading or even downright hostile questions, even tried literally to put words into their mouths indicating the thing was crooked. They were interested in listening to what the authorities
the subject had to say unless it appeared to correspond to their preconceived ideas.

The people in Saigon, who should have the overall picture are the inept ones - all the good ones are out in the field trying to get picture of Johnny getting killed. This may be interesting, but it is hardly to give an overall picture of the war. How many can you see getting blasted?

This business really concerns me. Those young guys here are so worried about the innocent people getting hurt that they lose their perspective.

Now do pretty much a neo-isolationist type as you know - had been discountant of the fact and the overall picture. Which is what innocent people always get hurt in wars. There’s little here which even approaches the massive strategic bombing of World War II. The innocent hurt are really very few (we just didn’t have correspondents in Berlin in 1944), and every effort is made to spare them - even including some which are not compatible with sound military
strategy and tactics—simply because it seem politically desirable—and it probably is. Also some of these damn immigrants are not so innocent. Asians are like everyone else: the respect the winner—the strong. They will harbor the cong if they fear him, and if they know we won't make it tough on them for doing so, the reporter.

Some of them go further than this and seem inevitably to believe us for the people killed by our terrorist. This of course goes to the very heart of the problem—would they be better off if we pulled out and let the communists have the place, and would we be better off even if the world? To me, this seems very unlikely at the time—although it might be true that we could have made better
decision 3 years ago.

This today's word of wisdom from one who is perhaps one of the least informed. I really know less about the operation than I did when I was reading the N.Y. Times every day—although I must say their reporters seem worse than even the miserable average here.

Love.