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To Whom It May Concern:

Rocco Fortunato asked me if I would be willing to write him a letter of support. It is my pleasure to write him a letter of support and I consider it an honor to be able to share with you about Mr. Fortunato, who is affectionately known to all as "Rocco".

I met Rocco in 1995. He was in the early stages/years of his conversion and our friendship was immediately forged as we shared our love for the Lord and for the Church. Together we have studied the faith, discussed the faith, taught one another about the faith, and shared the faith with others.

In the 1990s, I was heavily involved with youth and young adult ministry in the Southern Tier. Through these various ministries, I had the responsibility to find speakers for various events. In approximately 1996, I had Rocco speak to a youth group at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Greene, NY and in approximately 1997 I helped organize a retreat featuring Rocco at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Binghamton, NY. In approximately 1998, as a member of a planning committee, I also invited Rocco to speak (in addition to other internationally known Catholic speakers) at a regional retreat in Endicott, NY.

During that time in the Binghamton area, I have seen Rocco preach to a room of 300 people, and I have seen Rocco encourage a small group of displaced youth when a tornado interrupted a summer youth conference (a group of us were stuffed into a basement hallway with probably 20 youth who were depressed that their retreat had been interrupted. Through Rocco's leadership, he rallied the chaperones and spontaneously continued the retreat in that basement hallway, creating an incredible, memorable, and joyful experience).

Rocco is phenomenal with groups but he is also excellent one-on-one. I have seen Rocco listen compassionately to a teenage girl struggling with her life. I have seen Rocco play basketball with a teenage boy who needed to connect with a caring man. I have talked privately with these kids later, and they spontaneously told me how much Rocco helped them, and how his words of encouragement were life changing to them. Rocco's pastoral style is dynamic and he is able to meet people where they are in an effort to help them.

In 1999, my job moved me from Binghamton to Connecticut, so I was not able to be in regular contact with Rocco. Also, my career responsibilities prevented me from being involved in youth and young adult ministry as I had been involved in Binghamton. Thus, I have not had any opportunity to invite Rocco to speak at any events since then.

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ROCCO FORTUNATO
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Over the past 10 years, I have enjoyed talking with Rocco on occasion and I have been highly impressed by the depth of his knowledge of theology, apologetics, and catechesis. Rocco's study is intense, thorough, and astute. His style is very enthusiastic and the young perceive his sincerity and his simplicity – Rocco loves God and wants to help others to know and love God as he does. Personally, I always learn something when I talk to Rocco, and I always come away from a conversation with him feeling 'built up'.

The other day, my wife and I were talking about the religious education of our teenage children. Out of the blue, my wife said to me, "I wish we had the money to hire Rocco Fortunato to teach our children – he would be the best!" Rocco is the best youth worker that I have ever met. As a clinical psychologist, I can attest that Rocco's personality and mental health is excellent; I know this from being his co-worker in ministry, I know this from being his friend.

I give Mr. Fortunato my highest level of endorsement and support, and I recommend him to you without reservation.

Sincerely yours,

*Signature removed for
security purposes*

Timothy G. Lock, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist