

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LANSING

Office of the Bishop
300 West Ottawa Street • Lansing, Michigan 48933-1577

May 29, 2009

Dear Families of Catholic School Students in Lansing:

Praised be Jesus Christ! He is our Risen Lord, and with you I celebrate the great Solemnity of Pentecost, the fulfillment of Christ's promise to send us the Holy Spirit in power. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is at work among us, and we can rejoice that the Lord has not left us orphans (John 14:8). We are God's children, and we entrust ourselves to Him.

It is out of concern for the education and formation of your children that I write to you.

Following a presentation by representatives of Lansing area pastors concerning the state of the Catholic schools in Lansing, in February of 2003, a Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) was established at the request of Bishop Mengeling to develop a strategic plan to promote accessible, available and affordable Catholic school education for the Greater Lansing area. Recommendations were presented by the BRC to the Bishop in October of 2003 advocating one middle school and two elementary schools in the City of Lansing. In 2004 the Lansing Area Catholic Education System (L.A.C.E.S.) was established to implement those recommendations. The Meitler Group (education consultants) of Wisconsin was retained to help form a strategic plan. In their recommendations, Meitler concluded that "unless significant changes are made in the number and structure of Catholic schools, relatively few of them may remain at the end of this decade." "Plans are needed to ensure that Catholic schools remain, and that they are viable, healthy, and effective." (Meitler Report Executive Summary, June 2005)

In June of this past year I approved a Diocesan Plan for the future of our parishes. It included recommendations for our Catholic Schools, some of which were based on the studies mentioned above. I asked the Lansing Pastors to look at these recommendations with their principals and other educators and present a plan to me that would ensure a strong Catholic School education presence in the City of Lansing for years to come.

Therefore, based on the unanimous recommendation of the pastors of the Lansing parishes with schools and the Superintendent of Schools, I have approved the following:

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, the Catholic schools in the City of Lansing; namely, Immaculate Heart of Mary/St. Casimir, St. Therese, and Resurrection Schools, in cooperation with Lansing Catholic High School, will form a single school system. The system will be comprised of two K-5 schools and a common middle school. The K-5 school in the south end of the city will be located at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. The K-5 school at the north end of the city will be located at St. Therese Parish. The common middle school will be located at Resurrection Parish. The system will operate under a single budget (the two elementary schools will have the same tuition rate, the middle school & high school will have different tuition rates.)

An enhanced, coordinated curriculum will ensure a seamless transition from elementary school to the middle school to Lansing Catholic High School. This interparochial-diocesan partnership promises to enhance the Catholic Schools in Lansing. Plans for the new system will be finalized by December 1, 2009, and will address budgetary, transportation, faculty, and governance concerns. The team charged with formulating these plans and their implementation will be working through the summer and fall.

I am convinced that this decision is a prudent response to changing demographics and current realities in Catholic parishes and schools. More than that, I believe it represents a vision for a better educational future. It recognizes the limitations and challenges of strictly parish-based funding, and is consistent with shifts in Catholic school governance in dioceses throughout the country. We have a proud tradition of over a century of Catholic Schools in the City of Lansing. By making this decision at a time when our schools are relatively strong, I am convinced that this plan will ensure that we will be able to continue to provide excellent preK-12 Catholic education in the City of Lansing for generations to come.

There is no doubt that these changes, like all change, will bring some uncertainty and anxiety. Even so, I am hopeful and confident. I believe this plan represents the best future for the schools in the City of Lansing, and I ask for your prayers and support as we move forward together. Let us commit to grow together in hope and love so that we and our children will, indeed, attain to the full stature of Christ.



Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Bishop of Lansing



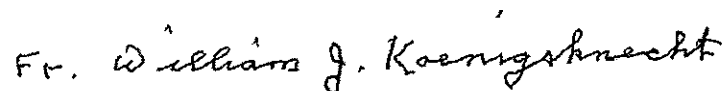
Rev. John Byers
Pastor, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish



Rev. William Lugg
Pastor, St. Casimir Parish



Rev. Michael Williams
Pastor, St. Therese Parish



Rev. William Koenigsknecht
Pastor, Church of the Resurrection