



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Office of the Cardinal

February 5, 2009

Dear Parents and Staff:

Last April the Catholic Church in the United States was graced by the presence of our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI. In his final homily at Yankee Stadium the Pope stated:

In this land of religious liberty, Catholics found freedom not only to practice their faith, but also to participate fully in civic life, bringing their deepest moral convictions to the public square and cooperating with their neighbors in shaping a vibrant, democratic society.

For over a Century, the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston have been a major focus and initiative in the Church's preparation of young Catholics to take their place in the Church and in the public square as credible witnesses to the Faith; these schools have, in the words of Pope Benedict, equipped them "to step forward and take up the responsibility which your faith in Christ sets before you." We are as convinced today as were our ancestors in the Faith that Catholic Schools remain an essential instrument and activity of this Local Church. We are resolved to cherish them and to build them up so as "to use wisely the blessings of freedom, in order to build a future of hope for coming generations." (Pope Benedict XVI)

Eighteen months ago, inspired by this conviction and determined to underwrite the future success of our system of Catholic Schools, we launched a comprehensive study of the schools, the motivations that inspire them, the challenges they face and the opportunities they present. This week we are announcing the first round of decisions made on the basis of this study which included collaboration and consultation with local administrators, key lay leaders, faculty, parents and many others across the Archdiocese who direct and animate our schools. The announcements include the painful news that four of our struggling schools will not re-open in August.

In future months other decisions and recommendations from the study will be announced. These particularly involve financial realities. Given the shifts of our nation's finances and stability in recent months, it is prudent to defer some financial aspects of the study until the current financial uncertainty has abated.

Dedicated and professional Religious and laity have educated the heart, mind and spirit of generations of young people in this great Archdiocese; they have challenged them, as did the Holy Father last April, "to bear fruit in the way you lead your lives and in the way you build up your families and your communities." This nurturing of Catholic Faith and Christian virtue has always been the objective and heart of our Catholic Schools. I assure you that such nurturing will not be diluted as we go forward with our plan for the schools of this Local Church.

With every prayerful best wish, I am,

Sincerely in Christ,

+Daniel Cardinal DiNardo

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston