

## ST. DOMINIC PARISH

March 2, 2011

Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKi  
Milwaukee Archdiocese  
3501 South Lake Drive  
Milwaukee, WI 53207

Bishop Richard J. Sklba  
Milwaukee Archdiocese  
3501 South Lake Drive  
Milwaukee, WI 53207

Subject: Catholic Schools at St Dominic, Holy Name, and St Clement Parishes  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Dear Most Reverend ListECKi and Reverend Sklba:

On March 2, 2011, our pastor, Fr. John Radetski, informed the St Dominic trustees, school principal and chairs of the Parish Council, Finance Committee, and School Committee that the St. Dominic and Holy Family Catholic Schools will close at the end of this school year and a new combined school located in the Holy Family building will open in the fall of 2011.

We respectfully request that a decision on school alignment be postponed for one school year to allow time to more fully understand the impacts of such a decision and to provide sufficient notice to parishioners and school parents at all three parishes. The reasons for this request are described in this letter.

We understand and support the goals of Vision 21. We want strong Catholic schools for our children. St. Dominic Parish is committed to work with our cluster parishes (i.e. Holy Name and St Clement) to consolidate resources and lower costs to strengthen each of the parishes. However, no financial evaluation has been conducted to show that combining the two schools will achieve those goals.

### **Timing Issues**

The timing of this decision has been so short, our parish leaders, parishioners and school parents have not had time to consider the impacts of the decision or to make informed decisions on school enrollment. Here is a summary of the communication to St Dominic leaders and members related to this decision:

**Tuesday, February 15, 2011** – Fr. Connell, Fr. Radetski, Dr. Kathleen Cepelka (Superintendent of Catholic Schools), and Carol Ward (Director of Leadership and Associate Superintendent)

presented the results of an Archdiocesan study of possible scenarios to support growth and vitality in Catholic schooling at St Clement, Holy Name and St Dominic parishes. The trustees and parish council members from the three parishes attended this meeting. The principals of both schools received this information earlier this day.

**Sunday, February 20, 2011** – Fr. Radetski met with the St Dominic School Committee and described the three possible scenarios.

**Wednesday, February 23, 2011** – Fr. Radetski met with the St Dominic Finance Committee and described the three possible scenarios.

**Monday, February 28, 2011** – At a regularly scheduled Parish Council meeting, Fr. Radetski discussed the three possible scenarios.

**Wednesday, March 02, 2011** – Fr. Radetski informed the St Dominic trustees, school principal, and the chairs of the Parish Council, Finance Committee and School Committee of the decision to close both schools and open a consolidated school.

We understand Fr. Radetski intends on informing parish members of this decision during this weekend's Masses. This weekend is the scheduled "Enrollment Weekend" for St Dominic School. So some school parents and parishioners will have received the school consolidation information on the same day they intended on enrolling their children in St. Dominic School. This announcement will arrive to parishioners less than 20 days from the date parish leadership first learned of a possible re-alignment.

### **Fiscal Issues**

Further, we have received no financial evaluation showing that this new school alignment will strengthen our school systems or provide better Catholic school opportunities to the children of the three parishes. A process to pay for the new school has also not been finalized.

During the February 23 Finance Committee Meeting, committee members pointed out that the St. Dominic Parish is not in dire financial circumstances. In fact, we have recently added to our reserve accounts. Committee members expressed disappointment that it had not been consulted during the development of the school evaluation since the Finance Committee has the responsibility to evaluate financial matters in the Parish.

During the February 28 Parish Council meeting a motion was made and approved by a significant majority expressing firm support of delaying the school decision until further evaluation can be made. In addition, a nearly unanimous request was made to have Parish wide input sessions to allow information sharing and evaluation of any plan including developing financial projections. During the meeting Fr. Radetski challenged those present to "find the money" cover a currently project budget deficit. That challenge was made at about 7:30 pm on February 28. Within 48 hours, over \$70,000 in pledges were already received. This amount far exceeds any potential shortfall in the coming budget.

### **Summary**

Opposition to implementing this school re-alignment for the fall of 2011 has been expressed by:

- 1) Both Elected Trustees
- 2) Parish Council
- 3) Finance Committee
- 4) School Committee

5) Numerous active Parish members

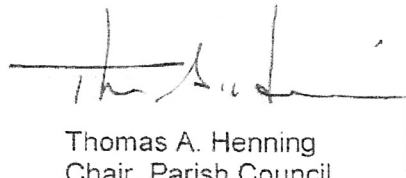
Without the support of our parish leadership and active members, the proposal has little chance of success at this time.

Again, we respectfully request that a decision on school alignment be postponed for one school year to allow time to more fully understand the impacts of such a decision and to provide sufficient notice to parishioners and school parents at all three parishes. The principals and the teachers at both schools need the additional time to assess the impacts on their careers.

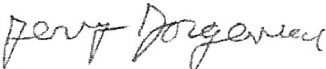
Respectfully submitted,



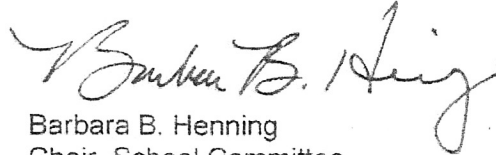
Lyle VanderWyst  
Trustee, Treasure



Thomas A. Henning  
Chair, Parish Council



Jerry Jorgenson  
Past Chair, Finance Committee



Barbara B. Henning  
Chair, School Committee

Copies: Fr. Jim Connell  
Fr. John Radetski