

MOST REV. DANIEL R. JENKY, C.S.C.
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Dear Friends in Christ,

For some time now, our Diocesan Finance Office has informed me that the John Lancaster Spalding Scholarship Endowment for Catholic Education was significantly underfunded and could only provide help for as few as 15% of the families requesting aid. Last March, with the advice of the Presbyteral Council, the Diocese hired the *Steier Group* to consider a capital campaign to enhance this as well as other pastoral funds. The result of their survey of both the clergy and the laity was quite positive, with the majority reporting in favor of such an undertaking. I must confess, however, that given the financial and political situation in the State of Illinois, I have had my doubts. With the highest taxes in the nation and with over a quarter of a million people moving out of state every year, together with the possible postponement of several important parish and school projects, I have been worried that this might not be the best moment to initiate a diocesan wide capital campaign. I therefore called together my Consulters, the Vicars Forane, together with the Presbyteral Council for a special meeting to further discuss the question. After an extended and frank conversation, these representative priests reconsidered their position and now believe that a capital campaign at this time would perhaps be a mistake. I am also aware of the fact that our priests undertake an enormous amount of work to keep our parishes viable, sometimes serving several parishes in a particular area. It therefore might not be prudent at this time to add to their burdens and ask them to undertake the work of a capital campaign. After prayer and reflection and greatly helped by their sound advice, I have therefore decided to cancel plans for a campaign.

Obviously, the Diocese will always invite people to consider a sacrificial gift in support of Catholic education both in their annual giving and through legacies. Our excellent schools constitute an important means of passing on the Faith to future generations and also greatly assist in evangelizing school families. May Christ the Teacher inspire us all to generously support this essential Catholic ministry.

May God bless all of you, and please accept my most sincere thanks for all your good advice.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C." with a flourish at the end.

✠ Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.
BISHOP OF PEORIA