



April 4, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

Among the many questions I receive regarding archdiocesan issues, I am frequently asked about the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, D.C.

The Ann Arbor-based Dominican Sisters of Mary signed a purchase agreement last year with the Archdiocese of Detroit to acquire the building and land at 3900 Harewood Road, which is where the Cultural Center is located. In February 2011, the Sisters decided not to proceed and the Archdiocese is continuing its efforts to sell the Cultural Center building and land.

Opened in 2001, the Cultural Center was envisioned as a place to foster greater understanding among people of different religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds through art, cultural programs, dialogue, and study.

Upon my return to the Archdiocese of Detroit as your archbishop, I convened a commission to review the financial status of the Archdiocese including the fact that the Archdiocese had made significant loans to establish and maintain the Cultural Center. Beginning more than a decade ago, the Archdiocese has provided about \$54 million in such loans.

The Archdiocese made its loan commitments in better economic circumstances based on a business model that proved to be unsustainable. Visitor traffic and event bookings at the Cultural Center fell short of projections, and the Cultural Center has been unable to service the loans made by the Detroit Archdiocese.

Given different needs and priorities for the Church in southeast Michigan, the Archdiocese will continue to market the Cultural Center's building and land for sale, which will enable the Archdiocese to recoup some of its investments in the Center.

To learn more about the Archdiocese's involvement in the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, visit our website, www.aodonline.org/SharingTheLight/CulturalCenter.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Archbishop of Detroit